

Lightning 271

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Chapter 271: The Problem With Destruction Lightning

The elders stopped breathing as they looked with shock at Old Man Lightning. What did he just say? Did he just say that the Lightning Sect could break apart? What was he on about?

"Don't you think you are overreacting?" one of the elders asked Old Man Lightning.

Old Man Lightning crossed his arms, closed his eyes, and took a deep breath. "If we don't plan accordingly, this is a possible outcome. I am not overreacting," he said.

"What do we have to plan for then?" asked another elder with urgency. "What is the problem?"

"Let me give you a hypothetical," Old Man Lightning said and then looked at one of the elders specifically. "Stor! Let me give this hypothetical to you specifically. I think you are the best person for that."

Stor was the only elder who wasn't in panic right now. He actually looked into Old Man Lightning's eyes with determination. "Go ahead," he said evenly.

"Imagine yourself in Gravis' shoes. I am reducing the strength of the Earth Sect's disciples so that you actually feel the strength, or in this case, weakness of your enemies in front of you, just like Gravis. Gravis is about as strong as an average Sect Master, so, in your case, two people at the Seed Stage and ten people at the initial stage of Spirit Forming are coming at you. I have not told you all how the fight went because I want to see how you would react," Old Man Lightning explained.

Stor nodded and let Old Man Lightning continue.

"Those disciples were 20 kilometers away and shouted at you that they would kill you. Then, they charge at you, but with their speed, they would need nearly five minutes to reach you. What would you do?" Old Man Lightning asked.

"I would question them about why they wanted to kill me," Stor said.

Old Man Lightning nodded. "In your past, the Earth Guild in the Middle-Continent annoyed you slightly when you visited them, so you annoyed them back. No one got injured, nothing major was damaged, no one died. Yet, the Earth Sect has seen this as an insult and wants you dead. Those disciples heard the call and followed through with this."

Stor rubbed his stubble in thought. "I would tell them that they are running to their deaths. Their strength and mine are too far apart. This couldn't even be considered a fight."

"The disciples answer that they know that. They know exactly that they are about to die, but they wouldn't dare to betray their beliefs," Old Man Lightning explained.

Stor thought about this for a while, while the other elders watched with interest. "I would wait until they arrive. After all, saying that someone wants to kill you and actually doing it is a huge difference. I can afford this luxury because they are so weak. If they were stronger, I would probably either directly flee or take the initiative," Stor said after some seconds.

Old Man Lightning nodded. "Okay. The disciples reach you and build a barricade. You wait in front of the barricade, but no attacks arrive. You wait for 30 seconds, but no one attacks you. What do you do now?" Old Man Lightning asked.

The eyes of the other elders shone. They hadn't expected this development. They were pretty sure that this is precisely how it had gone for Gravis. The details were very precise. Many of them asked themselves what they would do in this situation.

"I would tell them that they have 30 more seconds to attack me. If they decide against that, I'll leave. Killing some youngsters because they said that they would kill me, but not going through with it, doesn't sit that well with me," Stor said.

The other elders were quite surprised. Stor could be considered the cruelest of the elders. He followed the destructive side of the temperament of lightning very closely. They were surprised that Stor didn't just straight up kill them.

Old Man Lightning nodded. "They taunt you so that you would attack, but none of the disciples take the initiative to attack. What now?"

Stor didn't hesitate. "I turn around and leave. If they don't have the guts to fight, then there is no reason in me killing them," Stor said. "This is no tempering, and they haven't attacked me. Fighting them makes no sense."

The other elders nodded. They fully agreed with this decision. They also wouldn't attack the earth disciples in that case.

Old Man Lightning sighed. "Just as I thought. I think we actually have a problem here," he said with a shake of his head.

The others looked skeptically at Old Man Lightning, but one of the elders looked like he realized something. "Wait a second!" he shouted. "Didn't you say that multiple of the disciples died? Did Gravis attack them?" he asked.

The others' eyes also opened widely. This seemed barbaric in their minds! This wouldn't be at all how lightning worked!

After that, Old Man Lightning explained to them exactly what Gravis had done. Some of the elders showed uncomfortable expressions at that. Forcing the earth disciples to choose between death and their cultivation seemed unnecessarily cruel in their eyes. They were especially appalled when they heard how Gravis killed one of the disciples just because he had hesitated to make his decision.

"While doing all of this," Old Man Lightning said, "I didn't even see an inkling of regret or guilt in Gravis' eyes. He was fully following his own moral compass and committed no wrong in his action. After all, they have stepped on his bottom line. The only reason why anyone survived was that those people decided to betray their beliefs. If they hadn't, they would all be dead."

"This seems similar to the Warped Ones," one of the elders said, making the others nod.

The so-called Warped Ones were former disciples of the Lightning Sect that had a very warped sense of fairness. In their minds, fairness was power. That mindset came nearly exclusively from their traumatic

past. Most of the Warped Ones had been abused by more powerful people in the past, making them believe that whatever a stronger person did, was inherently fair and right.

They had been abused when they were weak, so it was only fair that they, in turn, abused the weak. Due to them adhering to their fairness and honesty, they had no issues in cultivating lightning. After all, there was no objective definition of fairness. It all came down to what they themselves believed was just and fair.

Whenever the Lightning Sect found a Warped One, they would banish them from the Sect. The Warped Ones were very rare, so there never appeared another power created by those. There just weren't enough to create another power.

Old Man Lightning lifted his hand to halt the discussion. "It does seem similar, but it's not identical. A Warped One would have just killed them directly. Gravis' definition of a bottom line is just less flexible in comparison to ours. We still consider life and forgiveness if someone went against us. Of course, we often consider it but not follow through. This brings me to my next point. Do you remember how the Freya Clan acts in general?" Old Man Lightning asked.

"The Freya Clan are basically pushovers," Stor said with crossed arms. "A Sect comes to them, giving them a proposal. The Freya Clan follows through, yet they don't get paid. Yes, they get angry, but they never attempt any revenge. They just stop working together with that Sect. A couple of decades later, they attempt to forge bonds with those same Sects again, the earlier enmity completely forgotten. That's why they are under our protection. We don't go against our words."

Old Man Lightning nodded. "Exactly. Doesn't that seem to be the exact opposite of how Gravis acts?"

The elders fell into thought again, but one by one, their eyes lighted up.

"Are you suggesting that different forms of lightning foster different mindsets of lightning?" one of the elders asked.

Old Man Lightning nodded solemnly. "Exactly!" he said. "Explaining the peculiarity of Gravis' cultivation would take too much time, so let me just tell you that he is the person that has the highest synchronicity with Destruction Lightning possible. No one else, ever, will have such a high synchronicity with Destruction Lightning. You can take his temperament as a perfect template for the temperament of Destruction Lightning," Old Man Lightning explained.

The elder responsible for internal affairs looked with intensity at Old Man Lightning. "So, the higher ratio of deaths between fights inside the Sect is due to that?" he asked.

Old Man Lightning nodded. "We don't have many fights between members, but we do have some. Yet, most of the time, when a winner is established, the victor doesn't finish the loser. After all, they are still from the same Sect. Even if there were enmity before, that wouldn't warrant the death of the other party. Most of the time, establishing one's dominance over the other person is enough."

The elder responsible for internal affairs continued the words of Old Man Lightning. "But if they have Destruction Lightning, they will surely destroy the losing party. This is a similar temperament to natural lightning, but it yields a totally different outcome."

"Now," Old Man Lightning started again. "Let's presume we don't know about this situation. We get more and more Destruction Lightning cultivators, and the deaths in internal fighting become more and more. What would you have done then?"

The elder responsible for internal affairs started growing nervous as he thought about that hypothetical scenario. "I would have probably implemented some rules about life and death fights needing to be accepted by one elder. Like that, only the people with real life and death enmities would be allowed to fight each other."

"Yet," Old Man Lightning continued the elder's words, "that would betray the fairness in the eyes of the Destruction Lightning disciples. If that happened more and more frequently, what do you think would happen?"

The elders took deep breaths. This was a dangerous scenario.

After some seconds, Stor looked at Old Man Lightning with intensity, but on his forehead, sweat could be seen.

"Civil war!"

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Chapter 272: How to Move Forward?

The elders were incredibly nervous. They hadn't faced such a danger to the Lightning Sect before in their lives. After all, Lasar was the strongest Sect Master out of all the Sect Masters. On top of that, they also had Old Man Lightning. In their minds, there hadn't been anything that could threaten the well-being of the Lightning Sect.

The elder responsible for internal affairs had already started planning. After all, planning these things was his responsibility. "I see four possible solutions to this," he said.

Old Man Lightning looked at him. "Then let's hear them."

The elder walked into the middle of the hall. He was too riled up, and his brain thought too quickly to stay put in his throne. "First solution. We won't make any more Destruction Lightning disciples. Like this, we can keep the old Sect and the quota. Of course, the bad thing is that we would give up our path forward."

"I disagree with that," said another elder. "Giving up our path forward isn't worth it."

Stor also nodded. "I also disagree."

Old Man Lightning lifted his hand to stop the discussion. "What's the second one?" he asked.

The elder continued. "Second solution. We keep a carefully maintained balance of disciples that cultivate natural lightning and Destruction Lightning. Like that, no side can become more powerful. Of course, that could still lead to civil war, and keeping the numbers equal isn't the same as keeping the strength equal. One side just needs one more top expert to dominate the other."

"Also disagree," one elder said. "This would still create a civil war. Like this, the Sect will split into two. This is no solution."

Old Man Lightning shook his head. "This is unacceptable. Third solution, please," he said.

"Third solution. We split the Sect into a Destruction Lightning Sect and Natural Lightning Sect. Like this, we don't have any conflicts between the side."

The elders didn't instantly disagree this time. This solution was worthwhile to consider, after all.

