

Lightning 341

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Chapter 341: Return and Another Goodbye

A gigantic portal opened in the middle of a humongous dark hall. Many other, smaller portals were lined along the wall of the hall. Every portal had a different color, and there were thousands of them. The hall itself was many kilometers wide, and mortals would take over an hour to jog from one end to another.

CRRR!

A big green bird came out of the portal. Skye quickly noticed that there was a floor right beneath her, so she extended her talons and stopped her flight. Her talons scraped across the ground due to her speed, but the floor was completely undamaged. Instead, her talons got ground down a bit.

Skye's and Gravis' eyes widened immediately in shock. Skye's eyes widened because of the imposing hall and the hard material, while Gravis' eyes widened because of the Energy he felt.

"How is there such an unreal amount of Energy?" Gravis asked involuntarily. When he had left for the lower world, he was sure that he hadn't felt such an overwhelming amount of Energy. The sheer volume of it was so overpowering that Gravis even felt it challenging to move. It was like the Energy in the air was pressuring his being.

'I never noticed that there was so much Energy in the air,' Gravis thought. 'I feel so suppressed that I probably can't even reach the sound barrier. How did I move with my weak body back then? I shouldn't have been able to move faster than a snail with so much Energy constantly pressing into me.'

Gravis' eyes shone. 'Cultivating in this environment would probably allow me to achieve breakthroughs in a matter of days.'

Whooom!

Suddenly, Gravis felt himself get disconnected from the Energy. Now, he felt like there was no Energy in the air. He couldn't even absorb it anymore. First, Gravis was shocked, but he quickly realized what had happened.

'Father has probably isolated me from the Energy,' Gravis thought and then sighed. 'I nearly thought about cultivating here. Like this, I would become more powerful, but I wouldn't be able to temper myself. It's better this way.'

"Alright, one returnee with a beast companion," one clerk that Gravis hadn't noticed before said as he wrote something down on a clipboard. The clerk stood around 50 meters away from them.

Gravis was surprised that he hadn't noticed the clerk at all. Yet, he quickly realized why that was the case.

'My Spirit can only reach a distance of ten meters? This is insane! First, the Energy suppressed me, and now my Spirit is also suppressed? How have I not noticed this before?' Gravis thought as he scratched his chin.

"Why is this weak human not afraid of me?" Skye transmitted to Gravis with confusion. She also felt a little bit insulted. This human felt identical to a mortal. She could crush him just by moving her wings a bit.

Before Gravis could answer, the clerk spoke up without looking away from his clipboard. "You're not in your lower world anymore, bird. I advise you to never underestimate anyone in this world. When you feel that someone has no power, it doesn't mean that they are weak, but that their strength is too powerful for you to notice."

Skye was surprised that the clerk had heard her message. She had only sent it to Gravis, so how could another human hear her?

"Skye, he's right," Gravis said. "This is the highest world, and even beggars can teleport. Someone that is able to work in here is surely more powerful than a beggar."

Skye received a culture shock as she tried to understand that.

The clerk nodded. "He's right. If you want to know, I am at the later stages of the Immortal Emperor Realm. If you consider the Body Tempering Realm as the first one, and the Unity Realm as the fourth one, I would be at the ninth one."

Skye's eyes widened even further, if that were even possible, while Gravis' eyes shone. 'So, the Immortal Emperor Realm is the ninth Realm? Finally, I have some frame of reference. Star Gods are obviously more powerful, so that should be the tenth or eleventh Realm then.'

"Anyway," the clerk said as a clipboard appeared before Gravis. "I need you to fill out this form if you want to take your companion outside."

Gravis looked at it but shook his head. Then, he looked at Skye with a sad smile. Skye also looked at Gravis with sad eyes. Then, Gravis looked at the clerk again. "That's not necessary. I've taken Skye from a lower elemental world to transfer her to a middle natural world," Gravis said.

The clipboard in front of Gravis vanished as the clerk nodded. "Makes sense. That makes things easier. Please move away from your companion," the clerk said.

Gravis jumped off and hugged Skye's beak for half a minute. After that, he stepped back. "We'll see each other again. I'm sure of it!"

Skye nodded back. "Don't get left behind, younger brother!" she transmitted with mirth.

Gravis also chuckled a bit. "Goodbye, big sister."

With that, Gravis walked away.

"Any preferences?" the clerk asked Skye.

"A world with lots of trees and a wide sky sounds good," Skye transmitted.

The clerk nodded again and looked through a book. After that, he found something and pointed to the wall, at a portal.

Whoom!

The portal flew forward and increased in size. After some seconds, it landed in the middle of the hall, and its size was big enough for Skye to step through. "Alright, you can enter. Wish you luck," the clerk said.

Skye and Gravis said their goodbyes. After that, Skye took flight, circled the hall once, and then shot into the portal. The portal shrunk and went back to its previous spot.

Gravis released a sigh. 'I really hope we'll see each other again, Skye,' Gravis thought with melancholy.

"That's four Immortal Energy Stones," the clerk said to Gravis, taking him out of his melancholy.

Gravis turned to him in shock. "I need to pay for that?" he asked.

The clerk snorted. "Of course. You think using a portal doesn't cost us anything? We have to build connections with the worlds. Do you have any idea how difficult that is?"

Gravis rubbed the back of his neck with awkwardness. "I guess that makes sense. What are these Immortal Energy Stones?"

"They are a resource to cultivate in the immortal Realms. That's Realms seven to nine for your info," the clerk explained like he had done that a million times, which was probably also true.

Gravis' eyes widened. "How am I supposed to get one of these? I just came from a lower world!" Gravis said.

The clerk waved his hand dismissively. "Eh, don't worry. You're a Research Adept now. Training ten classes of Research Assistants gives you one Immortal Energy Stone. So, in total, you only have to work for 40 years. Isn't working for a measly 40 years a good exchange for giving your companion a future?"

Gravis grimaced. If he had known that previously, he would have still gone through with the trade. After all, Skye was too important to him.

But 40 years? That's a long time. Though, 40 years was what people needed to reach the Unity Realm anyway. Yet, it still felt so long to him. Gravis released another sigh.

"Okay, I'll see what I can do," Gravis said.

The clerk nodded and wrote something down. "Anyway, now that that's out of the way, we should get back to our protocol," the clerk commented dryly as he looked at another clipboard.

"Name?" he asked.

"Gravis," Gravis answered.

"No, you're not," the clerk answered directly.

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Chapter 342: Bureaucracy

BANG!

"But I'm telling you, I'm Gravis!" Gravis shouted as he punched the desk in front of him, but the desk wasn't damaged in any way. By now, the clerk and Gravis had been at this topic for over ten minutes, and they had moved to the clerk's office.

"And I'm telling you that there is only one person named Gravis working as a Research Assistant. You don't look like him, you don't feel like him, and you don't have the Obsidian Ring on you," the clerk said back with annoyance. "I don't know what you're trying to accomplish, but it's not going to work!"

"Like I said, my cultivation has changed my look, and I lost the ring!" Gravis shouted back. This whole conversation was grating on his nerves. He hated it when people told him that he was lying. Gravis was pretty sure that he knew his own fucking name!

The clerk snorted. "Even if that were the case, Gravis has left only two days ago, which would be equal to about six years. How would you have reached the Unity Realm in only six years? On top of that, look at your ridiculously overtrained Will-Aura. How would you even do that in six years?"

"You're telling me that there is no way to reach the Unity Realm in such a short amount of time? Also, I went through a lot of tempering to get that Will-Aura, and it took me only six years! If I can achieve this Will-Aura in only six years, you can't tell me that there is no way to reach the Unity Realm in six years!" Gravis shouted back.

"Sure, there are ways to reach the Unity Realm in a short amount of time," the clerk said, "but all the lower worlds available to Research Assistants follow the Will-Forging Path. The fastest way to progress in that path is to remain at least ten years in the Spirit Forming Realm. Even with the help of pills, your Spirit still needs to adapt!"

Gravis clenched his fists in frustration. "Then how about I just tell you how I achieved it? You should be able to verify if that is possible or not!" Gravis shouted back.

The clerk shrugged. "Sure. Telling us everything you learned about cultivation is your job either way," the clerk said as he summoned a Jade Token, which floated over to Gravis. "Put it against your forehead and make your Spirit enter it for about five seconds. It automatically records everything you know about cultivation."

Gravis grabbed the Jade Token out of the air. Many people wanted to keep their cultivation a secret, but that was impossible for Gravis. After all, it was literally his job to gather and deliver the knowledge of a lower world.

Whoom!

Gravis put the Jade Token at his forehead and made his Spirit enter it. He felt his Spirit being filtered by the Jade Token, and after five seconds, it pushed his Spirit away. "There! Go check it for yourself!" Gravis shouted with annoyance as he threw the Jade Token back.

Pack!

A hand caught the Jade Token, but it was neither Gravis' nor the clerk's hand.

"There are things in here that no one should know," the Opposer said as he crushed the Jade Token.

Gravis looked with pleasant surprise at his father. "Father, long time no see," he said.

