

Lightning 361

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Chapter 361: How to Forge

Gravis was still a bit confused, but as he saw his father's expression getting increasingly annoyed and bored, his eyes widened in realization.

"Wait, you're going to teach me!?" Gravis asked incredulously.

"Is that so strange?" his father asked.

Gravis rubbed the back of his neck in nervousness. "Well, don't take this the wrong way, but you never really taught me much regarding cultivation. I never even thought about the possibility that you would personally teach me something," Gravis said.

"That's because I want you to forge your own path," his father said, "but you can't forge your own path if you don't know how to forge."

Gravis blinked a couple of times. "Was that another joke?" he asked.

"Yes," the Opposer said with narrowed eyes.

"Eh, okay," Gravis said.

Some seconds passed in silence. Then, his father sighed.

"I'm your father. Teaching you something shouldn't be that strange to you," he said.

"I'm sorry, father. I just hadn't thought about that," Gravis said helplessly.

"It's okay," his father said, "I didn't really teach you much. So, such a reaction is to be expected. Anyway, we should get started."

Gravis nodded and stood up.

"Where are you going? You don't want to learn how to forge?" his father asked with his usual, even voice.

Gravis was confused again. "We're inside your room. I don't think we can forge here," Gravis said.

"Why not?" his father asked.

Gravis ruffled his hair in confusion. "Well, there is no oven, smelter, or whatever it's called. There is no water to cool the products or anything else. There is no equipment here," he said.

"Will you have such equipment in the middle world?" his father asked.

"Eh, no," Gravis answered.

"So, why should I teach you a forging technique that needs equipment?" he asked back.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "I don't need equipment to forge?" he asked.

"No, not your technique, at least. You only need something to cool the product, nothing more."

Whoop!

A small bottle appeared before Gravis. "This bottle has an ocean-load of water. You shouldn't need more in the middle world," he said.

Gravis looked at the bottle and picked it up. It wasn't heavier than a regular bottle, but when he sent his Spirit into it, his eyes widened.

"So much water," he said in shock.

Gravis couldn't even estimate how much water was in the bottle. It seemed absolutely endless. Were there millions of tons? Billions? Trillions? Gravis had no idea. It was just too much. Also, were there fish and plants in there?

"This is an ocean?" Gravis asked.

The Opposer nodded. "You haven't seen an ocean before, right?"

Gravis shook his head. "No, I only heard about it. The lower world also didn't have anything like an ocean, at least, I think so."

"That's because it isn't a Natural World," his father said. "There is no need for an ocean. Many beasts would live in the ocean if it had one, and not many humans would go there. It would just be a senseless waste of Energy and space."

"It's different for the highest world. We have some big oceans here, and humans in this world are powerful enough that they don't care about the ocean water. It wouldn't be much different from air to them."

"That makes sense," Gravis said. "What about Natural Worlds?" he asked.

"The highest world needs sea beasts. So, Natural Worlds have oceans. By the way, you can't retrieve anything from the bottle. Otherwise, you would find a way to use it as a weapon or bargaining tool. You could flood an entire middle world easily with that," his father said.

Gravis blinked a couple of times. "Then how am I supposed to cool the finished weapons?" he asked.

"You just treat the bottle like a bucket. Hold the weapon into it, and it will cool. Get comfortable with the bottle because you're going to use it a lot in the future," his father said.

"Is that really all I need in regards to equipment?" Gravis asked.

"Yes, you don't need more. When you have the materials, you only need to use your lightning to make the material malleable. After that, you need to temper it so that it actually gets converted into a hard weapon. Then, you need to draw the Formation Arrays on it. The cooling is the last step. That's everything in regards to forging," his father said.

"That sounds simple," Gravis said.

"It is," his father said.

Gravis remained silent for some seconds. "That's really it?"

"Yes," his father said. "What more did you expect? Did you think that I'm going to teach you some mystical way of swinging a hammer to imbue materials with some kind of law or meaning? The real world isn't that mystical. Forging is a job. It's a profession. It's work."

Gravis sighed. "You know, you're really taking all the fun out of cultivation," Gravis said helplessly.