One of the elders sighed. "Like this, we would split apart directly without casualties. Our Sect might not become stronger in this instance, but become weaker. After all, we would give up a lot of disciples to the Destruction Lightning Sect. Though, we could also consider it as our Sect."

Old Man Lightning shook his head. "This is a bad solution. You guys don't look at the situation from the point of view of young, aspiring cultivators."

The elders looked at Old Man Lightning. "What do you mean?" one of them asked.

"Think of yourself as someone in the Body Tempering Realm," Old Man Lightning started explaining. "You have the choice between natural lightning and Destruction Lightning. Which one would you choose?" he asked.

The elders all realized what Old Man Lightning meant, and they grimaced. "Everyone would choose Destruction Lightning."

Old Man Lightning nodded. "Exactly! Why would anyone want to choose a weaker element? Destruction Lightning is objectively more powerful. If we split our Sects, the Destruction Lightning Sect will flourish while the old Lightning Sect would deteriorate until nearly nothing remained. Without new blood to replace the old, the old Lightning Sect will die out."

Old Man Lightning turned to the elder responsible for internal affairs again. "What's the last solution?"

The elder took a deep breath. "Fourth solution. Every single new member of the Lightning Sect will, from now on, learn Destruction Lightning. The new will completely replace the old. Until the natural lightning people die out, we will maintain the current rules. Like this, the internal conflict will still be there, but there won't be any civil war. After all, the cultivators only have to wait."

The room remained silent as the elders thought about this last possibility. All in all, logically, this was the best decision. The Lightning Sect would still remain the Lightning Sect, and no civil war would happen. Yet, emotionally, this was a difficult decision.

The elders empathize and cared for each other, specifically because they all cultivated the same element. It bound them together into one force. Yet, if they decided to go through with this, they would become the last members that would cultivate this, ever. To them, it felt like they were a species at the brink of extinction. The difference between the third and fourth solution was that the Lightning Sect remained as one with the fourth solution. Yet, the natural lightning cultivators would still die out.

Every cultivator already saw themselves as their own race or species. They all cultivated one thing, which made them very different from others. They felt like they were the last humans. They felt like they were about to be replaced by a new kind of humans. Wasn't their way the best way? Didn't they choose this element because they thought it was the best?

Before this discussion, they hadn't seen the Destruction Lightning cultivators as other people. They also cultivated lightning, after all. They weren't different from them. Yet, with the changed temperament and different power levels, they automatically distanced themselves from the Destruction Lightning cultivators.

They started looking out of the windows into the Sect. Fights of life and death were allowed if both sides agreed to it or if both parties were at the same level. If both parties were at the same level, it only needed one side to agree. Natural lightning cultivators would find that unfair since Destruction Lightning cultivators could be counted as a full level stronger. At least, that held true for the Energy Gathering Realm.

The difference in levels was different in the Spirit Forming Realm. With Gravis' relative power that he had now, he would have been able to fight four or five levels above his own in the Energy Gathering Realm, yet he could only barely fight two levels higher in the Spirit Forming Realm.

This meant that natural lightning cultivators could only be considered as half a level higher in the Spirit Forming Realm, while one level higher in the Energy Gathering Realm. Yet, this half level, or one level, could be likened to the difference between a Heavenborn and a normal cultivator. It wasn't impossible to win against someone like that, but very difficult.

As they thought about the differences, they also saw several things that they would consider unfair. Someone with Destruction Lightning could bully or anger anyone with natural lightning as long as they were at the same level. After all, if the person cultivating natural lightning refused to comply, the person with Destruction Lightning could simply kill that person.

Moving the levels up when between factions would anger the Destruction Lightning cultivators. After all, it had always been the Realm that decided the fairness in a fight. If Destruction Lightning cultivators were only allowed to fight one level above themselves against natural lightning cultivators, this would break the fairness in their minds. That was why this option hadn't even been considered.

The lives of the disciples who still held natural lightning could become horrible. The elders started discussing this issue. Deep inside, they had already decided that they would be the last of their kind. The cultivation of natural lightning was about to die out. The fourth solution was the best one, logically speaking, but the most painful for the elders to make. It felt like they brought the blade down on their own kind. Their kind was about to die out.

"I will be responsible for keeping the peace," Old Man Lightning said suddenly.

The elders turned to him with questioning looks.

"I can't watch as the old lightning disciples get taken advantage of. Of course, such an incident will be very rare, but it will happen. We have always trusted our disciples. We always trusted that their own fairness kept them in check. Yet, now, I will revoke that trust. I will keep watch over the Lightning Sect, and if an enmity occurs, I will judge accordingly," Old Man Lightning explained.

The elders were a little confused. "Isn't that exactly the trigger for the civil war? After all, the disciples will feel that they can't get their fairness."

Old Man Lightning shook his head. "I will act differently. As long as the disciples are of the same camp, I won't interfere. If this spreads across the camp, I will stay hidden behind the scenes and watch. If I think it is reasonable, I won't interfere. Yet, if I see someone take advantage of his inherent higher power..." Old Man Lightning took a deep breath, "I will stealthily make that person vanish."

The elders looked with discomfort at Old Man Lightning. "That would be harmful to your cultivation," one elder said quietly. "This isn't the way of lightning."

Old Man Lightning sighed. "I don't see a better option."

The elders remained silent. They also didn't see a better option. Having one person sacrifice themselves for the Sect was the best option they could come up with.

After some minutes of silence, Old Man Lightning sighed again. "I really wish I had the creativity of Gravis. No matter what I threw at him, he found a creative and smart solution out of his mess." Old Man Lightning took out his cane and looked at it, "I can't even hit him with my cane anymore."

"Wait!" Old Man Lightning suddenly said with a new shine in his eyes. Then, he turned to the elders. "Do you mind if I ask Gravis for his opinion? He might come up with a solution to this."

The elders were a little taken aback by Old Man Lightning's swift change of mood, but they all shook their heads. "Go ahead," they said.

Like this, Old Man Lightning contacted Gravis.

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Chapter 273: Gravis' Grand Ideas

Old Man Lightning contacted Gravis and told him all about their situation. He didn't keep what he thought about Gravis' action secret. After all, Gravis had to understand that he was different from other Lightning Sect cultivators. Even if he felt isolated because of that, he needed to understand the full range of the issues.

Old Man Lightning had heard about Gravis' past in great detail, so he knew that Gravis felt alone nearly all the time. He had just found a place to belong to, yet Old Man Lightning was about to destroy that again. Old Man Lightning actually felt a little bad about telling Gravis all these things.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?" Gravis asked in confusion.

Old Man Lightning sighed. "I didn't want to make you feel isolated again. I'm sorry," he said with sympathy.

Gravis snickered. "What? This? Make me feel isolated? Do you think I'm a dry piece of wood that you can break just because you step on it?" Gravis asked. "I am part of a Sect, and I don't care what the others cultivate. They can all cultivate darkness for all I care. I don't care about their elements. I only care about the people."

Old Man Lightning sighed in relief. "So, you don't feel isolated?"

"No, why would I?" Gravis said. "Look around. I can talk with people all I want without them attacking me. In my homeworld, I didn't even know about the cultivation of elements. I guess there are a lot of people that cultivate those, but it was never relevant."

Gravis cracked his neck. "Anyway, let's get to the issue," he said. "I'm going to be very direct now. I really don't get the issue. I don't see the problem at all."

Old Man Lightning furrowed his brows. "If we don't find a solution that both sides agree with, we will have a civil war. You say that isn't an issue?"

Gravis snickered a little. "Yeah, but war needs two parties that want to war with each other. First of all, we don't have that. Second of all, everyone will be replaced eventually. There is literally no time for a powerful enmity to be created. As long as every new person cultivates Destruction Lightning, they will only have each other to fight with. And about those people that remain in the Energy Gathering Realm, who cares? Their path is over either way. They might as well leave the Sect."

Old Man Lightning frowned. "We can't do that. They have joined the Lightning Sect, and we promised that they would be forever part of the Lightning Sect as long as they kept to the rules."

Gravis scratched the side of his neck. "So? We have a lot of methods to help those people and also reduce our number of stagnant Energy Gathering disciples."

Old Man Lightning lifted his brows in surprise. "Tell me," he said.

"It's quite simple. Give them tempering. The weaker ones will die, while the others will rise. Yes, the total number of disciples will decrease drastically, but the quality of each one will increase."

Old Man Lightning shook his head. "It doesn't work like that. Those missions have to be paid by us, and if we don't have enough people, we can't regain the lost resources."

Gravis grinned. "There are several ways around that."

Old Man Lightning lifted an eyebrow again. "Oh?"

"Yeah. For example, you can hold an internal auction for missions. No one will pay more than their potential earnings in those. Yet, the Contribution Points you get from that will offset the losses. Isn't giving the low number of missions to the highest bidder the fairest way? After all, the people with the most Contribution points have done the most for the Sect. They should get priority over those missions," Gravis explained.

Old Man Lightning thought about this. They hadn't considered such an option previously because offering more missions would put a drain on their funds. On top of that, they had been under the assumption that they needed more people to keep the Sect's resources flowing.

With this method, they would lose disciples, but others would become stronger. Those stronger disciples, in turn, would take harder missions, which would earn more. On top of that, if those stronger disciples accepted a mission from an external source, they would bring even bigger profits.

The external missions were basically always the same amount. Of course, those external missions were not nearly enough for the disciples. Many disciples basically camped in front of the notice board to be the first ones to get a new mission.

"What about the external missions of weaker monsters? With less weak people, those missions won't be completed," Old Man Lightning asked.

Gravis looked evenly into the direction of the Sect Hall. "So? Fuck 'em. If we have too few disciples at the required rank, don't accept the missions. There are enough people outside the Lightning Sect who would jump on those missions."