The Opposer looked at Gravis with a smile and nodded. "We'll talk later." Then, he turned to the clerk, who was sitting there in terror and with widely opened eyes. Did the most powerful being of the world just arrive right in front of him? He couldn't even process what was happening.

Another Jade Token appeared, as well as four shining, white stones. "This includes all cultivation techniques for this lower world, and these are the four Immortal Energy Stones that my son owes you," he said.

The clerk accepted both things with shock and reverence. "Th-Thank you, your exalted majesty," he said quietly.

And suddenly, the Opposer wasn't there anymore. It was like he had never been here in the first place.

Gravis looked with a smug grin at the clerk. "Convinced now?" he asked.

The clerk released a nervous sigh. "Yeah, okay. Sorry," he whispered as he started filling out the form. "Apparently, it really is possible. Who would've thought?" he muttered to himself. He wouldn't doubt the Opposer's words.

After some seconds, the clerk put the Jade Token on his forehead. A second later, he put it away again and frowned. "Eh, three outta ten. Pretty bad. But the information is very comprehensive and very detailed. Of course, that's to be expected from his exalted majesty," he commented.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "What do you mean with that?" Gravis asked.

The clerk seemed to be back in his usual, carefree, and boring mood. "We rate the cultivation techniques of the worlds on a scale of one to ten. We take the strength, ease of use, adaptability, speed, and potential into account."

"The strength of the cultivation techniques of that lower world is a little bit above average, but it's not easy to use. First, you have to create a separate Elemental Seed, and you also need to have a fitting temperament. This makes it nearly impossible for one person to cultivate more than one element. On top of that, the temperaments would clash."

Gravis' eyebrows rose in surprise. "Does that mean that the temperament restriction isn't an issue in other elemental cultivation methods?"

"Nope," the clerk said. "Many of them just suppress and use the element, while others make the element completely yours. That's a way more effective method to use the elements."

Gravis was a little surprised about that. "What about the other three criteria?" he asked.

"Adaptability refers to the possibility to change, modify, or remove the cultivation technique with the least amount of backlash as possible. It's also around average in that regard. Could be better, could be worse," the clerk narrated as he played with the Jade Token in his hand.

"Speed refers to the speed of progress in cultivation. Some cultivation techniques hinder progress, while others hasten it. Same like the previous criteria, it could be considered as average."

Gravis frowned. "So, everything up to now is average or slightly above average, with one thing being worse than average. Until now, it sounds like a five out of ten for me. I guess the bad factor is the last criteria?" Gravis asked.

The clerk nodded. "Exactly. With these Elemental Seeds, you create something new inside of you that still remains its own thing. Your power comes from this seed, but the seed isn't completely yours. After all, if it were yours, it wouldn't have a restriction on your temperament, would it? Having another arm doesn't force you to grab more stuff, does it?"

Gravis thought about this. He hadn't seen it like that before, but it made sense. "I'm guessing this will be a problem later down the line?"

The clerk nodded again. "In the Immortal Realm, you need to create a body that can resonate and harmonize with your Laws. Having something foreign inside you makes that pretty difficult. Yet, at that point, the Elemental Seed has already been part of you for a long time. Changing it will make it difficult and time-consuming," the clerk explained.

Gravis was confused. "Laws? What's that?" he asked.

"The understanding of the world. Water goes down. Hot air goes up. Lightning goes boom. All simple rules of the world, but the more complex mechanics are called Laws. If you understand and feel them, you can use them to become more powerful and grow. But that's not something you need to care about right now. Give it another two Realms," the clerk explained.

Gravis wanted to ask more, but he decided to ask his father instead of the clerk later. His father would probably explain it in a more comprehensive manner.

Seeing that Gravis had no more questions, the clerk put the clipboard away. Then, he summoned an emblem. "Here's your Research Adept emblem. Don't lose it, or you will be thrown out of the city for trespassing," he said as the emblem floated over to Gravis.

Gravis put the emblem onto his black shirt and nodded at the clerk. Then, he left the hall.

Meanwhile, the clerk released a nervous sigh as he slumped back into his chair. 'Man, I'm lucky that I don't do the round-up. If I did that, I would probably be dead right now,' the clerk thought with lingering fear.

When someone came back from the lower world and used a service that cost money, some of his colleagues would round up the sum. Like this, Gravis' four Immortal Energy Stones would have become five. Four would go to the company, while one would be pocketed.

Luckily for the clerk, he was one of the few honest clerks.

Scamming the Opposer's son?

That was an all-exclusive high-end express delivery to the afterlife.

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Chapter 343: Hidden Danger

Gravis exited the hall and saw his homeworld's sky for the first time in six years. It looked similar to the sky of the lower world, but there was one clear difference.

SHOO! SHOO! SHOO!

The sky above him was nearly invisible due to all the flying carts and cultivators shooting around. Above the city, the Sky Community resided. Everyone with a certain minimum of strength could fly around and trade in the Sky Community. This made the Sky Community technically a part of the city, but a humongous one. There was over ten times the number of people in the Sky Community than in the city itself.

One should remember that the teleporting beggars Gravis was talking about were the beggars in the actual city, not the Sky Community. These beggars were more powerful than the people in the Sky Community. That was evident by the fact that they were allowed to live inside the actual city.

Some people might find the prospect of being a beggar to be degrading, but one shouldn't be blinded by the beggar-status. Every single person actually residing in the city had supreme power. If even one of these people felt some pity for a beggar, they might throw something at them. Something that such a powerful person carried with them might be worthless to them, but an unprecedented treasure to the beggars.

Instead of looking down at the beggars, the people in the Sky Community were envious. They wished that they could have the strength to beg in the city's streets. This was the city where the Opposer resided, and he surely wouldn't pick some random spot to settle down.

This part of the world had the densest Energy out of everywhere else. The closer one got to the castle of the Opposer, the denser the Energy. That was due to two reasons. One, the spot was the absolute center of the world, and two, the Opposer pulled Energy to himself like a black hole.

It was common knowledge in the world that nearly all the Energy in the highest world was moving slowly to the Opposer. His attraction towards Energy was just ridiculous.

In the early days, people were afraid of being seen as stealing the Opposer's Energy, but over generations and generations of progressively more courageous people, they had noticed that the Opposer didn't care. They only had to keep a certain distance from his castle. Many lives had been ended by coming too close to the castle, which allowed them to judge the exact distance.

Due to this, the people created a city around his abode without him even ordering it. More people came due to the higher Energy, and they wanted to have buildings to live in. With more people came more buildings, which required more people to manufacture the buildings.

At some point, everything had been so overcrowded that a council for the city had been created, which established the rules. A minimum requirement for power had been put into place. After all, how dare some weaklings reside in such a prime spot? Someone stronger would simply beat them to death and take their place, which created an equilibrium for necessary power.

Legally, the Sky Community didn't have a minimum requirement for power, but the fact that it resided in the sky created a requirement for power by itself. After all, only people in the Unity Realm could fly.

Gravis watched the Sky Community for some minutes as he was lost in his memories. He remembered how he had watched the Sky Community together with Stella and sighed.

'Stella had been so powerful that she even managed to gain a spot for her family in the main city. If she flew to the Sky Community, everyone would make way for her in fear. Yet, she always only watched it together with me, never flying up,' Gravis thought with another sigh.

Gravis furrowed his brows as he looked up at the Sky Community. 'Heaven has created her with the goal in mind to hurt my father by hurting me. I guess she was a similar existence to the secret High Priest that created the Heaven's Trial, someone that becomes powerful just to die for one of Heaven's goals.'

Gravis shook his head. 'Such a life is tragic. Being destined to become powerful without a choice and then just dying. What's the point of becoming powerful if you will die in such a short amount of time?'

After some minutes, Gravis regained his usual calm and smiled a bit. "Well, now I can finally fly up there and join them," he said with a smile.

This had been something that had always been out of reach for him. He had always longed to fly together with the others, and today, he finally had enough power to join them.

Whoosh!

Gravis flew into the sky, but he was rather slow. The dense Energy in the air suppressed him, and his full speed was only equal to his full speed when he had been at the initial Stage of Spirit Forming without his Lightning Board.

In comparison to his top speed in the lower world, this was nothing. It actually took him over a minute to reach the lowest flying shop. The Sky Community had been farther away than he had expected.

Gravis looked down at the city, and for the first time, he noticed its ridiculous size. He guessed that some walls were at the edge of the city, but he couldn't even see them. Gravis guessed that the city was, at least, hundreds of kilometers wide.

'And everyone in this city is so powerful? That's a ridiculous amount of powerful people. I wonder how many Gods reside in this city. How many immortals reside in this city?'

Gravis was lost in wonder for some seconds.

"Oi, don't take up space, kid," a voice came from the shop beside Gravis.

'Kid?' Gravis thought and looked over. A young-looking man with fierce eyes looked at him. The person was in a bad mood, apparently. He was close enough that Gravis' Spirit could reach him, and Gravis took a deep breath.

'What is this unreal, supreme power that I'm feeling?' he thought with shock. The young man's aura was so mighty that Gravis felt helpless in front of him. He was 100% sure that he wouldn't be able to even survive a single slap.