"That's how the world works. Anyway, we should get started," his father said as he summoned a thin booklet. "This has all the important materials relevant to a middle world written down. The first thing about forging is to treat the mineral correctly. If you can't make it malleable, you can't do the other stuff. That's why you have to know the materials."

Pack!

His father tossed the booklet over, and Gravis looked at it. "That's a pretty small book. Are there really so few materials?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Look inside. You'll see," his father said.

Gravis opened the book to the first page. The first page was completely black. When Gravis saw that, his brows furrowed, and he looked back at his father. "Is this a joke?" he asked.

"What?"

"There is nothing on here. It's just a blank, black page," Gravis said.

"It's not a black page," his father said.

Gravis opened the book and showed the black page to his father. "It's a black page!" he said.

"No, it's a white page with black writing on it," his father said.

Gravis looked taken aback. He had quite some control over his Spirit. After all, he was able to read the small descriptions of the items inside the store. Yet, he saw absolutely nothing but black with his Spirit.

Gravis looked back at the page and concentrated. Slowly, he felt his vision zoom into the page. Inside his mind, the page transformed into a vast, black island. Yet, there was still nothing but blackness. Gravis started sweating as he noticed that he still couldn't see anything else but blackness.

He concentrated more and more. After some seconds, his eyes started becoming red in concentration.

"There!" Gravis suddenly shouted. "I see something white!"

"Believe me now?" his father asked.

"Well, I think so, but I still can't discern even a single word," Gravis said.

"That's your problem, not mine," his father said.

Gravis rolled his eyes but then got an idea. With a smirk, he retrieved the booklet into his Spirit Space. Then, he made his Self inside his Spirit Space smaller. It was made out of pure lightning, and he had control over lightning. He might not be able to compress it further, but he could split some lightning off his Self.

Over 99% of the lightning went to the side while his Self became smaller and smaller. After some seconds, Gravis was unseeable by human eyes. Then, he moved the abandoned lightning over him so that it shed some light onto the booklet.

It was like Gravis was standing on a flat continent. Everything had words written on it as far as the eye could see. Gravis smirked when he saw the clear words. If his Spirit didn't work, why not simply use his eyes? He might not be able to see the writing with his regular size, but it wasn't an issue when he was so small.

"Did anyone ever tell you that you're a smartass?" Gravis heard from in front of him and saw his father standing on top of the booklet inside his Spirit Space. His father was just as big as Gravis right now, or, more like, just as small as Gravis.

"Is that a compliment?" Gravis asked with a smirk.

"It's neutral," his father said. "This might help you in dangerous situations, but you might also find shortcuts for your cultivation. That would be bad."

Whoop!

Gravis involuntarily opened his physical eyes again as he saw the booklet and his father in front of him. His father had thrown him out of his own Spirit Space.

"Read it with your Spirit. You need to learn how to concentrate all of your Spirit into something if you want to forge properly," his father said.

"Why didn't you say that in the first place?" Gravis asked.

"Because I didn't want to," his father said with a severe tone.

"Mhm," Gravis commented dryly.

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Chapter 362: Lots of Reading

Starting that day, Gravis tried to read the book without stopping. He just sat in front of his father as he concentrated on the booklet with everything he had. In the beginning, Gravis thought that it was a bit awkward to just sit in front of his father, reading constantly.

Yet, his father just closed his eyes and sat there motionlessly. Gravis had no idea what his father was doing. So, Gravis just continued sitting there, trying to read.

Gravis didn't notice, but a lot of his siblings had come to visit. It wasn't that he had completely shut himself off, but that his father had put him into an isolated space. To Gravis, it just looked like his father was sitting there, doing nothing.

Meanwhile, his siblings saw Gravis for the first time and were quite surprised. The young boy was just sitting there, staring intently at a booklet. Many of them looked at the booklet and read some stuff in it. It wasn't hard to read such small writing with their power.

They quickly realized that their father was teaching Gravis how to forge. Some of his siblings were happy for him. Some were envious. Some only rolled their eyes. Though, the majority was envious that their father was teaching something to Gravis while they had never been taught anything.