Old Man Lightning continued frowning. "But with less external missions, the Sect will earn even less," he said.

Gravis smirked like he had expected that answer. "Yeah, but have you seen the Mission Board recently? There are a lot of open missions for Spirit Beasts. It seems like we have more missions for Spirit Beasts than Spirit Forming disciples. If we reduce the number of Energy Gathering disciples by tempering and increase the number of powerful disciples in return, we might have enough to accept all those missions."

Old Man Lightning's eyes widened. He immediately checked the Mission Board and noticed that a lot of external missions weren't taken. All of these were for people at the Spirit Forming Realm. "You're right! That would solve the issue. By offering our disciples tempering, a lot of our disciples will die, but others will become more powerful."

Yet, Old Man Lightning frowned again. "But that would only push the problem back. The internal fights would still occur at the Spirit Forming Realm. It would still be unfair to let the two sides fight, even if only half a level is between them."

Gravis' smirk intensified. "That's where the second part of my plan comes into play, but first of all," Gravis said, "If we are already completely replacing the Lightning Sect, why not go even further? Don't you want to see how powerful this Sect can get?"

Gravis now felt the same thing that all his previous teachers had felt towards him. They had all wanted to see how powerful Gravis could get, and Gravis, in turn, now wanted to see how powerful the Lightning Sect could get.

Old Man Lightning's breathing slightly quickened. He felt that the thing that Gravis would say would be insane. Yet, the fire of ambition inside of him got roused by Gravis' question. Yes, why not go all the way? "Tell me," Old Man Lightning asked with interest.

Gravis still continued smirking. He felt great about having the opportunity to make the Lightning Sect rise. "Force every person with Destruction Lightning to go through the tenth level of Energy Gathering."

Old Man Lightning's eyes widened. He knew that Gravis would say something insane, but not this insane! "That's insane! Where would all these people even find the necessary tempering? This will make the cultivation manyfold harder for everyone! Like this, the people would need a level two Unity Will to ascend!"

Gravis' smirk vanished, replaced by a solemn look. "Look, you have forgotten something very crucial. In actuality, the whole Sect and probably also this entire world has forgotten this crucial detail. The current state of this world tells me as much."

Old Man Lightning felt a little bit offended by Gravis saying that everyone in the world was ignoring something. "What are you on about?" he asked with annoyance.

Gravis looked evenly in the direction of the Sect Hall. "Ascension isn't the goal," Gravis said.

Old Man Lightning snorted. "Of course it is! What else would be the goal?"

Gravis shook his head. "Think about the higher world. Their cultivation is more advanced. They have way more knowledge and way more power. In the higher world, people at the Unity Realm have just managed to come out of the bottom of the barrel, yet there is a middle and a top before them. Let me ask you the following. Would any power in the higher world give a shit about some ascender that didn't even reach the Self Stage? After all, there are many lower worlds for them out there. Some of them surely only ascended with the Self Stage."

Old Man Lightning's eyes widened in shock. He hadn't considered that at all. Everyone only knew their world, and in their minds, they all saw how rare people at the Self Stage were, yet what about the other worlds? Maybe in other worlds, people that ascended over the Tree Stage would be considered garbage. What of the people in the higher world then?

Gravis looked severely at the Sect Hall, where Old Man Lightning currently stood. Even though they were far apart, they still looked into each other's eyes. "I am pretty sure that people like that are considered trash in the higher world. People who didn't go through the Self Stage shouldn't even go there if they want to live a good life. On top of that, it might actually become entirely impossible to advance a Realm without an extremely solid foundation at some point."

Old Man Lightning looked with nervousness down at the floor. The elders in the hall looked at him, surprised by his sudden change in emotion. What had Gravis told him?

"Right now, in the eyes of the higher world, our Sects are considered trash, including the Lightning Sect," Gravis said.

"Don't let the Lightning Sect remain trash."

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Chapter 274: Powerful Future

Old Man Lightning gritted his teeth as he heard Gravis refer to the Lightning Sect as trash. The Lightning Sect was the second strongest Sect in this world, only surpassed by the Heaven Sect. How could something like this be considered trash?

"How dare you say that the Lightning Sect is trash?" Old Man Lightning transmitted with anger.

Gravis didn't relent. "In this lower world, the Lightning Sect is incredibly powerful, but imagine the people from the higher world. They hear that someone comes from this world, and they immediately assume that everyone from there is trash. After all, we send one person that ascended via the Tree Stage after another into this world. If there were some ascension pool or something similar per lower world, ours would probably be considered as the worst one. Are you fine with that? Are you fine with the higher world looking at us like this?" Gravis asked with a severe voice.

Old Man Lightning gripped his cane hard and clenched his teeth with power. "Even if that were the case, where would those disciples even find tempering? After all, we can't just be the only ones that cultivate to the Self Stage."

Gravis continued looking severely in the direction of the Sect Hall. "Why not? What speaks against that?"

"Everything! Where would our Sect even find tempering!? Are we supposed to kill each other for tempering?" He asked.

"Yes!" Gravis shouted.

Old Man Lightning looked taken aback. "What? I was being sarcastic! I won't allow our disciples to kill each other!"

Gravis sneered. "Aren't you already doing that? After all, isn't the whole issue that we are discussing that people start killing each other? It's normal! The cultivation path is the most important! You don't need to force anyone into these fights. If you just set up such fights, the people will join on their own. As for the others, they just have to wait!"

Old Man Lightning still wasn't convinced. "What do you mean with wait?"

"Simple," Gravis said with a smirk. "How do you think the other Sects will react if they start seeing more and more people with Destruction Lightning? They will surely start forcing people into the tenth level of the Energy Gathering Realm. After all, they can't lose out to another Sect!"

Old Man Lightning opened his eyes wide in realization. That actually made sense! Since no Sect had supreme power over the others right now, the other Sects might start doing just that. After all, that was the easiest way to increase the power of every disciple.

"But if we also force our disciples to go through the tenth level of Magic Gathering, the whole thing of tempering will reappear again. After all, Destruction Lightning is way more powerful than any other element," Old Man Lightning said. Apparently, he had calmed down somewhat.

Gravis also looked more relaxed now. "You know, I was actually quite surprised that only lightning has this way to become very powerful. I also felt it strange that an element's purity can only be decided in the Body Tempering Realm. I am pretty sure that there is a solution to both of these problems. Other worlds have different methods, and those worlds might not be bound by the limitations of our Elemental Seeds."

Old Man Lightning thought about this. "The more I think about this, the more I think that you are right. We have a predetermined way to cultivate, so no one tries to search for a new way. After all, it has stayed like this for an eternity. It has always been like this, and it has shown its effectiveness."

Gravis snorted. "Because you don't have any comparisons in this lower world. I am pretty sure that there are more ingenious ways to cultivate an element. On top of that, I am also sure that there are other, stronger variants of the other elements. Is there some kind of legend about stronger variations of other elements?" Gravis asked.

Old Man Lightning thought about this. "There is a legend about Primordial Fire. That is an incredibly hot fire, which can only be found in volcanoes in the Core-Continent. The Fire Sect actually owns such a volcano. Yet, they have never been able to harness its powers."

Gravis thought about this but then started smirking. "You know what I think? I am pretty sure that there is a way to make this fire one's element, and I think other worlds have managed exactly that. After all, our world has a restriction that the other lower worlds don't have, which makes it impossible for us."

Old Man Lightning was confused. "We have a restriction that other worlds don't have?"

Gravis nodded. "Yes. This whole thing about killing people with a Will-Aura at the Body Tempering Realm shouldn't exist in other worlds. In actuality, this whole thing goes against the goal of Heaven. After all, doesn't Heaven want as many powerful cultivators as possible? Why would it restrict the power of cultivators then? I'm pretty sure that only such an incompetent buffoon like this lower Heaven would think of something so stupid," Gravis said in disdain.

Old Man Lightning thought about this situation some more. "So, you think the Fire Sect might be able to harness the power of that volcano with people that have reached a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Stage?"

"I think so, at least," Gravis said. "Why would such a resource be provided if cultivators couldn't take advantage of it? Keeping something like this going would surely cost a lot of Heaven's Energy. If there was no way to make the cultivators become more powerful, why even bother creating that or keeping it up?"

"There are others as well. Basically, every Sect is situated in a place where a very powerful element runs rampant. Funnily enough, our Lightning Sect is the only one without such a powerful elemental source," Old Man Lightning said.

Gravis' brows furrowed. "That's probably because Heaven considers lightning as its own domain and has some kind of inferiority complex about it. Could also be that it is afraid of someone with Destruction Lightning. After all, that kind of lightning is its most powerful weapon by far, and people with Destruction Lightning have a very high resistance to it."

Old Man Lightning's mind was in overdrive. All these new perspectives and information made him think about all predetermined truths of this world. The more Old Man Lightning thought about this world, the more he realized that they might actually be trash in the eyes of the higher world.

They weren't able to increase the purity of their element after the Body Tempering Realm. They were not able to harness all these powerful elements. They didn't go through the Self Stage. Old Man Lightning laughed bitterly as he realized all the missed opportunities and weaknesses of the cultivators in this world.

Old Man Lightning sighed. "This is very eye-opening, but it won't change anything. After all, people with a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Realm are still forbidden."

Gravis smirked. "What if they aren't?" he asked smugly.

Old Man Lightning furrowed his brows. "You can't tell me that isn't true."

Gravis continued smirking. "I am pretty certain that the Heaven from my homeworld is keeping a close watch over this world right now, and it likes its rules. I am sure that as soon as it had noticed this particular thing, it immediately stopped it from happening. Tell me, have there been sightings of more people with a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Realm?" Gravis asked.

Old Man Lightning quickly turned to the elder responsible for the subservient branches of the Lightning Sect. "Has there been a reported increase of people with a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Realm?" he asked.