"Oi, you deaf?" the guy said again. "Move!"

Gravis regained his bearings. "Oh, sorry," he said as he moved to the side where he didn't block the entrance for new customers. "I was stunned by the feeling of your power, senior," Gravis said politely.

The guy just snorted. "It's alright. The fact that you can even feel my power says good things about your strength, kid. But honestly, do you have a death wish?" he asked.

Gravis was a bit surprised. "What do you mean?"

The guy sighed. "Kid, you just reached the absolute bare minimum to fly up here. Everyone flying around here is way stronger than you. A single thought of some of the people here could kill you," he explained.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "There is no rule against killing someone?" Gravis asked.

The young man rolled his eyes. This kid really knew nothing. "It is forbidden to kill someone. If you kill someone deliberately, you will receive a heavy punishment, but if you do it accidentally, you only have to pay a fine."

Gravis rubbed his chin in thought. "And I guess that the fine is expensive, but not for everyone, correct?" he asked.

The young man nodded. "Smart kid," he said. "Most people don't want to pay the fine, but if some progeny from some powerful Clan or Sect arrives, they won't care about it. They have so much money that it oozes out of their every pore. They just charge through the Sky Community, and whoever dies, dies."

"But wouldn't that be deliberate killing?" Gravis asked.

The young man groaned again. "Kid, money is powerful. If you give the guard enough money, it suddenly becomes an involuntary killing instead of a deliberate one. Of course, the guards are also under supervision, so they can't break or bend the rules too much. As long as one can argue that they didn't target you, it can become an accident with enough money."

Gravis took a deep breath. The Sky Community looked so peaceful from the ground. It looked like a happy market where everyone was able to exchange their stuff. Gravis hadn't expected that such a peaceful looking place hid such danger.

"Thank you," Gravis said with an honest tone. This person might have actually saved his life.

"Eh, don't mention it," he said. "Anyway, wanna buy something?"

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Chapter 344: Scanner

Now, Gravis' interest was piqued, and he looked at what the guy had to offer. He was flying inside a wooden house with one floor. Keeping that whole thing floating probably needed some concentration. After all, a whole house, even if it was small and made out of wood, wasn't light. Gravis guessed that he would only be able to keep that thing floating for a couple of hours.

Gravis looked through the wares and saw some peculiar things. Artifacts, rings, weapons, and many different interesting things were displayed. Beside each object was a small sign that described the object in full detail. The writing was incredibly small, and mortals wouldn't even be able to see a letter.

Of course, people in the Unity Realm and stronger had powerful eyes and could also read with their Spirits. Apparently, that's how the sellers described their wares. After all, people who couldn't even read the writing probably also didn't have the money to buy the wares.

Gravis read through some descriptions and found something. "What's Nascent Nourishing?" he asked.

The seller rolled his eyes again. The kid didn't even know that? "Nascent Nourishing is the Realm above the Unity Realm. People also call it the Equalization Realm. I'm currently in the middle Stages of that Realm."

Gravis absorbed the knowledge like a dry sponge. Apparently, as soon as he had returned from the lower world, the restrictions that his father had put in place to keep cultivation secret had been lifted. 'I have a powerful will now, and seeing the distance of power won't make me despair anymore,' Gravis thought.

Gravis also finally learned the power of the seller. 'The middle Stage of Nascent Nourishing, huh? That's one and a half Realms higher than me. No wonder I feel like he could slap me to death. Even now, I feel nervousness inside of me by just standing near him. His power just feels overwhelming.'

Gravis scratched his chin in thought. 'I still can't feel the power of the people in the actual city, which makes them all many times stronger. I wonder how powerful those people are? I'm really only at the beginning of cultivation. Basically, every single person flying around here can slap me to death. If I didn't have such a powerful will, I might've become demotivated.'

"Oi, don't scare my customers with that ugly expression," the seller said, pulling Gravis out of his thoughts.

'Fuck, I really need to keep my thinking face in check,' he thought. "Sorry, I was lost in thought," Gravis said. "I noticed that you don't sell stuff at the middle or higher Stages of the Nascent Nourishing Realm. Is there a particular reason for that?" Gravis asked in interest.

The seller laughed a little. "You're a smart one, eh? You immediately noticed that," the seller said with a smirk. "Of course I have stuff for these Stages. I'm a tycoon, after all. Yet, I don't carry them with me," he said.

Gravis' brows furrowed. "Why? Wouldn't you earn more money by selling those?"

The seller laughed a little again. "Sure, I would, but I think you should be able to figure out the reason why I don't sell those. After all, I have told you all the rules that the Sky Community has to follow."

Gravis' eyes shone a little. "All the rules, huh? So, only killing is forbidden, and everything else is allowed?" Gravis asked.

The seller smiled and nodded. "Exactly! There is no rule against stealing or fighting, as long as no one dies. This means someone can just walk by and pocket my entire shop. That's why every shopkeeper only brings wares to sell that are only interesting for people, at least, one Stage lower than them. Some people at the same Stage as the seller might be interested in some peculiarity, but it's not worth the fight, most of the time."

"Interesting," Gravis said. "So you just don't carry stuff with you that could interest stronger people than you. That's how you are able to sell your wares. I'm guessing that you also don't carry such stuff in your Spirit Space?" he asked.

"Right," the seller said. "I keep all my stuff in a warehouse in my company," he said.

Gravis lifted an eyebrow. "Your company?" he asked.

The seller snorted. "Of course. Every seller has their own business. The people who can sell their wares here are smart and have established their place. Everyone is a smart businessman."

Gravis nodded. "Thank you for explaining that to me," Gravis said as he looked at the wares again. He also noticed some materials, pills, and even techniques. The available techniques were so numerous and varied that Gravis guessed that this one shop had more techniques than the entire lower world he had just left.

Just the cultivation techniques were very varied. He saw some elemental cultivation techniques and battle-techniques, faith techniques, consuming techniques, ritual techniques, and many other things.

As Gravis read the descriptions, he felt his horizons widen. 'There are so many methods to cultivate? Someone can use the belief of others as nourishment for their path? It's even possible to sacrifice the lives of weaker beings to gather and purify Energy. There are even techniques for enslavement and stealing someone's potential via sex.'

Gravis furrowed his brows. 'Some of them fill me with revulsion. It's like they are the absolute opposite of my lightning.'

"Hey! I said, stop making that face!" the seller shouted.

Gravis quickly shook his head. "Sorry," he said as he continued reading with interest. After a while, he found something that interested him. It wasn't a technique, but an object. Gravis pointed at it. "This looks interesting," Gravis said.

The seller saw what Gravis was pointing to and rolled his eyes. Of course, Gravis chose one of the cheapest things he had to offer. Well, the kid was only at the beginning of the Unity Realm, so he probably didn't have much money.

"Yes, as it says on the sign, it's a scanner. It has millions of plants, ores, and resources in its database. You just need to point it at something, and it will tell you what it is," the seller explained.

Gravis nodded. "How come it's so cheap?" he asked.

"The laws of our world are too overbearing, making the scanner very expensive to use. After all, it needs Energy. It's only a basic model. They are basically being sold everywhere. They have a lot of information, but it just takes too much Energy to use them."

Gravis scratched his chin. "Stronger people know more about their craft, so they wouldn't need the scanner, while weaker people can't even use it. That's why it's so cheap, right?" Gravis asked.

The seller nodded. "Yes, and the more advanced the material, the more Energy it needs," he said, but then smirked. "But aren't you the lucky one? It's actually perfect for you, isn't it?" he asked.

Gravis also smirked. "Right," he said.

Both of them knew why this scanner was perfect for Gravis. Gravis was wearing the emblem of a Research Adept, which meant that there was a high chance that he would go to a middle world next. The middle world didn't have such oppressive laws as the highest world. Therefore, the scanner would become many times cheaper to use. Yet, there was something else that Gravis wanted even more.

"What about an encyclopedia about resources? That way, I don't need to use a scanner," Gravis said.

The seller smirked. "If you want an encyclopedia that covers what the scanner knows, you need to go to the actual city. No one in the Sky Community has the guts to sell something like that."

Gravis furrowed his brows. "But isn't it just the same thing as what's recorded in the scanner? Shouldn't it be cheaper instead of more expensive?" he asked.

The seller laughed a little. "That's the thing. The scanner has been created to tap into a new market. It's impossible for anyone without a considerable amount of power to siphon the data out of the scanner. Therefore, the people who can't afford the encyclopedia can only purchase the scanner."

Gravis scratched his chin. "So, since knowledge has no production cost, you use something that is, theoretically, way more expensive to create a cheaper product. I'm guessing that there is an artificial scarcity for the actual encyclopedias?"

The seller's eyes sparkled. "Smart kid. That's exactly right! The company that makes the scanners doesn't want to make enemies with all the people who have bought the expensive knowledge. Yet, they still want to make money from the sea of weaker cultivators. With these scanners, they don't publicize the information but still give a cheap alternative for weaker cultivators. Smart, isn't it?"