Though, that was to be expected. The vast majority of Gravis' siblings were artificially raised to the Immortal Emperor Realm. Only a select few would go through the bitter path of cultivation. Of course, those few had also received some teaching from their father if they managed to come back from the lower world they had been assigned to.

Some of his siblings complained about the unfairness, but the Opposer just looked with boredom at them.

"You gave up on cultivation, and you won't be able to become stronger if you rely on me. Either you put in some work to temper yourself, or you just stay how you are. What's the point of teaching forging to you? Without the ability to comprehend new laws, you will, at most, be able to forge something for the Law Comprehension Realm. That's three entire Realms below yours," The Opposer would say.

Of course, many of Gravis' siblings only got angrier at that. In their eyes, their father was playing favorites. It felt so unfair. One of them even doubled down on his complaint.

"I raised you to the Immortal Emperor Realm. If you want, I can reduce your power back to the Body Tempering Realm. Then, you can start the path of cultivation again. At that point, I can teach you something," the Opposer said.

This person still wasn't happy with that. Yet, they didn't take their father up on his offer. Cultivation was just suicide! Why would anyone want to do that? They already had a high status and could get nearly everything they wanted with their power. What was the point in throwing their lives away to eventually achieve the same thing they already had?

"Smart decision," the Opposer said. "With your attitude, you would just throw your background around and get mugged and killed by the first bandit that sees your nice robes."

That particular sibling felt offended and quickly left. How could someone like their father become so powerful? He wasn't even able to talk with proper etiquette!

Orpheus also visited his father, and when he saw Gravis sitting there, he only lifted an eyebrow. "Why is he reading here?" he asked.

"I don't know," his father said. "I never told him he couldn't leave. If he feels more comfortable reading in front of me, he can. I don't mind either way."

Orpheus and his father talked for a long while, and he finally got to know the whole truth about his father and his problems. After his father was finished explaining, Orpheus sighed, but it wasn't because he was hurt.

Orpheus was happy that his father was able to make progress. Orpheus was also very smart, and he had thought a lot about life and happiness. He wasn't blinded by his father's illustrious status and had realized that his father probably also had problems that he didn't want to share with anyone.

The fact that his father shared some of his problems with Orpheus made him feel closer to him.

"You know," the Opposer said with a sigh. "You actually have the talent to become a Heaven's Magnate. There are not many things I lament, but I'm sad that you decided to stop cultivating."

Orpheus felt his insides shake a bit. His father hadn't said many positive things to him in his life. So, this small show of affection meant very much to him.

Yet, Orpheus only laughed bitterly. "I have no chance of reaching your Realm either way, so what's the point of becoming a Heaven's Magnate? A Star God and a Heaven's Magnate are the same thing to Heaven. When there is no possibility to break free, why should I continue? In the end, I'll just be a slightly stronger ant to Heaven. Nothing will change," Orpheus said.

"I'm happy with my wife and family. As long as we stay inside the city, there is no danger to us. Even if I became a Heaven's Magnate, the best thing in my life would still be my family. There will be no difference in happiness either way."

The Opposer sighed again. "You're right," he said slowly. "It's your life, and you define your happiness. It was only my inherent pride for my children that made me lament your decision to stop cultivating. I just want to say..."

"I'm proud of you," the Opposer said, shaking up all of Orpheus' emotions. His father had never said anything like this! Tears almost came out of Orpheus' eyes.

"Thanks, father," Orpheus said.

After some more talking, Orpheus left, throwing one last smile at Gravis.

After some weeks, Gravis was able to concentrate his Spirit enough to actually read the words. Yet, it was still very exhausting to his concentration, but Gravis didn't let that deter him. In actuality, he saw the constant stress on his Spirit as some kind of training.

His concentration had nearly run out when he had achieved Unity. Who knew, maybe he would need even more concentration in the future? Being better in something was always useful, even if it was a skill that was rarely used. It was a net positive!

The more Gravis trained his concentration, the easier it was to read. After two months, he had become used to it. Keeping up his concentration was stressful, but with his powerful will, he was able to force himself through the stress.

Like this, Gravis continued reading.