The elder was taken aback that Old Man Lightning suddenly talked to him. "I have gotten some reports about a higher number of those joining the Entrance Exams. Of course, we didn't accept them. After all, the Heaven Sect would just kill them in a couple of months. It's basically wasted resources."

Old Man Lightning's breathing became quicker as he heard that. A higher number of those? Hadn't Gravis just said that the suppression of those people had stopped? This couldn't be a coincidence, could it?

"There have been higher numbers of those," Old Man Lightning transmitted to Gravis.

Gravis' smirk intensified. "Just as I thought. Think of this as a visiting elder that inspects the workings of a lower branch. The elder sees all the issues and immediately starts rectifying them. With the return of people with a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Realm, it is only a matter of time until the other Sects find their more powerful elements. On top of that, those people have an advantage in regards to their will, so they will also be more likely to choose the tenth level of Energy Gathering."

Gravis continued talking with more fervor. "Think about the future! More cultivators of other Sects will have more people going through the tenth level of Energy Gathering with stronger elements. As soon as other people notice their compatriots and enemies taking more risks to become more powerful, they will feel inadequate. At that point, many of those will also decide to follow this path. The tenth level of Energy Gathering won't be special anymore. And maybe, in the future, all Sect Masters will be in the Self Stage, because Tree Stage cultivators have become too abundant."

Gravis continued striking while the iron was hot. "If we don't take the first step, we will lose our advantage. Accept all people with a Will-Aura in the Body Tempering Realm! Go out of your way and actively scout them if necessary! It won't be too long until the other Sects notice the change. We have two advantages that will make us the overlords of this lower world!"

"We have received the information first, giving us a head-start, and we have a way easier way to cultivate our stronger element. As long as the Lightning Sect is the first to act, it will become the overlord! On top of that, we get incredible tempering from other Sects in the future."

Old Man Lightning remained silent, but a fire was burning in his eyes.

Gravis said one last thing that sealed the deal.

"This lower world will become incredibly powerful in the near future! Don't get left behind!"

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 275: Changes Take Effect

After a lot of talking and planning, the decisions were made. Old Man Lightning informed the elders about everything that he and Gravis had talked about. All in all, Old Man Lightning and Gravis planned for several hours since there were a lot of details that needed to be ironed out.

While those two talked, the elders looked uncomfortably at Old Man Lightning. The meeting was officially still going, so they couldn't just leave. Yet, they also couldn't continue talking since one person was talking with an external one that officially wasn't part of the meeting.

After Old Man Lightning and Gravis finished talking, Old Man Lightning informed the elders about everything. In the beginning, they also thought that Gravis' plan was insane, but after they heard all the details, the emotional shock they felt was just as bad as Old Man Lightning's.

They had never compared themselves to other lower worlds. They knew nothing about the other worlds, so it was nearly impossible to compare themselves to them. They always thought that they were rather powerful. After all, a lot of people were ascending from this world. Sadly, they had ignored the things that they could have achieved, like the special elements.

The elders had still held hope for ascension, but after hearing Gravis' assumption that people who ascended via the Tree Stage would be the bottom of the barrel, they felt disheartened. The elders all took it differently.

One of them was incredibly regretful. It was like his dream of reaching the top was mercilessly destroyed. The oldest elder of the bunch had already made his peace with the fact that he would never ascend. To him, there was no difference. His goal had always been to make the newer generation as powerful as possible so that as many disciples would surpass him as possible. This goal hadn't changed.

The other elders were in the middle. They had mostly accepted that they wouldn't ascend, but in the back of their minds, they still had a faint hope. This knowledge came crashing down, completely destroying even the faintest trace of their dream.

It was cruel to destroy someone's dream, but they deserved to know the truth. Most elders accepted the new knowledge quickly and started ironing out more details.

From this day forward, the Lightning Sect was on an entirely new track. It took a couple of days for the changes to take effect, but when they did, the Lightning Sect fell into an uproar.

The most significant uproar came because of the auction system for missions. The opinions on that were very polarizing. The disciples with less money said that it would only be fair that the missions were on a first-come, first-serve basis, while the disciples with more Contribution Points were happy.

That uproar was quickly stopped by Old Man Lightning using everyone's weak-spot, their fairness. The people with more Contribution Points have done more for the Lightning Sect, so they deserve some special treatment. They have done a lot for the Sect, so the Sect would do a lot for them.

Since lightning cultivators were honest and fair, this quietened nearly everyone. Like this, the Sect was able to commission more missions without any financial loss. Just as Gravis had expected, the missions were intensely fought over. After all, this was some excellent tempering, which was also rewarded with Contribution Points. The only downside was the danger to one's life, but that couldn't be changed.

From this day forth, the number of disciples went down again, while the remaining ones' quality increased. Disciples that could be considered lazy also started doing jobs that they wouldn't have considered earlier. Jobs like cleaning the Sect, taking inventory of stock, selling wares, and similar stuff were abundant. After all, every disciple could be considered an elite in this world. Why would they do any of that?

Yet, now they were required to do these jobs. Without those, they wouldn't be able to afford missions. These jobs were only done by people without enough Contribution Points because, as soon as someone successfully completed a mission, they would have enough Contribution Points to purchase the next one directly.

Usually, one would think that this would create an environment where the richer get richer while the poorer disciples suffered. Yet, there was a decisive difference. The richer disciples only got richer by tempering themselves successfully. This meant that they would soon reach a higher Stage or Realm, and therefore, wouldn't have any interest in the missions they have done before. After all, these missions were too easy for them now.

With this change, a steady stream of disciples rising through the ranks was created, while the number of disciples became fewer and fewer.

After seeing the trend, the elders decided to lower the requirements for new disciples. Like this, they would get way more disciples. Of course, the ratio of death would also be higher for those disciples. Yet, the elders knew that there could be a supreme genius hidden behind a cloak of trash. There were cases of cultivators suddenly shooting above all their peers, even though they had been way behind before.

With all of these changes, the Lightning Sect completely changed. They went from an average-sized organization into a conglomerate of hot-blooded youngsters. Deaths happened every single day, while the quality of the disciples shot up crazily.

Of course, many of these things only happened months or years into the future.

Right now, this was of no concern. Not because it was irrelevant, but because something way more important happened. Around 13 days after the meeting, Lasar returned, and he had reached the Self Stage.

This was the first time in centuries where one Sect had two people at the Self Stage. Right now, the Lightning Sect shone in the Core-Continent like the moon, while the other Sects could only shine like stars. The only thing outshining the Lightning Sect was the Heaven Sect, which always towered over the world like the sun.

Old Man Lightning told Lasar everything that they had planned, and just like Old Man Lightning, Lasar grew excited. His ambition and drive, which had been rekindled by Old Man Lightning's breakthrough, grew even hotter. He was excited about the future of the Sect.

Sadly, all these changes were irrelevant to him directly. Cultivators that went through the tenth stage of Energy Gathering were still rare. The new wave would only arrive when the Destruction Lightning cultivators reached that level. The other Sects would take even longer. Then, one had to consider how long it would take for someone to reach the Self-Stage from that.

All in all, Lasar would not see any "new" tempering experiences for, at least, 50 years. Could he wait that long? Theoretically, yes, but he didn't want to. If he wasn't ready to wait, he could only go to the Heaven Sect and request tempering. Lasar was very powerful, sure, but he wasn't as insanely powerful as Old Man Lightning.

Old Man Lightning went through many more tempering experiences, and his will had been more powerful than Lasar's when he had reached the Self Stage. Lasar might actually need to kill two or three priests to achieve a breakthrough. Even winning one fight looked almost impossible. If Lasar wanted to temper himself against a priest, he would need to push his battle-strength to the absolute possible maximum, which would take many years.

That Lasar returned was the best outcome for Gravis. He had been a little worried by taking Old Man Lightning with him to the Darkness Sect. Yet, with Lasar here, he wouldn't need to worry about the Lightning Sect. After all, who would have the guts to attack a Sect protected by someone at the Self Stage?

Like this, another week passed, and it was about time for Gravis and Old Man Lightning to go visit the Darkness Sect.

Gravis looked at his new saber, and his battle intent grew. He could finally use his most potent weapon without destroying his Spirit Weapon. On top of that, the Ogre had tempered Gravis' will too. His Unity Will wasn't even close to reaching the third level, but it had progressed in the second one. Right now, it achieved a compression of 36%. This was probably the most powerful Will-Aura that had ever existed in this lower world.

And Gravis was still in the Seed Stage!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 276: Declaration of Battle

Gravis left the Lightning Sect and traveled to the Darkness Sect. It was time for revenge! Byron surely wouldn't expect Gravis to take his revenge only one and a half years after their meeting. This was very little time for people in the Spirit Forming Realm. Of course, Gravis wasn't alone, but the people accompanying him were not only Old Man Lightning but also Lasar.

Lasar rode on his own Lightning Board. Old Man Lightning was pretty good at smithing and had already created some Lightning Boards. Making something completely new was difficult, but copying an already existing schematic wasn't really difficult. These new Lightning Boards were also more robust than the old ones. Old Man Lightning was friendly enough to replace the Lightning Board that he had destroyed with a newer, better one.

The question was, though, why did Lasar also accompany Gravis? The answer to that was pretty simple. It was because of tempering. Old Darkness would never fight Old Man Lightning since he knew very well that he couldn't win. Yet, what about a person that had just recently broken through into the Self Stage? That might interest Old Darkness.

A fight against Old Darkness would, for sure, be easier than a fight against a priest. Yet, it would still be dangerous enough to actually count as tempering. Because of these reasons, it was Lasar that

accompanied Gravis. On top of that, Lasar was also interested in how Gravis fought. After all, he had never watched Gravis fight.