Gravis nodded. This truly was smart.

"I don't have any hard currency, so I can only barter with some stuff that I have brought from the lower world," Gravis said.

"That's what I thought," the seller said. "Normally, I wouldn't even look at someone at the beginning of the Unity Realm, but I saw your Research Adept badge. The stuff from lower worlds is rather weak and cheap, but some lower worlds have an abundance of rare resources. You might have no wealth at all, or a lot of it."

Gravis nodded. "Makes sense. Let me just transfer to you an image of some of the things I have in my Spirit Space."

Gravis wasn't afraid that the seller would attack him. After all, this was the lowest shop in the Sky Community. Gravis only needed to fall a bit to enter the city's area. The seller wouldn't be able to follow him to the city.

Gravis sent a picture of some of the stuff he had looted from the High Priest, and the seller started smirking.

"You're a rich customer," he said with a smirk.

Gravis smirked back.

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Chapter 345: Trade Finished

Gravis smiled. "So, I can afford the scanner, huh?" he asked.

The seller nodded. "Yep. You can also afford something else that costs about as much. You have some pretty rare stuff there. Though, just because it's rare doesn't mean that it's useful. Rare resources from the lower world are the best materials for the Spirit Forming Realm, but nearly useless for the Unity Realm."

Gravis nodded. "I can understand that. Though, these premium resources for the Spirit Forming Realm are probably worth quite a bit for stronger people that want to get some equipment for their children, right?"

The seller laughed a bit. "Exactly, but I still need to travel quite a distance. I'm going to be honest here with you. I will sell these resources with a profit of ten times, but I have to travel to the relevant regions first."

Gravis lifted an eyebrow. "Ten times is quite a bit. It almost seems like you're trying to scam me."

The seller snorted. "The problem is that you can't find people interested in those items here. Everyone that's here either has powerful strength or a huge background. In order to sell this stuff, I need to travel to the outer fringes of the world. Do you have any idea how far away this is and how much it will cost me?"

Gravis sighed and shook his head.

"When I sell all your stuff, and I mean ALL your stuff, I would have only made a profit of two times. It's also a risk and time sink for me to travel to these regions and sell it. After all, supply is one thing, but we also need demand. That's how business works. What use are these resources if I can't find someone interested in it?"

Gravis sighed. Everything the seller said made sense. He had no way of finding out how much these resources were actually worth, so, even if the seller scammed him, Gravis had no other choice. He didn't have the luxury of time.

Also, he doubted that he would even have the resources to travel to the lands where such resources had a demand. He doubted that the teleportation department accepted every piece of rubble as long as it was worth something. They probably only accepted some kind of hard currency, and Gravis was pretty sure that he had none of that.

"Alright. I accept," Gravis said.

The seller smiled. "Good choice. Now, go choose something with similar value to the scanner, and then we can exchange."

Gravis quickly looked around, and he had found something else that was also quite interesting to him. "I'm taking that," he said as a ring floated over to him.

"Good choice!" the seller said with a smile. "As it says on the sign, this is a Life Ring. It can theoretically store any beast below the Immortal Realm, but it depends on if they willfully enter or are forced to. The deciding factor is your Will-Aura, which is incredibly powerful for your level, by the way."

Gravis looked at the ring. "So, if a beast enters willingly, I can just keep them inside as long as they are below the Immortal Realm?" Gravis asked.

The seller nodded. "Yes, but they can also exit whenever they want if they enter that way. If you want to force a beast into the ring, you need to activate the Formation Array. It will use your Spirit as a resource and your Will-Aura as suppression. In general, your Will-Aura needs to be one Major Realm higher than the beast's Realm."

The seller pointed at Gravis. "So, in your case, you should be barely able to capture a low-grade Unity Beast."

Gravis' furrowed his brows when he heard that. "But I only have a level three Unity Will. Wouldn't that still be considered to be inside the Unity Realm?" he asked.

The seller raised an eyebrow in confusion. "Level three Unity Will? What's that?" he asked.

Gravis realized that his knowledge about classifications for Will-Auras came from the lower world. His homeworld probably had a different classification system. "Sorry, that's the classification for Will-Auras from the lower world I came from. What's the classification here?"

The seller realized what Gravis meant. "Oh, no problem. The second condensation of a Will-Aura is called an Equalization Will because its main purpose is to unite and equalize your centers of power."

Gravis scratched his chin in thought. "Equalize? Does it have something to do with the Nascent Nourishing Realm, which you have also called Equalization Realm?" he asked.

The seller smirked. "Nice deduction. Correct, the Equalization Will is there to connect the centers of power and to shift the power around in them. It basically goes through two major Realms, the Unity Realm, and the Nascent Nourishing Realm."

Gravis furrowed his brows again. "But my Will-Aura is already compressed to about 0.1% of its initial size. Shouldn't I be near the end of the Equalization Will then?"

The seller laughed a bit and shook his head. "Kid, you're underestimating the possible compression of your Will-Aura. Your Equalization Will will continue to compress until it is only big enough to suppress the Spirit Space of someone else. You can see your own massive brain from your Spirit Space, so you should know how small your Spirit Space is."

Gravis thought about it and realized that the seller was right. The compression of his Unity Will didn't take the compression of the volume into account, but the radius. The radius was decreasing with the compression. So, the initial radius of Gravis' Will-Aura was 600 meters, which would become 0.6 meters if he compressed it fully.

Yet, the Spirit Space inside Gravis' brain was a bit smaller than a millimeter. He would need to compress it down to another three digits, to around 0.0006 meters, which would be 0.6 millimeters. When Gravis

finished his math, he realized that he was a small bit over the halfway mark of compression. There was still a long way to go.

"So, my Will-Aura is equal to a new Nascent Nourishing Realm cultivator then?" Gravis asked.

The seller nodded. "Yep, but that's only theoretically," he said, confusing Gravis again.

"What do you mean with theoretically?" Gravis asked.

"You don't need a powerful Will-Aura to reach the Nascent Nourishing Realm," the seller explained.

Gravis' eyes widened. "I don't?" he asked, shocked.

"Nope. It's one of the few Realms that don't need a Will-Aura. Most people call the Nascent Nourishing Realm also the Willless Realm, because you don't need to temper your will to reach it."

The seller sighed. "To be honest with you, your Will-Aura is even stronger than mine, even though I am already at the middle Stage of Nascent Nourishing. I'm kind of envious."

Gravis was, again, shocked. This powerful person that could slap him to death with ease had a weaker will than him? This felt almost unreal.

"Anyway, let's get on with the trade!" the seller said with a smile. Then, the scanner and the Life Ring flew over to Gravis. "Bring them into your Spirit Space first," he said.

Gravis knew why the seller would offer the wares first. He was the stronger of the two, and if he demanded payment first, he could just leave. He was giving Gravis the wares first to show his honest business attitude.

Whoop!

Gravis pocketed the two items, and the seller nodded. "Alright. Now, just summon these things. You don't need to worry about them falling due to their weight. I can hold them easily," the seller said as he transmitted a picture of the stuff that he wanted.

Gravis summoned everything, and for a short time, a massive pile of items appeared. Yet, just as they appeared, they vanished again. Gravis hadn't even seen them before they were already gone. The seller had exquisite control over his Spirit.

Like this, Gravis' Spirit Space was nearly empty. He could only see his two nearly broken sabers, his two new items, Heaven's body, and some scattered miscellaneous items that the seller wasn't interested in.

Whoop!

The shop vanished. "Alright. I'm heading off to sell your stuff. This should be faster than waiting here forever for another customer. It was nice doing business with you, kid," the seller said.

Gravis was surprised that the seller immediately closed his shop as soon as their trade was finished, but he didn't mind it. "Sure. Thank you," Gravis said.

The seller waved once more and then shot off into the distance. He was definitely much faster than Gravis.

Now, Gravis was alone again. He looked once more at the Sky Community, but after knowing that it hid such danger, he decided against going there. It was time to visit his parents.

With a smile, Gravis lowered himself to the city again.

"HALT!" an imposing shout appeared as a guard from the city teleported in front of him. "Your Realm is too weak to enter the city!" the guard stated.

Gravis blinked his eyes in surprise a bit. "I'm a Research Adept. I'm allowed into the city," he said.

"Show your emblem as proof," the guard said.

"What do you mean, show my emblem? It's right here..." Gravis said, but then he opened his eyes wide in shock.

His Research Adept emblem was gone! It was not on his body and also not in his Spirit Space!

Gravis immediately looked in the direction where the seller left. No wonder he had been so friendly and forthcoming in his trade. He was never interested in his wares.

That dick was only interested in stealing his emblem!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 346: The Outside

Gravis' rage grew as he realized what had happened. He hadn't thought about it, but wasn't it weird that some seller, over a major Realm stronger than him, would patiently answer all his questions? He had initially believed that the seller only wanted to appear friendly so that Gravis would continue buying stuff from him, but that had been wrong apparently.

Gravis sighed. "I'm sorry. My Research Adept emblem has been stolen by someone," he said.

"I know," the guard said. "I saw it. He stole it right when he pocketed your resources."