It took him six entire months to finish the booklet.

Bang!

Gravis fell onto his back as he finished reading the last word. He was finally done! If Gravis were only reading it, he would have been done about two months ago, but he was reading very slowly. After all, he had to remember everything in detail.

The contents of the book were very detailed and descriptive. There were even diagrams and descriptions of how the specific material looked when magnified many times. Apparently, when one magnified any material enough, they would find that matter was also just Energy.

Energy was Energy, and matter was Energy. This meant that everything was Energy. Were space and time also Energy? Was Gravity also Energy? Gravis wasn't sure, but it seemed that way. He had also seen and recognized some similarities and patterns between different materials. Gravis felt like he was on the cusp of understanding something, but he just couldn't make the connection.

"You done?" his father asked.

Gravis sighed in exhaustion. "Yes. I'm done."

"You remember everything?" his father asked again.

Gravis nodded. "Yep."

"Good, then let's get onto the next topic," his father said.

Gravis furrowed his brows and lifted his head to look at his father. "You won't test me?" he asked.

"Why?" his father asked.

Gravis sat back up again and scratched the back of his head. "Well, what if I didn't remember everything?"

"But you said you did," his father said, evenly.

"Yes, but what if I only said that to stop reading?" Gravis said.

"Would you do something like that?" his father asked.

Gravis scratched the back of his head more. "No," he said.

"There you go. Testing you is a waste of time," his father said.

Gravis sighed. He had realized by now that his father was logical to a fault. Gravis scratched his chin in thought. 'Maybe that's where I got some of my personality from?' he asked himself.

Whooop!

A Jade Token appeared in front of Gravis.

"This Jade Token has the information for all possible alloys for the materials. It's about 18 times the content," he said.

Gravis' eyes widened. "I already read for so long. Do you intend to keep me here forever?" he asked.

His father just blinked with a bored expression. "This shouldn't take more than a couple of hours," he said.

Gravis' eyes widened. "That fast? But didn't you say it was 18 times the content?" he asked.

"Yes, but the Jade Token will directly push the information into your Spirit. You just need to slowly get used to and comprehend it. As I said, it shouldn't take more than a couple of hours," his father said.

Gravis grabbed the Jade Token and looked at it with furrowed brows. Then, he looked at his father.

"Why didn't you just give the information about the materials to me in a similar way? After all, you said that the reading was mostly for training my concentration. I have trained my concentration to the highest point it can reach when I was only 10% into the book. Couldn't you have just given me a similar Jade Token then?" Gravis asked.

His father blinked with a bored expression again. "You knew the point of that exercise, and when you've reached that point, there was no reason to continue reading. I could have given such a Jade Token to you."

Gravis' ruffled his hair in frustration. "And why didn't you?"

"You didn't ask."

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Chapter 363: How Do Laws Work?

Gravis took a deep breath to calm down. "So, I've wasted about four months on this?"

His father narrowed his eyes at Gravis, and Gravis actually felt some genuine annoyance from his father. Gravis had known his father for his whole life. So, he was pretty good at noticing the small differences in his expression.

"Do you think it's that easy to create Jade Tokens that beam knowledge right into your Spirit?" his father asked. "Others don't even get all the information at once. They have to search for it by themselves. You're in a privileged position here. Yet, you're still complaining? Then what's the difference between you and your sister, Melody?"

Gravis took a deep breath. He had forgotten that he was in a privileged position. The best forger alive was teaching him personally, yet, Gravis had still complained about the time it took.

Gravis hated hypocrites the most, but now, he saw himself acting the same way. He was getting the best education regarding forging, but he had still not been satisfied with it. When Gravis realized that, he felt horrible. He had acted exactly like the people he despised.

"I'm sorry," Gravis said genuinely, even bowing a little. "My greed for power has blinded me to reality. Thank you for reminding me of my own principles, father," Gravis.

His father nodded. "Good, then go learn the alloys," his father said.

Gravis nodded and concentrated his Spirit onto the Jade Token. As soon as his Spirit touched the Jade token, it broke apart, and a sea of knowledge assaulted Gravis' Spirit. It was a very similar feeling to the time when he had absorbed Heaven's lightning, but still a bit different.