Of course, they still needed to be careful. If Lasar died to Old Darkness, Old Darkness might decide to kill Gravis next. Gravis wasn't powerful enough to win or survive against Old Darkness. Therefore, Old Man Lightning also followed them. Of course, he wouldn't interfere, even if Lasar died to Old Darkness. He would also promise that he wouldn't kill Old Darkness. Otherwise, Old Darkness wouldn't even show up.

Gravis was a little bit worried about the Lightning Sect, but Old Man Lightning assured him that nothing would happen to the Sect. After all, Old Man Lightning was still alive, and everyone knew that. If something happened to the Sect, he would just take his revenge.

The Darkness Sect was rather far away from the Lightning Sect. They traveled for one and a half days until they finally arrived at the Darkness Sect. Of course, they had timed their arrival so that it was early noon. Giving the Darkness Sect the advantage of night wasn't necessary. Fighting a whole Sect alone was already dangerous enough for Gravis.

One shouldn't forget that the defenses of a Sect weren't only the people, but also the Formation Arrays, and there were many of those in each Sect. Some of them could release attacks, while others created a powerful defense. On top of that, there were also Illusion Arrays, which could make someone lose themselves. Gravis would need to fight everything alone.

It was the perfect time for Gravis to take his revenge. A couple more days and he would be ready to reach the Sapling Stage. If he could reach the Sapling Stage whenever he wanted, he wouldn't be able to temper himself at all. Right now, his Will-Aura was powerful enough to stop basically every Seed Stage cultivator from moving, and that was considering that he didn't compress it.

If he compressed it, half of all Seed Stage cultivators would lose consciousness. Only the Sapling Stage cultivators could still move, albeit in a suppressed state. If Gravis reached the Sapling Stage, this whole thing would jump a whole level. At the Sapling Stage, Gravis could simply walk all over Byron and the whole Darkness Sect. He might even have a chance against Old Darkness at that point.

Right now, while being at the Seed Stage, fighting Byron alone would count as tempering, but not so much. After all, Gravis had heard from Lasar that Byron wouldn't be able to win against the Ogre in a one on one. With the addition of the elders, the fight would be a bit harder than against the Ogre. But if one also added the fortifications of the Sect, this would become real life and death tempering.

Gravis felt his insides shake in excitement. It felt like he had become addicted to betting with his life. The rush of being close to death and having to use all of one's weapons was incredible. Every time he survived such an experience, he felt himself become more powerful with speeds that couldn't be compared to training.

Lasar and Old Man Lightning noticed Gravis' feverish state of mind and grew a bit anxious. In their minds, Gravis was taking this way too far. If one walked too close to a river, their feet would get wet. This meant that, at some point, Gravis would join a fight that was beyond his ability. They were worried about Gravis.

They knew Gravis very well, but not as well as Gravis knew himself. He knew that this mindset was dangerous. He had realized this feeling long ago and actively planned around it. This feeling didn't come out of nowhere. He actively released this intense feeling.

Gravis always kept this feeling suppressed. He realized its danger and had already categorized it as some kind of addiction born out of necessity. He had known that he was addicted to tempering long ago and used everything in his power to suppress it. Yet, when a difficult fight appeared, he stopped restraining that feeling. The excitement made him concentrate more than he could when he was calm.

This feeling wasn't like blind rage. It was motivation! A strong motivation to survive and become more powerful! In a fight, this feeling made him more powerful, but that was only true for a fight. If he followed that feeling when he wasn't fighting, he might get blinded by it and actively seek fights that were too dangerous.

As was told many times before, a disadvantage could become an advantage if used correctly. Over 99% of people would probably describe such an addiction as bad, yet Gravis made use of it to empower himself. The only drawback was that he had to actively go against it while not fighting.

Yet, with his powerful will, that was no problem. In actuality, he could completely eradicate it with his will if he wanted to, but decided against it. As long as he handled the drawback well enough, it would only become another weapon. With this burning motivation, he would always be able to fight at his emotional peak, something that was very problematic for other cultivators. After all, everyone had good and bad days.

The three people stopped about 70 kilometers away from the Darkness Sect. Like this, they would be inside the range of the Spirits of Old Darkness and Byron.

"Byron! Old Darkness!" Gravis shouted to get their attention. Maybe they hadn't taken note of them. Gravis wanted to make sure that they paid attention. "You don't need to flee in fear. Today will be a fair fight!"

"Gravis!" came a transmitted shout from Byron. "Are you actually so small-minded that you will eradicate the whole Darkness Sect because of me outwitting you!?"

Gravis laughed slightly. "You don't need to worry about that," Gravis said. "I said it would be a fair fight. You have, at least, a 50% chance of winning. On top of that, as long as you comply with a small request, no one below the Sapling Stage will die today, well, maybe except me, of course."

"Explain!" came a voice that Gravis had never heard, but he was sure that it came from Old Darkness. His voice sounded hoarse and decrepit. It sounded similar to a whisper, even if it was a shout.

Gravis smirked. "Old Darkness, Lasar will fight you one on one! He won't attack anyone else in the Sect! After all, that is my job. I will tear through your whole Sect, but don't be worried! You have an hour to clear the Sect of everyone beneath the Sapling Stage. In one hour, I will charge into your Sect and kill all the elders and that bastard Byron. At the same time, Lasar will search for you, Old Darkness. It's up to you if you want to fight him or flee," Gravis shouted.

After some seconds, Old Darkness answered again. "Why is Dorian here?" he asked.

Old Man Lightning laughed slightly. "You don't need to worry about me," he said with a smirk. "I am only here for the eventuality that you kill my Little Lightning Bolt. After all, I can't have you kill Gravis too! Of course, you don't need to be worried by me. Even if you kill my Little Lightning Bolt today, I won't attack you as long as you don't attack Gravis or me. Today, my only job is to protect Gravis' life from you."

There was nearly a minute of silence. Byron and Old Darkness were probably discussing how to proceed. After the minute was up, Old Darkness answered. "Fine, but Lasar has to fight me, at least, 500 kilometers away from here. Our fight shouldn't involve the Darkness Sect. On top of that, Dorian must swear upon his cultivation that what he said is true."

Lasar narrowed his eyes, and battle intent raged inside of them. Finally, some good tempering! "I agree," Lasar shouted.

Old Man Lightning smiled warmly at Lasar. He was happy that he had the chance to temper himself further. Even if Lasar died, it would be a fair fight. Dying in a fair fight was the best death that cultivators could have.

"I swear upon my cultivation that I will not involve myself in Gravis' or Lasar's fight, as long as you, Old Darkness, don't involve yourself in Gravis' fight. You happy with that?" Old Man Lightning shouted.

"That is enough," Old Darkness answered. "Lasar, Dorian, follow me!" Old Darkness said.

Suddenly, a mighty Spirit appeared. Gravis hadn't felt this Spirit before, but he was sure that this was Old Darkness' Spirit. He showed himself so that the other two could follow him.

Lasar and Old Man Lightning turned to Gravis. "Good luck!" Lasar said.

Gravis only smirked. "I never had luck, and I won't need it today!"

Old Man Lightning and Lasar looked at each other. Lasar remained stoic, while Old Man Lightning smirked a little. Then, they charged after Old Darkness.

Gravis crossed his arms and waited.

In one hour, he would charge right into the Darkness Sect!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 277: Illusion Array

Gravis waited for 55 minutes, but nothing happened during that time. No one from the Darkness Sect came for him, while Lasar and Old Man Lightning were still away. They were probably still fighting, which was a surprise for Gravis. They should have actually finished by now.

Gravis guessed that they might have already finished fighting but didn't want to distract him. Wanting to know the result of a fight was also a motivation to return alive. Maybe they thought that Gravis would grow "content" when he knew that Lasar won. Maybe they thought Gravis would lose his calm if they told him that Lasar died.

Of course, all of this didn't matter to Gravis. He was used to his companions dying. Something like that wouldn't affect his mind by much. He still had a connection with his companions, but his will allowed him to quickly deal with grief.

In a fucked up way, Gravis also knew that if someone close to him died, his will would become more powerful. Of course, he would never put the people close to him into danger just to increase his will. If he ever did that, he wouldn't be able to consider himself human anymore.

And like that, the time was up. It was time for Gravis to initiate the fight. The midday sun hung above the world, but Gravis saw nothing of that. When he had been in Fear City, he had already seen the constant, black, overbearing clouds in the sky. These clouds were only more extreme around the Darkness Sect.

Even though it was day, the surroundings were darker than a new-moon night. Without Gravis' powerful eyes or Spirit, he wouldn't even be able to see his hand in front of his face. The only visible light was the horizon behind him, which created a small, blue line, stretching into seemingly forever.

Like this, Gravis started running forward. He wanted to keep his Lightning Board a secret. Who knew, maybe he would need it to run for his life? Gravis had to be ready for any eventuality. Losing wouldn't mean the end of one's journey, as long as he managed to stay alive.

Gravis came closer and closer to the Darkness Sect, but as soon as he reached a distance of ten kilometers from the Darkness Sect, a bright light shone. The light vanished just as quickly, and Gravis saw that he was on a beautiful meadow now. He could see green grass, beautiful flowers, and many animals. The light shone upon everything around him, illuminating his surroundings.

'Illusion Array, eh?' Gravis thought. 'The look of the Illusion Array is so much different to real life that probably no one would be fooled by that.'

Yet, just when Gravis thought that his mind started to become woozy. The surroundings started to become blurry and distorted while his mind slowed down to a crawl. His thoughts deviated and got sidetracked. 'This illusion is worse than I thought. Even the birds look distorted. I wonder how birds got to have their wings? How do wings even work?' he thought.

Whenever he tried to think about his current predicament, his mind started going from one tangent into another until he thought about the most menial and unimportant things. Pretty soon, he started looking at the animals like he was a kid in a zoo. He no longer moved forward as he started wandering around.

WHOOOM!