Gravis' grew frustrated again. If the guard saw it, he could have probably also stopped it. Sadly, it wasn't against the rules to steal other people's stuff in the Sky Community, and Gravis had nothing to do with the guard. He couldn't expect the guard to stand up for him. After all, Gravis probably also wouldn't care if he saw that happen.

Gravis would just think that this would be a great learning experience for the victim, but now, he was the victim. Gravis sighed again. 'Maybe I should really look at it as a learning experience,' he thought in defeat. 'Strength is everything, and if I can't protect my belongings, I probably don't deserve to keep them.'

That outlook was cruel, but in this world, it was a sad reality. It might be a wrong outlook for mortals, but for cultivators, it showed the cold truth. If he didn't have the power to protect his life or belongings, he would die or lose them.

"Anyway, since you've seen that it was mine, can you let me enter? You should know that I'm a Research Adept," Gravis said.

The guard shook his head. "Sorry, it's against the rules," he said.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "What do you mean with, against the rules? You know that I'm a Research Adept, and Research Adepts are allowed into the city, right?"

The guard shook his head again. "Wrong. People with a Research Adept emblem are allowed into the city, not Research Adepts. There is a difference."

Gravis grew more frustrated. "This is bullshit! Doesn't that mean that our city will lose Research Adepts and gain new people that aren't interested in going to middle worlds? That seems incredibly stupid!" Gravis shouted.

The guard sighed. "I know," he said, surprising Gravis. "It's a shit rule in my opinion too, but I have to enforce it if I don't want to lose my job. Do you have a powerful connection in the city that can help you enter? People at the Immortal King Realm can bring people into the city."

Gravis nodded. "My father should be enough. My father is the Opposer," Gravis said.

The guard looked with skepticism at Gravis. "I don't see the Obsidian Ring on you," he said.

Gravis' clenched his fist in frustration. He really didn't want to say it, but he had to. "I lost it," he said.

The guard looked like he had expected the answer. "Mhm, that's quite inconvenient, isn't it? First, you lose your Research Adept badge, and then you lose your Obsidian Ring, eh? Was that stolen too?" he asked.

Gravis sighed. "No," he said through gritted teeth. "I lost it in the lower world," he said.

"Mhm, sure," the guard said sarcastically. "And I guess all your other powerful connections are not available at the moment, are they?" he asked.

"Orpheus is my brother. He has a high position in the research department. He can vouch for me," Gravis said.

The guard nodded a couple of times with sarcastic enthusiasm. "Great! Then contact him. After all, nearly everyone has a Telepathy Talisman. It shouldn't be an issue to contact him, would it?" he asked with a mocking tone.

Gravis' frustration grew as he clenched his teeth. "I don't have one of those," he said.

The guard had a mocking, shocked look on his face. "Oh no, what happened? Your Research Adept emblem was stolen while you lost your Obsidian Ring? Did you maybe sell your Telepathy Talisman, or was that stolen or lost too?" the guard asked, 'concerned'.

Gravis narrowed his eyes. "I never had one in the first place."

The guard looked with a mocking, defeated look at the sky. "That sucks, man. Everything that can prove that you can enter the city has been stolen or lost. You really have some shitty luck, huh?"

Gravis snorted. "You can call it shitty luck if you want," he said.

The guard also snorted. "Anyway. Enough playing around. You can't enter the city." Then, the guard's eyes narrowed. "On top of that, you have tried to impersonate one of the princes, which is a crime," the guard said.

Gravis looked with narrowed eyes at the guard. "And what's the punishment for that?" he asked, unamused.

The guard noticed that Gravis wasn't nervous at all, which made him hesitate. What if Gravis really was one of the princes? "Normally, you would be put to work for 20% of your Realm's expected lifetime, but since I saw your emblem being stolen, I'll overlook this fact this time. Yet, I can't let you go without some repercussions," the guard explained.

Gravis lifted one of his eyebrows unamused. "Which are?" he asked.

"You will be transported to the city's outside. Whatever happens, is up to your strength and luck."

Gravis wanted to ask what the guard meant, but he felt himself unable to move. Then, he felt an incredible amount of Energy gathering around his body, and around a second later, Gravis vanished.

Whoop!

And reappeared somewhere else. This was Gravis' first time being teleported by someone else. He had been teleported to the lower worlds for his practical exams and for his journey, but that was done by Formation Arrays. A person had never teleported him from one place to another. He didn't even know if that was possible.

Gravis looked at his new surroundings and grew shocked. Behind him was a humongous wall. It was so big that Gravis felt like it was splitting the world in two. He couldn't see its top, and it looked like it stretched into infinity.

The wall was completely black and seemed to be one solitary object with no gaps. The sheer size of it made Gravis feel like an ant.

One half of his world seemed to be comprised of the wall, while the other half was the outside of the city. Gravis had never left the city, so he had no idea how the outside of the highest world looked. Now, he was able to look at the city's surroundings for the first time in his life.

Yet, they were rather plain. He saw grass and trees. Yet, there was a suspicious absence of beasts or even insects. On top of that, the trees and grass looked too ordinary. He could see none of the towering trees or aggressive plants that he had expected. There was also no human or settlement around. It was just pure nature as far as the eye could see.

'Isn't the highest world the strongest one? Why does everything look so quiet and peaceful?' Gravis thought in suspicion. The surroundings were tranquil, and the only thing Gravis could hear with his powerful hearing was the wind.

He didn't hear birds, insects, or even the rustling of trees. Only a mild wind blew, but the grass and trees remained absolutely still. It was almost like the wind didn't exist for them.

When Gravis saw that, his eyes narrowed. 'If the wind does not even affect the grass, it probably means that this is no simple grass. It might not look like it, but the grass is probably so dense and hard that the wind doesn't have enough power to influence it. I shouldn't touch it for now,' Gravis thought.

He had been flying before he had been teleported, and he had appeared a couple of kilometers in the air. He was nowhere near the ground, which relieved him. The plants and grass definitely weren't simple. After all, they could grow here, at the closest spot to the center of the world.

He remembered that his father had told him that even the weakest beasts in the surroundings were stronger than the strongest person in a lower world. If such powerful beasts fought, they would probably destroy a lot of territories. The fact that this grass still grew here without any issues showed that it was extraordinary.

Rustle, rustle.

Gravis saw the trees and grass in the distance rustling. It was like a wind was blowing outwards, making the grass and leaves sway. When Gravis saw that, he narrowed his eyes and started flying upwards as fast as he could. His Spirit didn't reach that far into the distance, but he knew what that was.

The swaying of the grass grew closer at an incredible speed. It looked like wind, but Gravis was sure that this was no wind. That was a shockwave!

Gravis charged to the sky as fast as he could, but the shockwave was faster. The gentle swaying of the grass hid its power. It looked like a peaceful wind, but Gravis knew better. As he gained height, his nervousness grew.

In a couple of seconds, he felt a minuscule tremor going through the massive wall. The tremor was so small that no mortal could notice it, but Gravis was able to feel it just barely with his Spirit. 'How powerful is this shockwave that it even manages to affect the wall?' Gravis thought.

Gravis immediately transferred as much as he could into his body to harden it.

Then, the shockwave arrived.

BANG! BANG!

Gravis was hit, spat out a mouthful of blood, and hit the wall. Many of his bones broke, but he was still alive. He immediately healed himself with about half of his Life Lightning and continued flying upwards.

Or at least, he would have, if he hadn't noticed the grass in the distance swaying more and more. Gravis realized that this was not the only shockwave.

It was only the first of many!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 347: Grass and Ground

Gravis was trapped in a perilous situation. He had to harden his body to survive these shockwaves, but with this strengthened body, it would become too heavy to lift. If he wanted to escape the area, he would need to lighten his body, but then, a single shockwave would reduce him to dust. But if he strengthened it, he would fall! After all, there was no gap in the wall to keep him steady.

Gravis quickly realized that there was only one way to survive. If he remained in the air like this, he would die. So, Gravis decided to shoot towards the ground.

BANG!

Another shockwave arrived, but with Gravis' previous experience, he was able to protect himself better. Instead of being hit across his whole body, he angled himself so that his feet were pointing at the shockwave.

If the power came from a fall, it would be better to distribute his body's weight onto a broader surface, but the power came from the air. The smaller the affected area, the better for him. The shockwave hit his feet, making some of his muscles tear, but he was able to stop himself from crashing into the wall with his arms. Of course, his arms also took some damage.

Fortunately, since the majority of the force went into his feet and arms, he could slightly bend them to reduce the force. Like this, Gravis continued falling, tanking one shockwave after the other. In the intervals between the shockwaves, Gravis lightened his weight to slow his fall with his Spirit. He had no idea how hard the ground was, so he wanted to be careful.

After around half a minute, Gravis touched the ground gently. He was directly beside the wall, and the grass didn't touch it. The grass grew about ten meters away from him, barely being inside his Spirit's range.