Back then, he had immediately comprehended the concept behind that specific kind of lightning. This time, he wasn't comprehending any concepts but just learned one thing after another without any connection between them.

Even though one could say that learning all these alloys was less knowledge than learning Punishment Lightning, it still took way longer for Gravis to deal with this knowledge. This was the difference between just learning and reciting raw data and actually knowing the concepts behind it.

Gravis remained unmoving with a stunned and shocked expression for hours. His whole being was entirely concentrating on the knowledge that was infused into him. There were so incredibly many combinations of materials that could create so many different alloys.

Only a select few of these alloys would be useful for weapons, but that didn't mean that the others were useless. Many different kinds of machinery or equipment needed different kinds of properties for their materials.

On top of that, many materials had different affinities. Some made it way easier to store a kind of element, while others were better at storing Will-Spheres. Some other alloys or materials didn't allow certain Formation Arrays to be placed on them, while others only allowed a limited number.

Of course, Gravis knew that he wouldn't come into contact with over 99% of the materials and alloys he learned. There were simply too many, and different worlds had different materials. Yet, Gravis didn't know which world he would go to and what materials he would be able to find there. Therefore, he needed to learn about all of them.

After several hours, Gravis finally managed to regain control over his Spirit and body. Such a state left him completely helpless, and if he weren't with his father, brother, or mother, he would be incredibly nervous during that time.

Of course, no one would just barge into his father's room to kill him. Therefore, this place was the best place to go through these risky situations. He hadn't been able to deal with his emotions in the lower world because of the same reason. Any weakness could prove fatal there.

"You done?" his father asked.

Gravis took a deep breath and sighed. "Yes. It's a lot of knowledge," he said. "I even feel like I'm on the cusp of understanding something. The diagrams about the composition of Energy of the different materials feel like they're hiding a deeper meaning."

"Forging is also a law that is divided into many smaller laws. Understanding the concept of why different materials are how they are is one of these laws," his father explained.

"Oh, that's a law?" Gravis asked in surprise. He had thought that laws felt different. He had thought that they would be more magical in understanding, but apparently not. "Also, what do you mean with smaller laws?"

"Some things are easier to understand than others. Understanding why water flows downward is easier than understanding how space bends. There is a system for categorizing different laws, but you don't need to bother with that right now," his father said.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "How come? What's speaking against me knowing these things?"

"Because, if you know the different levels of laws, you might start overreaching. Knowing about the levels would also make you fixate on a specific goal. Normally, fixing on a specific goal is a good thing, but not in the case of laws. If you only concentrate on achieving one thing, you're blind to recognize the things you find along the way."

Gravis thought about this for a while as he looked at the ceiling. 'It makes some kind of sense, I guess,' Gravis thought unsurely. 'I might reach my goal sooner, but maybe I wouldn't be able to comprehend many other, smaller laws along the way.'

The Opposer saw that his son wasn't entirely convinced. "You could say that the smallest and weakest laws are the most important for your future," he said.

"How come?" Gravis asked.

"Because they are the door to a new path. If you don't know how the raindrop works, you can't even begin to understand how an icicle works. Without understanding how an icicle works, you can't understand how a snowstorm works, and without that, you can't understand how the supreme cold works."

"The more powerful and fundamental the Law, the more small laws you have to know to grasp it. If you only focus on one goal, you might miss understanding something about other small laws. There is nearly no useless law in this world, and the more you know, the better. Just try to learn about the things that interest you. That's the best path forward."

Gravis finally understood what his father meant. Now, it also made sense to him. Gravis was very introspective, and he knew that there was a real chance that he would only focus on his explicit goal, ignoring everything else along the way. Not teaching him about different laws was really more beneficial than detrimental.

"Thank you, father," Gravis said. He was thankful that his father allowed him to see another potential problem about himself. Life was about growing and becoming the perfect person they wanted to be. The more Gravis knew about himself, the better he could judge if an action would yield a positive or negative result. The personality of a person was one of the most significant factors for power.