"STOP!" Gravis shouted as he activated his Will-Aura. In a sudden moment of clarity, he managed to activate his Will-Aura and concentrate on what was important. As soon as his Will-Aura activated, his immediate surroundings became solidified. He still only saw the meadow around him, but the area inside his Will-Aura was, at least, not blurry anymore.

Shhhhh.

Gravis noticed that something was hitting his Will-Aura, which surprised him. After all, he had never seen an attack that was able to strike a Will-Aura. He inspected that area more and saw small and powerful strands of darkness being diverted by his Will-Aura. The strands looked like small hairs.

He felt that those strands hit his Will-Aura with quite some force. Even though they only gently flowed around his Will-Aura, it felt like they were putting quite some pressure on it. Luckily, his will was

powerful enough to withstand those. A will couldn't be exhausted, so, as long as the Will-Aura held, he would have no issues.

Gravis took a deep breath. 'That was close. I should have activated my Will-Aura earlier,' he thought. 'Well, at least I now know how an Illusion Array feels. There are probably two Formation Arrays working right now. One is there to hinder my concentration, while the other creates an area full of emotional stimulus. If I couldn't concentrate, I would remain in here and grow interested in every single little thing. That's pretty smart.'

BANG!

Suddenly, Gravis' lightning unloaded itself on something close to him. His lightning storage had been full, so multiple strands had been surrounding his chest and neck. Gravis immediately jumped back when he felt his lightning unload. Still in the middle of the jump, Gravis checked his storage and saw that the 20% outside his chest unloaded themselves on something. Gravis was sure that this was not part of the illusion. Something had come close to his chest or neck.

Sure enough, Gravis quickly felt some Energy entering him. Someone had tried to assassinate him just now and triggered his lightning, dying in the process. Yet, the Energy that came towards him was not much at all. It barely reloaded 5% of his lightning. When he felt that, Gravis narrowed his eyes.

"Are you really so shameless that you sent someone at the initial stage of Spirit Forming to test me!?" Gravis shouted. The amount of Energy entering his body could have only come from someone at the initial stage of Spirit Forming.

No answer came.

"Listen here!" Gravis shouted with everything. "Anyone at the Seed Stage and below is only throwing their lives away! You want power, influence, respect, wealth, and similar things, right? In order to get all that, you need to survive! Don't get scammed by Byron and his poisonous words! He might promise incredible rewards, but you wouldn't be able to receive them! Even if you manage to kill me, Byron will just kill you instead of handing over the rewards!"

Gravis' voice grew even louder. "You are darkness cultivators, and you feel you are smart enough to outsmart everyone! Yet, don't forget that you have a Sect Master that went through more than every one of you! If you try to scheme against him, you will only be played to death by him! The only real choice is to keep yourself out of the fight! I swear upon my cultivation that I will kill no one at the Seed Stage or below on purpose, as long as they don't attack me first!"

After shouting all this, Gravis took a deep breath again. He had no idea if that shout had worked, but he needed to remain careful. He might be able to see the darkness cultivators coming under normal circumstances, but the Illusion Array made this nearly impossible.

While Gravis had shouted, he moved the lightning inside his body around. His lightning naturally remained spherical, but that didn't mean that he couldn't change its form. The only reason why it was always spherical was that Gravis needed to concentrate actively on the lightning if he wanted it to stay in any other shape. Doing that for hours or days on end was troublesome, but it was no issue to change its shape in a fight.

His lightning changed until it had the forms of a many pointed, three-dimensional star. There was one round core, while thick strands came out of it like growths. If one saw this without color, they might say that his lightning looked like a tumor. Many small spikes of his lightning touched the skin of his torso, head, neck, arms, and legs. Like this, his lightning would react to any attack.

From outside, it looked like many white dots appeared all over Gravis' body. Right now, he looked more sick than dangerous. Yet, if someone took him lightly now, they would make a grave mistake. Every single dot was connected to his lightning, and if anyone came close to one of those dots, they would feel 10% of his lightning.

Byron knew a lot about Gravis' powers and weapons, but he didn't know about how the Heaven's Balance Cultivation Technique affected him right now. Gravis was sure that his speech from earlier would stop most, if not all people at the initial stage of Spirit Forming. Killing someone at that Stage would give him 5% of his lightning back, which would become a net-loss for him.

Yet, if someone at the Seed Stage attacked him, he would get around 10% of his lightning back. 10% of his lightning would also be easily enough to kill someone at that level. With this, he was basically immune to anyone at the Seed Stage or below.

After taking another big breath, Gravis started walking forward on the meadow. Everything around him looked the same, and he couldn't make out which position was which. On top of that, he had been distracted for several seconds earlier and had turned multiple times during that time. All in all, Gravis had no idea in which direction he had to walk to reach the Darkness Sect.

Yet, that actually didn't matter. As long as Gravis continued walking in one direction, he would either enter the Darkness Sect or leave the Illusion Array's area of effect. As long as he kept walking straight, he would get some results.

Like this, Gravis walked in one direction and closed his eyes and Spirit. The illusion might fool his eyes and Spirit, making him walk in circles. Yet, if he completely ignored everything, he would not get sidetracked.

It was only a matter of time.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 278: Cruel Tactics

Complete darkness surrounded Gravis. His Spirit was cut off from the outside world, and his eyes were closed. He also ignored everything that he heard. After all, he had to walk forward without any distractions. He only opened his eyes and Spirit for a split second every couple of seconds to see if he was still inside the Illusion Array.

While walking forward, Gravis swung his saber continually to destroy everything before him. He couldn't risk touching a tree right now. If he did, his lightning would unload into nothingness.

His heart pumped quickly. It wasn't because of nervousness, but because of excitement. He could see and feel nothing while one enemy at the Tree Stage and, at least, five enemies at the Sapling Stage watched him. Any one of those could attack him suddenly.

Gravis felt extremely close to death right now. Walking blind around an area where an enemy could strike him created waves inside his mind. This sensation alone was good tempering for him. Even if the others didn't attack him, in his mind, he would have still gone through a life and death crisis. Perception was everything when it came to the tempering of one's will.

BANG!

10% of his lightning unloaded again. This time, Gravis felt his lightning unload itself via his leg. He also quickly felt around 10% of his lightning regenerating. Apparently, he had just killed someone at the Seed Stage.

BANG!

Another unload from the same leg, and another wave of Energy entered his body.

BANG!

And again. Gravis was quite surprised by the disciples' willingness to throw their lives away, but he quickly thought of a reason. Some of the disciples probably made a pact where they decided to exhaust Gravis. After all, every single lightning strike cost Energy, and Gravis couldn't possibly have an infinite amount of that.

He also guessed that Byron had probably offered that gamble. He probably said something along the lines of that any disciple that managed to injure him would get some powerful weapon or something similar.

BANG!

And again!

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Six more unloads came in rapid succession, and every bang resulted in the death of one disciple at the Seed Stage. One had to know that cultivators at the Seed Stage weren't rare, but also not abundant. From the around 1,100 Spirit Forming disciples in the Lightning Sect, only around 150 were in the Seed Stage. The others were all in the initial stage.

Gravis guessed that the Darkness Sect probably had even less of those. After all, they didn't temper themselves as crazily as the Fire or Lightning Sect. Gravis guessed that he had probably killed around 10% of all their Seed Stage disciples.

After that, no more unloads came. The disciples had probably seen that Gravis had killed ten of the Seed Stage disciples and decided against taking the gamble.

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANG!

An avalanche of unloads appeared around Gravis, and he quickly widened his eyes as he realized several things. The unloads didn't come from a single point of his body but from all over him at random spots. On top of that, every single unload didn't give him 10% of his Energy back, but only 5%. This could only mean one thing!

'The elders are throwing disciples at the initial stage at me to exhaust me!' Gravis realized with anger. He didn't mind killing weaker people that attacked him, but it was something different when an elder threw their own disciples to their deaths.

Gravis deactivated his lightning and felt a lot of bodies hitting and burying him. The impacts weren't attacks or punches, but just bodies colliding with him. After a lot of bodies hit him, Gravis threw everything to the side with all his power. His physical body was very powerful, and the invisible pile of bodies got shot into the distance. Then, Gravis immediately reactivated his lightning and increased the power to 30%!

BOOM!

Gravis felt a huge amount of lightning leaving his body. Yet, surprisingly, no Energy came back. Instead, the world crumbled apart. As soon as Gravis noticed that something was happening, he opened his eyes and Spirit again. What he saw matched a lot of what he had expected.

Gravis was, right now, at the side of the Darkness Sect, facing diagonally outward. One kilometer more and he would have reached the outside of the Illusion Array. The elders had probably grown nervous and decided to act right now. Sadly, no elder wanted to sacrifice their life.

The illusion world had broken apart, and Gravis could see a lot of disciples standing up from the ground around him, scrambling away. As expected, they didn't flee towards their Sect, but away from it. Their panicked faces affirmed Gravis' suspicion. The elders had thrown the disciples at him against their will.

A hundred meters behind him, Gravis saw two elders standing behind a group of disciples in the initial stage of Spirit Forming. The eyes of the disciples showed pure horror. Those were probably the "lucky" disciples that had the "privilege" to give their lives for the Sect.

Gravis also noticed another elder lying just ten meters besides him, shock written across his face.

"YOU IDIO-"BANG! SHING!

Just as Byron had angrily shouted, Gravis had burst forward with all his speed and cut the elder apart. The elder had been too shocked to react. Earlier, he had charged at Gravis, thinking that he was empty. Yet, he spotted the reappearing white dots on Gravis and barely willed for the Formation Array to protect him. The Formation Array blocked the lightning and broke apart, destroying the illusionary world, while the elder got shot back due to the shockwave.