'What powerful grass,' Gravis thought in shock. 'It's harder than even my fully strengthened body. On top of that, since it's so small, it doesn't feel much of the shockwave. The other grass also filters the shockwaves further. This makes it so that every piece of grass only has to feel a slight amount of the shockwave. That's how it's able to grow in this environment.'

Yet, Gravis found another huge problem. 'Since the wall is perfectly vertical, the shockwave travels down and up along the wall. Since I'm at the wall's foot, parts of the shockwave also hit me from above now.'

Gravis was smart, but he couldn't foresee every development. He had simply not thought about the wall when he was falling.

Yet, there was also something positive. 'Since the grass is slightly stronger than my body, I should be powerful enough to dig into the ground.'

With that thought, Gravis took out his Void-Stone Saber and started digging into the ground, but it was hard. With his fully strengthened body, he had to use nearly all his force to dig. Yet, it was still difficult. A saber wasn't a good shovel, and progress was slow.

The shockwaves also continued, injuring Gravis further, and Gravis had to concentrate on staying alive. After a while, Gravis saw that his efforts bore nearly no results. It would take too long to make a hole for himself. 'On top of that, the shockwaves will probably become more powerful later. Two powerful beasts are probably fighting, and these are only the shockwaves from the beginning of the fight. If they get serious, they will become many times stronger. I need something else.'

Gravis noticed that the shockwaves moved the dirt around a bit, and some of the surrounding dirt was pushed into his created hole again. That opened up a completely new possibility for him.

Gravis' eyes shone as he started digging directly at the wall. Since the shockwaves traveled down along the wall, they should also enter the small hole directly at the wall. After that, the shockwave needed an

outlet for its power since more of its power was continuing to push down. The shockwave was unable to destroy the wall, so it could only push on the ground.

As Gravis dug, he also realized another problem. Summoning the dirt into his Spirit Space wouldn't work. The roots below the ground were alive, and the dirt they touched was infused with their will. He could only pocket the dirt that he had dug away.

To top it all off, since every piece of grass was at the Unity Realm, Gravis would probably only be able to get one piece of grass into the Life Ring. Yet, that would probably waste nearly all his Spirit.

Luckily, his plan paid off. The shockwave entered the small hole and started pushing the dirt to the side. It was quickly getting bigger. Sadly, it was only getting wider but not deeper. When he saw that, Gravis' gritted his teeth.

'I'm running out of options! I can only try my lightning now!' he thought. Using his lightning was risky. After all, his body's stamina was nearly limitless, but every use of his lightning would use up a considerable amount of it.

BZZZZ! BOOM!

Gravis threw a Lightning Bomb into the hole, and it quickly exploded. Sadly, the result was that the hole only grew deeper by a couple of centimeters. Gravis didn't have enough lightning to create a hole deep enough for him like this.

Yet, Gravis' eyes widened in surprise. Energy entered his body at a rapid rate. 'Fuck! I totally forgot about the high Energy density! Since I'm disconnected from the Energy, I forgot about it!'

Then, Gravis' turned around and looked away from the wall with shining eyes. 'On top of that, this Energy doesn't all come from the atmosphere,' Gravis thought as he saw that some pieces of grass had been transformed into dust.

The grass was hard and great at resisting shockwaves, but lightning was something different. The lightning had entered their roots and had traveled along with them, destroying some pieces of grass. When they died, the Energy in their bodies came back to Gravis.

When Gravis saw that, his eyes shone.

Whoop!

Immediately, he pocketed as much earth as he could into his Spirit Space. There were no more roots in his immediate surroundings, so he was able to pocket quite a lot of it. Yet, the hole was still not big enough for him to fit in.

'Well, if I regain Energy that quickly, I can stop being frugal.'

BZZZZ! BOOOOOOM!

Gravis summoned a Lightning Bomb with nearly his full power and chucked it into the hole. It immediately exploded, making the hole nearly 20 centimeters deeper. By now, it was around half a meter deep.

Gravis saw a lot of grass dying and pocketed as much earth as he could again.

BOOM!

Gravis spat a mouthful of blood as he was pushed to the wall again. He had been lying on the ground the whole time to resist the shockwaves, but this one had been way more powerful. His Life Lightning had also run out by now.

'Fuck, the shockwaves are becoming more powerful. I need to hurry!'

Gravis pocketed more dirt and gritted his teeth. 'I wanted to make a hole where I could sit in, but it seems like that won't be possible. Well, I can only do this!'

The hole was not that deep but very wide and angled like a slope. When the shockwave entered it, it would push the dirt outward, away from the wall. Due to that force, it had created a slope that allowed the shockwaves to exit the hole.

Gravis quickly crawled inside and then summoned his pocketed dirt above him. He summoned the dirt to create a slope, but this one was above the ground and angled so that the shockwaves wouldn't hit him.

The shockwaves from the front would travel upwards while the shockwaves from the top would travel away from the wall. Like this, Gravis waited inside his hole.

PUCHI!

Only to get impaled by a root. The tiny root started absorbing his Life Energy, but Gravis immediately summoned his lightning. The root was destroyed, but others quickly took its place. 'The grass is treating me like fertilizer!' Gravis realized.

Luckily, for once, there was enough Energy around to keep his lightning topped up. Every root that came near him was spotted by his Spirit and promptly destroyed.

This whole situation continued for nearly an hour.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 348: Dangerous Roots

The hour had been very dangerous for Gravis. The root from the grass had absorbed around 50% of his Life Energy and had created a hole in his body that just wouldn't stop bleeding. His Life Lightning had run dry, so he couldn't even fix the hole in a short time. On top of that, the blood he had lost due to the shockwaves and the hole had soaked the ground around him.

The blood was an excellent fertilizer for plants, so more and more roots came for him. Gravis was using over 50% of his lightning every minute to eradicate them. If there weren't such a high Energy density, Gravis would have died long ago.

To top it all off, he also couldn't create a Lightning Bomb in here. Such a powerful explosion would throw all the dirt away that was on top of him. By now, the shockwaves had become incredibly powerful. Gravis didn't feel them with his body thanks to the slope of the dirt, but his Spirit felt the

effects. As soon as his Spirit went above ground, it would be completely annihilated. He knew that he would instantly die if he touched the shockwaves.

Gravis had felt nervous when he had been above ground, but now, he genuinely felt that his life was in danger. He could deal with the roots of the grass, but what about stronger plants? Fungi had most of their body underground, and one would generally say that a mushroom was more powerful than some grass.

And sure enough, after some minutes, a much more powerful root had appeared. Most of Gravis' lightning had been focused on dealing with it, but the only thing it did was retreat every time. He wasn't able to damage it in any significant way. The other roots also didn't stop coming. On the contrary, they were becoming more and more. His blood was just too appetizing.

'This root is troublesome!' Gravis thought. He was lying unmoving below the ground, almost like he had been buried. Evasion was obviously not an option, and if even the grass was able to penetrate his body easily, this root would just annihilate him if it touched him. After all, it was many times more powerful.

Luckily, Gravis' new lightning was doing wonders. He had gained that lightning from absorbing Heaven's lightning, and it was way more powerful than his previous Destruction Lightning. The root seemed to fear it somewhat, and it couldn't deal with it.

Whenever the root touched the lightning, some of it would break off. Sadly, that broken off part would heal just as quickly. Gravis felt like a shark was swimming around him, estimating if the potential gains were worth the trouble. It really wanted to absorb him, but the lightning was also really troublesome.

Gravis grew incredibly frustrated because he knew he could annihilate the root with a Lightning Bomb, but that would also expose his body to the outside for a bit. If he did that at the wrong time, the shockwaves on the top would annihilate him.

This was a scary situation since Gravis couldn't use his most powerful advantages. He mostly evaded attacks and then killed his enemies with incredible force. He couldn't use either of those in this situation.

'Elemental Synchronicity would be perfect in this situation,' Gravis thought, but he didn't really wish for it. He believed that his current path was better than his lost Elemental Synchronicity. Without his peculiar immunity to lightning, Heaven would have easily annihilated him with its powerful lightning strike.

The time passed by slowly, and after an hour, the grassroots had become fewer. Gravis had eradicated most of the grass, and above ground, one could see a clean area. Gravis had killed multiple square meters of grass.

Yet...

'This fucking root!' Gravis thought in rage. It just didn't give up! It came again and again. It just wouldn't leave him alone! Gravis had been dealing with it for over an hour, but it just kept on coming! To top it all off, it started becoming more and more daring.

By now, Gravis needed to hit it thrice with his lightning to shoo it away. Gravis was still able to deal with it, but that quickly changed as three other roots came towards him. Gravis felt the will of the roots and found out that all these roots came from the same plant.

Gravis gnashed his teeth. 'It's really committed now. Not long, and it will probably go for the kill. Trying to keep it at bay won't work for long anymore, but I will be reduced to ashes by the shockwaves if I use a Lightning Bomb. There is only one last thing I can do. It might be risky, but there is no other chance!'

Whoop!

Gravis summoned the Life Ring. 'You might have a powerful body, but that doesn't mean that you're not in the initial Stages of the Unity Realm! After all, beasts and plants have much more powerful bodies!' he thought.