His father nodded again. "Good, if you want, you can try to understand the concept behind the different materials. The Law you would be able to grasp from that would be called the Middle-Tier Hard Pure Material Composition Law."

Gravis blinked a couple of times. "That's a mouthful," he said.

"Because it's the lowest form of a law. Generally, the longer the name, the lower the Law. Every word of the name specifies what you know further. Let me explain it to you once, so you understand."

Gravis nodded.

"The Composition Law is one of the highest Laws that exist. When you know that, you know how everything is made in the world. When you understand that, you can use it to create everything you want to make."

Gravis' eyes widened. "Does that mean that I can also create life?" he asked.

"If you also understand how life works, yes. Anyway, the more words you add, the more specified your understanding of the Law. The word 'Material' shows that you only know the composition of dead matter. You don't know about the composition of living matter or different forms of Energies."

"The word 'Pure' shows that you only know about the pure materials. There is nearly an infinite number of combinations of materials that create something different. So, you would only know about pure materials."

"The word 'Hard' refers to materials similar to ore and stone. You don't know about wood, water, earth, or similar, relatively softer materials. Lastly, the word Middle-Tier refers to the fact that your understanding would only go up to the Immortal Realm."

"Therefore, you would only understand a tiny bit of knowledge regarding something very specific in the grand scheme of things," his father finished explaining.

Gravis slowly started realizing how much there was to learn. He had read for such a long time and knew so much about all these things. Yet, it still required so many words to show exactly how small the area of his knowledge was.

Gravis' eyes shone for a bit as he realized a small peculiarity. "When I understand a law, I can't know its specific name with much accuracy, right?" Gravis asked.

His father nodded. "Exactly. You only know what you know. You can't know what you don't know. Naming a newly understood Law requires knowing things that you don't know. So, there are generally two names for laws, an official one, made by a powerful cultivator very knowledgeable in that field, and one that the cultivator created for themselves."

Gravis nodded. "Thank you for explaining. What's next?"

Boom!

A huge pile of different materials appeared out of thin air.

"Smelting practice."

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Chapter 364: First Smelting

Under his father's directions, Gravis named a lot of different materials and their properties. Though, since he didn't understand the underlying concepts, he could only quote what the booklet had said. One could argue if being able to recite all of this information was knowledge or not. After all, he didn't understand the deeper meaning of the materials. He could only quote something.

Gravis only knew the what, but not the why. Yet, a vast sea of what was required to understand the why. There was no way around this. After Gravis had recited the different materials and their properties for around two hours, his father grabbed a piece of ore.

"Look," he said.

BZZZZ!

A purely white bolt of lightning appeared and enveloped the ore in the air, and Gravis immediately felt the familiarity with this lightning. It was Punishment Lightning, the same lightning Gravis had. Yet, Gravis wasn't really surprised that his father could use such lightning. His father had also said in the past that

people generally understood this lightning further down their cultivation path. This meant that there were a lot of people able to use it.

As the material floated in the air, the lightning bathed it, heating it up quickly. After a while, it started becoming malleable. Gravis knew the specifics of the material, so he knew how much power his father was using. On top of that, due to his affinity towards lightning, he could also feel the power with his being. It wasn't very strong. Gravis could create such powerful lightning without any issue.

Slowly, the ore started taking the form of a standard sword. After around three minutes, it had completely taken the shape of a sword. Yet, it didn't have sharp edges.

"You need to use your Spirit to form the material into a weapon," his father said. "It's quite a bit of stress on your Spirit and concentration, which is where your concentration training comes into play. You need to keep the finished product's shape in mind and use appropriate force with your Spirit. Too much, and you might damage its composition, too little, and it will break."

Gravis nodded as he kept looking at the sword-embryo.

"The edges of a sharp weapon need many times more concentration than just creating the weapon-embryo. When the material is much weaker than your current Realm, you can simply force it."

SHING!

In nearly no time at all, the sword's sides compressed, forming a very sharp cutting edge.

Whoop!

The sword reverted to its previous, dull form. "If you forge with such weak materials, you only need to force the borders of the sword into a sharp edge. At that point, depending on what material you used, you only need to follow the material's properties while cooling it down. Of course, I skipped the step of the Formation Arrays here."