Yet, when the elder had just realized that he had actually survived, Gravis had taken the initiative and finished him. 20% of his lightning regenerated, but his storages were still very low. The avalanche of bodies thrown at him had been cruel but effective. Every single lightning strike used 10%, while the corpses gave him only 5% back.

Right now, Gravis only had around 40% of his lightning left. At least the Formation Array was destroyed along with one elder. Gravis took note of the two elders behind the disciples and another two elders standing beside Byron. The Darkness Sect still had four elders and their Sect Master left, while Gravis only had 40% of his lightning.

"Plan D!" Byron shouted with frustration. Gravis knew that Byron wasn't frustrated about the dead disciples or the dead elders. Gravis was sure that Byron was frustrated because the elder had used the

Formation Array to block Gravis' attack. With the destruction of the Formation Array, they lost their most significant advantage.

After Byron had shouted, all the elders vanished into the darkness.

"Run! right now!" Gravis shouted at the disciples. "They are in stealth and can't risk showing themselves! This is the best opportunity to run!"

Like an avalanche, the disciples fled into the distance.

"None of you will escape!" came a sound transmission into everybody's mind. At the same time, one of the fleeing disciples got decapitated.

SHING!

The elder's eyes widened in shock as a Lightning Spear penetrated his chest. Gravis had felt the fluctuation of the elder's Spirit. When someone got emotional, their Spirit released a small fluctuation, which was barely noticeable. This was how the High Priest knew about his priests' emotions.

Such a fluctuation was very difficult to feel, but with Gravis' heightened sense of battle, nothing left his sight. Gravis was as concentrated as never before, and such a subtle fluctuation was nearly blinding to him. Thus, he had quickly condensed 20% of his lightning into a spear and shot it at the elder.

BOOOM!

The Lightning Spear exploded, obliterating the elder in the process. With the help of his Spirit, Gravis managed to make the spear powerful enough to kill the elder. Without his Spirit, he would have needed around 30% of his lightning for that.

Why had the elder acted like this even if it meant putting himself into harm's way? The main reason for that was the disappearance of the white dots on Gravis' body. The fact that Gravis had stopped releasing these white dots when they threw those disciples at him meant that they were successful in exhausting him. Otherwise, Gravis surely wouldn't have undertaken the risk of deactivating it.

They had wanted to weaken Gravis more with these disciples, but Gravis' sudden shout had thrown a wrench in their plan. One of them had to stop the disciples, and that's how this situation happened.

Gravis' attack had cost just as much lightning as he regained, but he had used around 25% of his Spirit for the Lightning Spear. At least, another elder had died. Like this, the numbers of his enemies had reduced to four.

Gravis deactivated his passive lightning and readied his saber. There was no Illusion Array anymore, so he could finally fight normally again. His eyes narrowed as he kept close watch over his surroundings.

The elders and Byron couldn't be seen anymore, but that didn't mean that they weren't there. After all, they were darkness cultivators, the supreme experts in stealth. They were probably close to him, ready to strike.

Like this, Gravis waited in silence.

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 279: New Tactics

Gravis waited patiently. He knew that Byron knew nearly all his techniques and methods. After all, Gravis had told and shown him in multiple fights. Byron also knew about Gravis' Lightning Bomb and Lightning Crescent. Due to that, Gravis was sure that the elders stood very far apart.

Yet, just with the case when Byron used Gravis' higher knowledge to his advantage, Gravis could now do the same thing to Byron. Byron knew Gravis' creative way of fighting and was probably incredibly careful right now. Gravis was sure that Byron was not only careful but actually too careful.

He was probably so intimidated by Gravis' growth and unique ways of fighting that he was afraid of committing a mistake. If Byron had directly attacked Gravis in the Illusion Array, he might have managed to kill Gravis. Of course, in that case, Gravis could have just exploded himself with lightning, taking Byron with him. Byron knew Gravis, and Gravis knew Byron.

Whoosh CLANK!

Gravis felt his surroundings move slightly and slashed with his saber. Two weapons collided, and Gravis got thrown back. All the elders had bodies more powerful than Gravis, making it difficult for him to block their attacks.

As Gravis flew back, he felt another fluctuation.

CLANK! BANG!

Gravis blocked with his saber and immediately unloaded the previously-stored attack. The attack destroyed the attacker until only ash remained. 'Another elder dead, another trump card gone,' Gravis thought.

At least Gravis regained another 20% of his lightning for a total of 60%. Sadly, his saber could only hold one loaded attack.

SHING!

Gravis had felt the fluctuation, but he was too slow to react. His whole left arm was cut off. Yet, instead of counterattacking, Gravis jumped back, quickly using 20% of the inherent Energy inside his body to regrow the arm. Yet, that wasn't enough! Nearly all the Life Energy inside his body was destroyed by the darkness that was infused into him, requiring Gravis to convert all his Energy into Life Energy.

He felt the attack and knew that it had come from Byron. With Byron's carefulness, he wouldn't have committed to such an attack if he wasn't sure that he could escape afterward. If Gravis attacked him now, he might waste the remainder of his lightning.

Gravis first wanted to take out the remaining two elders.

Clank! Clank!

Gravis got thrown back and blocked another attack. Yet, those attacks weren't as powerful as the previous ones. The elders had become more careful after the death of the third elder. They realized that any mistake could cost them their lives.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

Their attacks became more predictable but not as committed. Darkness cultivators weren't selfless people that gave their lives for a greater cause. Their own lives were more important than anything. Thus, none of the two elders attacked Gravis with any sense of commitment. They simply tried to be as careful as possible.

The fight dragged on like this for over an hour!

This was the most prolonged fight that Gravis had ever fought. Not because it was difficult, but because his enemies didn't give him any openings. 'Are they trying to exhaust my physical power?' Gravis thought.

No one had tried that tactic on him yet, but it seemed to work. On top of that, it was nearly impossible to foresee the attacks. The attacks came from spots so far apart that it should be impossible for the elders to get there. Gravis was sure that darkness cultivators had some kind of movement ability that they could use as long as they fought in the darkness.

He was constantly thrown back, and sometimes, when an unexpectedly powerful attack came, he became slightly injured. If he constantly used his full power to block, he would become exhausted quicker. Yet, the elders had more powerful bodies and took turns in attacking. Their stamina wasn't nearly as exhausted as Gravis'.

'This is bad! If this continues, I might actually die without having put up a fight!' Gravis thought. 'I haven't fought against someone that used this tactic before. I need to release, at least, 20% of my lightning with some added Spirit to kill one elder, but with their careful way of fighting, it's risky.'

After another couple of attacks, Gravis decided to change his way of fighting. As the next attack arrived, Gravis blocked it again, but surprisingly, the sound of clashing weapons was way quieter than before. Gravis had shown a blocking motion as a feint. Instead of actually blocking, he had let the elder throw his saber away. The elder's eyes widened in panic.

BANG!

Gravis released 40% of his lightning, killing the elder instantly. Yet, Byron seemed to have expected such a tactic from Gravis because before Gravis could retrieve his saber, it had already been absorbed into Byron's Spirit. Gravis was quite surprised by that since it had taken him only a split second to summon his saber. This meant that someone was continually trying to retrieve Gravis' weapon into their Spirit, and as soon as it had left Gravis' hand, they succeeded.

Only one elder and Byron were left, but Gravis had lost his weapon. Was that worth it? Definitely not! Gravis had fallen for Byron's trap. Gravis quickly searched the loot for another weapon but noticed that all the loot was gone. Byron had probably already absorbed all the loot that the dead disciples and elders had dropped. Like this, Gravis had no chance to use the weapon of someone else.

Whoosh, Whoosh!

Sounds of the air being cut could be heard as Gravis barely managed to dodge two daggers. Yet, because Gravis had no weapon to halt the remaining elder's advance, the elder continued attacking. The elder had seen that Gravis had no more weapons and attacked him with a flurry of attacks. The elder was

attacking Gravis like crazy, but Gravis managed to dodge every single attack. Without his Will-Aura slowing the elder immensely, and without the evasion training with his Spirit Seed, Gravis would have long since been hit.

Gravis tried to sidestep the attacks to hit the elder, but the elder swung in very wide arcs, making it impossible to get close. On top of that, it was always only one dagger that attacked. The other one was in a position between defense and attack. If Gravis showed an inkling of closing the gap, the dagger would stab forward.

On top of that, Gravis felt that both daggers were fully loaded. He could survive a normal stab with no problem, but an attack fully loaded with darkness would sap him of all his Life Energy. If he still had the inherent Energy in his body, he could refill his Life Energy. Sadly, he had used it all up before. On top of that, if one dagger hit, the second one would come too.

If Gravis closed in and managed to hit the elder, both daggers would bury into his body, basically ending his life. A trade of injuries, a tactic that Gravis had used a lot of times before, wouldn't work since a body with no Life Energy would become weak, old, and wither away. This was what made darkness cultivators so dangerous and good in assassinations.

Getting hit by someone with the fire element, for example, would be destructive, but not a sure death. The advantage of fire, on the other hand, was that it could be used from range. Instead, darkness had to be infused into the body of the enemy. Yet, if a darkness cultivator managed that, the death of their prey would be assured.

Gravis had his inherent Energy inside his body, which would allow him to resist one such an attack by converting that Energy into Life Energy. Anyone else would just straight up die in one hit. Sadly, right now, he would be just like anyone else. One hit, and he would immediately die. Every attack could end his life.

The elder seemed to become more aggressive as time advanced. He saw that Gravis couldn't resist for much longer and became more aggressive. After all, Gravis couldn't dodge forever. His attacks became more fervent, and it became more difficult for Gravis to evade. If there were a second elder attacking, he would have long since been hit.

Suddenly, Gravis lost his balance, and a dagger came down. Gravis' eyes widened, but it was too late. The dagger stabbed right into his torso as blood shot out of it like a fountain. Seeing that he had hit, the second dagger also buried itself into the torso. The elder grew excited as he saw the shocked expression of Gravis... which suddenly transformed into a smirk. 'I wanted to wait for Byron, but he didn't show up.'