Then, he strengthened his Spirit to its maximum. His body was weak during that timeframe, and all his concentration was on the ring. If anything unforeseen happened, he would die. His Spirit entered the Life Ring, and he willed it to absorb the root.

The Life Ring shone, and the roots stopped. Yet, only for a short period of time. After that, they started to very slowly extend towards Gravis. Meanwhile, Gravis' eyes started becoming bloodshot as he used all of his Will-Aura to focus on the ring. It was like he was back at the time when he was trying to connect his centers of power. His Spirit was also quickly being drained.

The roots slowly came closer, but Gravis didn't move. He kept concentrating on the ring.

Then, the roots touched his body. Gravis kept concentrating his will on the Life Ring. This was his only chance!

Yet, instead of stabbing into his body, the roots crawled along it, towards the Life Ring. Gravis didn't dare to become excited. One small interval of losing focus would allow the roots to kill him. Slowly, the roots touched the Life Ring and entered it.

Whooom!

As the roots entered the Life Ring, Gravis saw a whole network of them coming closer to his body. There were more and more. The initial four roots were nothing in comparison to this vast network. It was almost like a whole Spirit Tree was below the ground.

After several minutes, Gravis' Life Ring had absorbed multiple kilometers of the roots until a 100-meter-wide sphere of roots appeared. Gravis knew that this was the core of the roots. Sure enough, it was a humongous fungus.

As Gravis' Spirit ran dry, he absorbed the core of the fungus. After that, the remaining roots shot into the Life Ring at ridiculous speeds. In nearly no time, everything was absorbed, and Gravis took a deep breath of dirt.

'Cough, cough,' and immediately coughed. He didn't need air to survive, but he had taken that breath out of reflex. Luckily, his body quickly expelled the dirt. Then, Gravis closed his eyes to relax. 'I survived,' he thought as he felt calm again. He only had 10% of his strengthened Spirit remaining.

By now, no more roots came towards him. The shockwaves were still going crazy above him, but Gravis was safe. Now, he only had to wait. And wait, he did.

For three whole days.

'You done yet?' Gravis thought in frustration. The shockwaves were still going on, and they continued unabated. Yet, Gravis felt no feeling of danger anymore. He was used to the situation. His body was back to full health, and everything was topped up again.

"Hey," Gravis said. "I know that you wanted to teach me a lesson and to offer me some tempering, but it's getting boring now. My Will-Aura has already stabilized and became stronger again."

Whoop!

And like that, Gravis vanished, and reappeared inside his father's room.

Gravis took a deep breath and sighed. Finally, he was above ground again. He stretched his body a bit and looked at his father.

His father was sitting in the middle of his room, like always. Every time Gravis came into his room, he would just sit there.

His father opened his eyes and looked at Gravis with narrowed eyes. Gravis wasn't intimidated since that was how his father always looked. Ever since he could remember, Gravis rarely saw a different expression on his father's face.

"Welcome back, Grassis," his father said.

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Chapter 349: Philosophical Truths

"Grassis?" Gravis asked with a lifted brow. "Is that a joke?"

The Opposer looked at Gravis with his steely gaze. "Yes," he said coldly.

Gravis was first a bit confused, but then he started laughing. "Okay, it might not be funny, but your delivery is spot on," Gravis said. His father's blunt and cold delivery somehow made the shitty joke funny.

The Opposer stood up and walked over to his son. "Welcome back," he said, this time with a smile.

Gravis also smiled. "Thank you, father."

"Come, sit with me," he said as he sat down again. Gravis followed and also sat down.

Whoop!

Two cups appeared out of thin air, and Gravis immediately smelled what was in them. It was something that he had dearly missed. Gravis took the offered cup and smelled it more closely. "Coffee," he said with a sigh. "But it smells a bit differently."

"Yes," the Opposer said, "because this is a new blend. After all, you're no longer a mortal. You're as strong as grass now," the Opposer said with a smirk.

Gravis rolled his eyes. "Haha," he said sarcastically, "but I guess you're right. I wouldn't have expected that even just grass would be this powerful," he said while sipping from the cup.

The nostalgic taste assaulted his tastebuds, but that was not all. Gravis felt parts of the coffee enter his Spirit Space. Surprisingly, the coffee fused with his Self in the Spirit Space, and Gravis felt awake and refreshed.

Seeing Gravis' astounded expression, the Opposer smiled. "You're not a normal cultivator, so I had to invent this new kind of coffee. Otherwise, you wouldn't feel a thing."

Gravis was a bit surprised that there was a drink that could affect his peculiar Spirit. After all, his Self in his Spirit Space was comprised of lightning. How would anything be able to affect it? Yet, he quickly remembered who his father actually was. Something like this probably wasn't difficult for him.

It felt refreshing to actually drink something that affected his Spirit. The Spirit Wine hadn't worked back in the Lightning Sect. Gravis didn't care about that, but he had feared that he also wouldn't feel the effects of coffee or tea anymore. Luckily, his father found a way around this.

"To come back to your earlier comment," the Opposer said, "only the grass surrounding the city is this powerful. That's because of the Energy density and the constant struggle for survival. After all, one fight between some beasts is deadly for grass."

Gravis remembered something. "Speaking of, what were these shockwaves? I'm assuming that two beasts fought against each other?" Gravis asked as he took another sip.

The Opposer nodded. "Two beasts of the same faction had a scuffle and fought against each other about 1700 kilometers away from you. Such a scuffle can take up to a year if they are pretty close in power," he said.

Gravis' eyes widened in shock. "1700 kilometers away from me, yet the shockwaves were still so powerful?" he asked with a shocked voice.

The Opposer nodded. "Yes. You should remember where you are," he said.

"The highest world?" Gravis asked.

The Opposer shook his head. "Yes, but I'm referring to a more specific place. You're in the Central Plains, where the Energy is the densest in the entire world. Only the most powerful beasts and cultivators live here. You can't find any mortals for millions of kilometers, except the ones that are protected by their powerful family."

Gravis nodded. "That makes sense," he said and stayed silent for some seconds. "Father, could you tell me more about our world?" he asked.

"Sure," the Opposer said. "Your will is powerful enough that seeing the wider horizon won't affect you anymore. If I told you these things earlier, you might see the vast gulf in power and think that you would never reach it."

Gravis nodded. "I understand," he said.

The Opposer finished his cup and refilled it. "Our world was the first world. Back then, meaning before I became this powerful, there were no other worlds."

Gravis' eyes widened. "No other worlds?" he asked. He had assumed that all the worlds had been created at the same time.

His father nodded. "Yes. There was only this world. The old bastard only decided to create the other worlds to expedite the gathering of Cosmic Energy after he saw that I became a threat. After all, he and I still become stronger, and he needed an edge over me," the Opposer explained.

Gravis' felt his horizons widen. Cosmic Energy? The Opposer and Heaven were still becoming more powerful? He had expected that both of them had already reached the peak. "What's this Cosmic Energy?" Gravis asked.

The Opposer stayed silent for a couple of seconds. "I can't tell you all the details since that would maybe motivate the old bastard to move against you, but I can tell it to you in more general terms."

"Every world is created inside something that I call the Chaos Void. There is no official word for it since I'm the only being that had ever been there," he explained.

Gravis' felt his heart race. His father was about to tell him something that only he knew. Probably no one else, except for maybe some members of his family, knew this.

"It's basically an endless conglomerate of chaotic forces with no pattern. To put the forces at play into perspective: Every other being that would go there would die immediately. Only the old bastard and I can survive out there."

Gravis couldn't imagine the power of the forces at play.

"Energy is part of the Chaos Void, and that's where the Energy in the world comes from. The world is able to filter the Energy out of the forces, but it doesn't have enough attraction to pull in more than just a little bit," he explained.

"That's where the cultivators come into play. Try to imagine the world as a spherical filter inside an ocean. The filter only allows water to enter the sphere but not exit it. Obviously, the sphere has the same density and pressure inside as outside, right?" the Opposer asked as he drank more coffee.

Gravis nodded. "Right, and in order to get more water into it, the water inside the sphere needs to be compressed to make room for more. After all, you said that no water could exit it," Gravis said.

The Opposer nodded. "Exactly. The water is obviously Energy in this analogy. In order to compress the Energy, you would need to use more Energy. Like this, you only have a small gain of Energy since you already used a lot of it to compress it. On top of that, it requires more Energy the further you compress it."

The Opposer finished his cup. "That's where cultivators come into play," the Opposer said. "By becoming stronger, they automatically compress more and more Energy into themselves and pull in more from the surroundings. This creates empty spots of Energy in the world, which we call an Energy Vacuum. Due to the lower pressure, more of the chaotic forces get pulled into the world to fill the vacuum. Thus, more Energy enters the worlds."

"That's the reason why there are cultivators," he repeated.

Gravis looked out of one of the windows in thought. The reason why there was cultivation was one of the central philosophical questions that every human had. This question was on the same level as to why there were life and death and why the world even existed in the first place.

Yet, such a philosophical question had such a logical and straightforward answer. "So, cultivators only exist to make the worlds, and probably also Heaven, more powerful?" he asked.