Everything had happened too fast, and the elder hadn't noticed it yet, but the torso he stabbed did belong to Gravis... but the torso wasn't attached to Gravis' body. Suddenly, the torso got incinerated as a sphere of lightning burned it. The eyes of the elder widened in panic.

BOOOOOM!

The Lightning Bomb exploded, killing the elder in the process. Inside the explosion, Gravis stood there, uninjured.

What had happened?

Before coming here, Gravis had gotten an incredible idea. He could regrow his body with his Energy, but the cut-off body part wouldn't vanish. Gravis didn't know how his fight would go, so he had decided to be cruel to himself, just to be sure.

While he was still in the Lightning Sect, he had cut off multiple parts of his torso, regrew them, and cut off different parts. After being done, Gravis had another torso of himself. After infusing some Life Lightning into it, the cuts healed. Sadly, without a Spirit, it couldn't regrow any limbs.

So, after the elder had become reckless, Gravis had summoned the second copy of his torso in front of him. It was still his torso, but it was a second one, which wasn't attached to anything. Like this, he had caught the elder. Of course, he also quickly summoned his Lightning Bomb inside the torso. His body wasn't able to withstand the combination of Spirit, will, and Lightning, so it got quickly incinerated.

Yet, it had worked. The one-second build-up of the Lightning Bomb had been hidden. Thus, the elder hadn't been able to flee.

Sadly, by dodging so long and summoning the Lightning Bomb, Gravis' Spirit was nearly empty. His Lightning was also only at 30% of his total, thanks to him reabsorbing some of the explosion and killing the elder.

Gravis had no weapon, around 10% of his Spirit, and 30% of his lightning left, and his most dangerous opponent was still alive.

Byron!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 280: Preparations

"I am really impressed by your rapid growth," Byron said as he reappeared a hundred meters in front of Gravis. "I would have imagined that it would have taken longer for you to become that powerful."

Only Gravis and Byron were in this area. No living thing could be seen for kilometers. The ground, mountains, and trees had long been destroyed by the prolonged fight with the elders. Right now, it was only Gravis and Byron in a wasteland without any life. The only thing that could give one company was the darkness and cold wind.

Gravis looked emotionlessly at Byron. "Would you have ever expected that it would end like this when you decided to scam me?"

Byron sighed. "Initially, no," he confessed, "but after Old Man Lightning saved you, I have expected that something like this would happen. Though, I had expected that it would happen in, at least, five years."

Gravis continued looking evenly at him. "Actually, the opposite is true. It couldn't happen any later," Gravis said. "Right now, I am only 2% away from the Sapling Stage. In just two more weeks, this whole thing wouldn't even be dangerous for me anymore."

Byron's insides shook as he heard that. Then, he laughed a little. "And instead of waiting for that, you decided to use my Sect as tempering." Byron shook his head. "I can't imagine anyone that would be so crazy." Then, he looked with a complicated expression at Gravis. "But, I guess that's why you are growing so rapidly. Such a crazy growth requires an equally crazy attitude."

Gravis smiled a little. "Did you know that your best chance of killing me was directly after I entered the Illusion Array?" he asked.

Byron sighed. "Yes, but I was afraid that you were faking your infatuation. On top of that, if I were to strike you and you decided to blow up, I would be dead. I couldn't take the risk."

Gravis shook his head. "Even when I fought the elders, you kept yourself away."

"That was because of your Lightning Sphere. If I struck you and you managed to summon that, I would be dead," he said.

"And that's why you will lose today," Gravis said. "You have been so afraid of committing a mistake that you didn't act at all, allowing me to kill everyone around you. Now, you are alone. Was it really worth it to sacrifice basically your entire Sect to weaken me to this extent? Do you think it was necessary?"

Byron laughed a little. "But!" Byron shouted with a smirk, "you ARE exhausted and have no weapon. I think that outcome is more than enough. To be honest," Byron said as he looked at the Darkness Sect, "If I could choose again," then he turned back to Gravis, "I would act exactly the same. Exchanging the Darkness Sect to weaken you is worth it in my eyes."

"You really don't care that all your elders are dead, do you?" Gravis asked.

Byron laughed. "No. Everyone in the Darkness Sect is there to use it as a means to an end. No one has any loyalty toward it. Everyone wants to use everyone else to achieve their goals." Byron chuckled a little. "That's just how darkness cultivators are. Don't you already know?"

Gravis knew, but he just wanted to be sure. Hearing it directly from Byron was better than just assuming.

"Let's end this," Gravis said as he charged forward. He didn't use his lightning as acceleration since he had to be careful with it. After all, he didn't have much left.

Byron readied his two black daggers and also shot at Gravis. He had already noticed that Gravis could feel the fluctuations in the darkness. After a full hour of fighting, Gravis had learned to feel the bodies of the darkness cultivators. Being stealthy made no difference anymore.

As Gravis closed in, he swung at Byron from a distance. A leg appeared inside his grip as he threw it. Gravis had cut off way more than just a torso as preparation. He also had a lot of arms and legs inside his Spirit Space.

SHING!

Byron cut the thrown leg apart. He had expected something like this happening. Gravis came closer, and Byron took note of how Gravis positioned himself. He quickly readied himself and slashed at both of Gravis' outstretched hands.

SHIIIIING!

A small mountain of arms and legs appeared before Byron, surprising him. He knew that Gravis would have more body parts, but not that many! After cutting through many arms and legs, his strikes' power had been used up, leaving him open. Gravis quickly reached his torso and touched it. "Goodbye!"

BOOOOM!

All of Gravis' remaining lightning and Spirit were unloaded into Byron's torso. This was easily enough to kill him. Gravis had kept all these limbs as a secret to kill Byron. After all, he had never forgotten Byron while he had been fighting the elders. Byron was his most dangerous enemy, after all. Therefore, this trump card had been specifically saved for him!

Gravis absorbed some of his lightning back, but it was only a minuscule amount. Maybe not even 10%. On top of that, his Spirit was completely empty. Yet, even though Gravis was sure that this would have been enough to kill Byron, Gravis decided to jump back. That was because he had not felt any Energy entering his body. This could only mean that Byron was still alive.

Crack.

Gravis could hear a small thing cracking apart, and his eyes narrowed as he saw Byron stepping out from behind the lightning and dust, uninjured. Gravis had unloaded everything he had into him, but he wasn't even injured!

Byron chuckled. "Did you know," he said as he showed what was inside his hand. Gravis saw the small, broken Jade Token and knew what this was. He had seen it before. This Jade Token was identical to the one that the priest had used against Old Man Lightning! "I had to do dirty work for the Heaven Sect for 50 years to get one of these. This token is able to block one attack, and it was the reason why I wasn't worried by you. I knew that you only had one last attack left."

Gravis narrowed his eyes, but his breathing quickened. He knew that Byron had something to rely on, judging by the fact that he had attacked Gravis once, but he hadn't expected that it was this! "And even though you had that, you decided against attacking me earlier?" he asked.

Byron laughed louder now. "This token is worth more than the entire Darkness Sect. After all, only the High Priest can make these. This is like a second life! I'd rather sacrifice the whole Darkness Sect than waste this token." Then, Byron shook his head and shrugged, "but I guess I lost both, the Sect and the Token, now."

Then, Byron started smiling, "but that doesn't matter. Your Spirit is empty. Your lightning is empty. You are exhausted. You don't have a weapon. You are helpless now. It seems like I win again, Gravis. On top of that, without lightning, you can't even flee on that funny little board of yours."

Byron walked closer as Gravis lifted his hands in a defensive position. When Byron saw that, he chuckled some more. "Really? Even now, you think you can survive? Where is that coming from?"

After a couple of seconds, Byron stood in front of Gravis. They watched each other closely, and Byron laughed again. "I can't believe how happy I am right now! With your death, I have not only survived a calamity but also got some nice tempering. After this is over, I will be able to reach the Unity Realm! Here I thought that I had committed a grave mistake by scheming against you, but instead, you allowed me to temper myself."

Byron chuckled again. "Over the past year, the fear I had of you has tempered my will, something that I haven't felt for a long while. You know, I am really thankful that you were able to become so powerful. You allowed me to reach the Unity Realm."

Gravis didn't answer as he only looked at him with narrowed eyes.

Byron readied his daggers. "You can't believe how long I have waited for this moment," he whispered.

"Me too," Gravis said back as his face changed to fervent excitement.

Whoosh!

A saber appeared inside Gravis' hand. On top of that, the saber was also bursting with an incredible amount of lightning, Spirit, and, surprisingly, will.

The saber that Byron stole earlier?

That was a second saber! Gravis hadn't used his main saber at all!

This one was Gravis' real saber, and since it could withstand the Lightning Crescent without a problem, Gravis had preloaded a fully powered one in it. 70% of his full lightning storage and 100% of his Spirit were loaded into that single Lightning Crescent. This was the most powerful Lightning Crescent that Gravis could produce.

When Byron saw the loaded saber, his eyes widened.

Gravis struck down.

The Lightning Crescent shot forward.

At the last second, Byron's face changed from shock to a bitter and sad smile. "I guess I-"

BOOOOOOOOOM!

An apocalyptic lightning explosion with a radius of 500 meters appeared and destroyed everything in its vicinity. A gigantic crater formed as the shockwave destroyed everything for multiple kilometers around. If they had been any closer to the Darkness Sect, it would have become rubble.

The explosion vanished as quickly as it appeared while everyone could still see and feel the shockwave destroying the earth, many kilometers away.

Yet, Gravis only stood silently in the middle of the gigantic crater.

When he felt a massive amount of Energy entering his body, he knew...

Byron was dead.