The Opposer nodded. "Exactly," he said. "For your info, the reason why death exists also has something to do with it. By knowing why there's cultivation, you should be able to infer why death also exists," the Opposer said.

Gravis sighed. Even the mysterious reason for death was this logical. He already had a pretty good guess. "The possibility of forever losing our loved ones is terrifying and a motivator to become more powerful. After all, with more power, we have a better chance of protecting ourselves and our close ones."

The Opposer nodded. "Yes. Same reason why we have love and friendship. If we didn't care for our close ones, death wouldn't have such a powerful effect. Everything has been perfectly designed to motivate us to become stronger, and therefore, increasing the power of the old bastard."

Gravis sighed again. It felt like the world's philosophical truths had been answered, but the answer was only cold, selfish, and logical. Everything only existed to make Heaven more powerful.

Gravis sighed another time as he finished his cup.

He felt like some of the wonder and magic of the world had left, only to leave a grey and calculating machine.

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Chapter 350: A Father's Love

Some seconds passed in silence.

"By the way," the Opposer said. "You can probably also guess now why the old bastard and I are enemies."

Gravis was a bit surprised when he heard that. He had expected that they had some enmity because of something that had happened previously, yet his father said that he could guess it now?

Surprisingly, finding out why his father and Heaven were enemies was more difficult than finding out why death existed. But after some seconds of thinking, Gravis felt like he found the reason.

"You're a humongous storage of Energy without a key to open it," Gravis said.

His father smiled. "Well done. You always were a smart kid," the Opposer said.

Gravis felt happy to hear his father praise him.

"After a certain time," the Opposer explained, "I have reached a Realm that no one had reached before me, but the old bastard had noticed it too late. At that point, I was able to resist his influence. Obviously, I can't tell you exactly how I did that since that would definitely force him to act against you."

"So, after I was able to resist his influence, I became the strongest magnet for Energy in the whole world. Yet, since the old bastard can't kill me, he can't access my Energy. As you said, I'm a huge storage room of Energy that the old bastard can't access. So, he tried to kill me with everything he had. This created our enmity."

"Honestly, though," the Opposer said while furrowing his brows. "I don't know if the old bastard is truly unable to defeat me or if he is only acting like he can't. After all, I am an incredible source of attraction for Cosmic Energy. It could also be that he can kill me but just wants me to become fatter."

Gravis' insides shivered. He couldn't hear worry from his father's voice, but he was pretty sure that he felt his father worry. This was the first time in his life where his father appeared like he didn't have full control over everything. That possibility hadn't even crossed his mind.

The Opposer sighed something that Gravis hadn't seen before. "Actually, around five days ago, I felt like I fell into the old bastard's scheme."

"What do you mean?" Gravis asked with worry.

The Opposer looked deeply at Gravis. "That was the time when you reached the Spirit Forming Realm," he said.

"Oh, right!" Gravis said. "I totally forgot about the time dilation. It actually feels bizarre that six years have passed for me while only two days have passed for you. By the way, what happened back then?" he asked.

"When you adapted your Spirit to lightning, you have opened a tunnel for lightning to enter you," the Opposer explained. "Energy doesn't have a will, but lightning does. Yet, without a Spirit or soul, lightning can't become conscious."

"So, as soon as it entered you, it became conscious, and it did what it could do best: destroy. Your Spirit was too weak to resist the overwhelming power of lightning, so you died."

Gravis sighed shakily. He had expected that he had died back then but hearing it from his father made the truth have way more impact.

"The lightning took over your being and started summoning and absorbing more lightning. The old bastard hadn't noticed it since you were too weak for him to care about, but I had," he said.

"You should know that the manifestation of lightning would have absorbed all the lightning in your lower world in a couple of seconds. Then, it would have ascended and would have repeated this process until it reached the highest world."

"At that time, it would already be too late for the old bastard. The old bastard decided that around 50% of his power would be in lightning and if the manifestation absorbed that, the old bastard's power would fall to 50% while the manifestation had the other 50%."

"At that point, I could have just killed the old bastard and then the manifestation. After all, I'm more of an all-rounder. Lightning is only a small part of my power. Like this, I would have finally achieved what I've wanted to achieve for 50 billion years," he said.

Gravis' felt his insides shake. An enmity that had existed for 50 billion years or the life of only one of thousands of children. In Gravis' mind, he guessed that he would have chosen the enmity.

The Opposer sighed. "But I didn't want to lose you," he said, his sad and warm tone shaking Gravis' insides again. "I fell to the schemes of Heaven and had love dictate my judgment. I always believed that following Heaven's schemes, and by extension, his created emotions, would result in my death, but I did it anyway."

"Heaven has created love to make us stronger, but now, the same thing I have avoided to feel for my entire life has affected my judgment. I wanted to sacrifice your life for Heaven's death, but I just couldn't."

Gravis felt a complex mix of emotions. On one hand, he felt happy that his father loved him this much, but on the other hand, he felt guilty that his father wasn't able to achieve his goal. Maybe it would have been better if he stayed dead back then.

The Opposer put a hand on Gravis' shoulder and looked deep into his eyes. "Don't feel guilty, Gravis," he said strongly. "I have made my decision, and I don't regret it. Don't forget that if you didn't exist, this possibility wouldn't have even existed in the first place."

Gravis remained silent as he looked into his father's eyes.

"It isn't that you have committed a mistake or injured me. My decision to choose your life over my enmity just made everything return to how it was before. Don't forget that this all wouldn't have happened if you didn't exist."

Then, the Opposer smirked. "Also, it's not like we didn't gain anything out of this. After all, you have an unprecedented affinity towards lightning because of this. If anyone ever reaches my Realm, they can only be weaker or equally as strong as me since we followed the same path, but you are different."

"If you reach my Realm, you will be immune to the old bastard's strongest weapon while keeping your full strength. So, while there is a possibility that you won't be stronger than me, you will definitely be stronger than the old bastard. After all, you're the perfect counter to him."

Tears came out of Gravis' eyes. He had never felt much fatherly love from his father, but everything had changed today. His father had chosen him over his lifelong goal. He had often doubted that his father even loved him, but today, he was proven wrong.

His father might not have shown his love, but he obviously deeply felt for him. For the first time in a long while, Gravis felt genuinely happy. His victory against the lower Heaven had made him feel excited, but it hadn't made him feel happy.

"Thanks, father," Gravis said with some tears.

His father smiled warmly at him. "Don't mention it. You're my son, and I'm incredibly proud of you."

They remained silent for a minute as Gravis enjoyed the closeness to his father.

"After all," the Opposer said with a smirk. "You managed to kill one of the bastard's children without ascending! No one has ever managed to do that before," he said with a laugh.

Gravis laughed a bit. "No one?" he asked.

"Well, there have been cases where someone from a higher world killed a Heaven from a lower world due to enmity, but a stronger Heaven quickly annihilated them."

Gravis sighed. So it had been done before. "But that's only because you protected me," he said. Gravis was only still alive because someone stronger than him had protected him. This irked Gravis to no end. He didn't want to rely on anyone else.

"That's wrong," the Opposer said, surprising Gravis. "I know the old bastard pretty well, and I'm also pretty sure that he wouldn't kill a person that managed to kill a Heaven." Then, the Opposer lifted a finger. "As long as they didn't ascend to a higher world before killing it."

"So," the Opposer said with a smirk. "Even without me, the old bastard wouldn't have killed you for killing one of his children. He values strength above everything else. If one of his children isn't able to kill someone in their world, even though they have the whole world as their weapon, he would find them useless. Thus, since he believes that weakness is wrong, they deserved to die."

Gravis was surprised, but he also felt better about killing the lower Heaven now. "The highest Heaven is this fair?" he asked. "I thought that after the situation with Stella and with the lower Heaven's disgusting conduct, that the highest Heaven would also be like that."

The Opposer sighed. "Well, I don't like the old bastard, but I have to say that he is actually pretty fair. Of course, only if it doesn't involve me. He only acts like a dick towards our family and me. Everyone else, though, he treats pretty fairly. Shenanigans like Heavenborn or the suppression of powerful talents doesn't exist in the highest world."

Gravis was a bit surprised. "There are no Heavenborn?"

His father shook his head. "No, why would he need them? He knows that he is in full control, except for me, of course, so why the need to create something like the Heavenborn? If he doesn't like something, he can just change the rules or get rid of it. Also, having some heaven-chosen people around would make the normal cultivators hate Heaven due to envy."

The Opposer shrugged. "The old bastard has a pretty solid reputation in the highest world. Sheep that follow willingly are easier to manage than sheep that dislike you. In the peoples' eyes, I am the antagonist. I mean, they're not wrong. I probably killed way more people than the old bastard."

Gravis had never seen his father act and talk so casually. Gravis felt the gap between him and his father close further. The cold distance between them was slowly vanishing.

"Anyway, you wanted to know more about the highest world," the Opposer said as he summoned more coffee for himself and his son. "We kind of went off topic there for a while."

Gravis drank his coffee with a smile.

"Do tell," he said.