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Many small thunderclaps resounded throughout the room as many small bolts of lightning concentrated on the edges of the dull sword-embryo. The normal lightning still kept the material at the appropriate temperature while the small lightning bolts put more force on the edges.

Gravis' eyes narrowed as he realized how much focus this needed. The small lightning bolts for the edges would also increase the material's temperature, and if it got too hot, its composition would change, making it worse. His father was moving the small bolts of lightning around so that they still put more pressure on the edges yet didn't make them too hot.

On top of that, his father was adjusting the balance of the remaining lightning to counteract the heightened temperature around the edges. This required a lot of subtle and minute movements. It was like a person doing four different things at once with their four limbs.

"If you want to forge something actually useful to you, you will be working with materials that you can't force into shape with your Spirit alone. At this point, you need to do what I'm doing right now. Use your control over lightning to compress the material around the edges without damaging it. It requires a lot

of concentration and fine control to use this method effectively, but it's not nearly as consuming to your Spirit as the previous one."

Whoop!

Suddenly, the sharp edges vanished again to reveal the blunt sword-embryo again. When Gravis saw that, his eyes shone. "You didn't cut off part of the material to make an edge, but compressed it," Gravis commented.

His father nodded. "There are different ways to forge a weapon. Theoretically, you could grind the edges into a sharp shape, but that's not as effective as this method. Materials have different properties and can achieve different levels of power. That's referring to the Material Rank inside the booklet I gave you."

Gravis nodded. "This material is at the Early Unity Rank."

"Exactly. This means that the most powerful weapon you can make with this material is one appropriate for someone at the Early Unity Realm. Yet, you need to keep in mind that this is the upper boundary. It only shows the most powerful state of the material."

"Now," his father said, "If I were to grind it down like this,"

CRRRRRRRRR!

An ear grating sound appeared as the lightning hit the sword-embryo's edges diagonally, shooting outwards. A lot of particles shot away from the sword, leaving behind a sharp edge.

"This would only be able to become an Initial Unity Weapon. By not using compression, I haven't taken full advantage of the material. Of course, there is still one step remaining. There are still no Formation Arrays on the weapon."

"If I were to put the Formation Arrays onto the weapon perfectly, I would be able to create an Initial Unity Weapon. Yet, if I make some mistakes, the Formation Arrays might still work, but their efficiency will degrade rapidly. With this, the sword might downgrade to a Peak Spirit Weapon."

"Remember, the Material Rank only shows the theoretical highest Rank. This means that everything after that needs to be perfect to achieve it."

BANG!

The sword transformed into dust. "Now, it's your turn. We'll talk about the inscription of the Formation Arrays later," his father said.

Gravis nodded and pulled out one of the ores in the pile. He had chosen this one because this was not the first time he saw it. This was the ore that the lower world had called Core Ore, or Core for short.

Surprisingly, this ore was at the Initial Unity Rank. So, if everything went perfectly, it could become even a Unity Weapon. Yet, how could the lower world be able to do something as complicated as creating a Unity Weapon?

Gravis remembered the specifics of this ore and also its official name. It was called Low Ore. The reason for this simple name was that this was the best ore for weapons, which could be found in lower worlds. It was supremely rare in lower worlds but grew more and more common the more powerful the world became.

It was very cheap due to its abundance in the highest world and was the go-to material for everyone below the Unity Realm. It could be compared to standard iron ore for mortals.

Gravis made it levitate in front of him and envisioned a saber. He spent some seconds planning out every detail of the saber. Then, he summoned lightning in the air around the saber. Something like this had been difficult in the Spirit Forming Realm, but due to his higher control, it had become quite easy now.

The beginning wasn't hard since Gravis only had to heat the material slowly. He remembered all the specifics of the material and kept them inside of his mind. Keeping the disjointed information in his mind was way more exhausting than just understanding it by heart. Yet, in the beginning, there was no other way.

After some minutes, the ore started becoming malleable. Gravis stopped increasing the power and did several calculations in his head. He had to check all the details and behavior of the material to even estimate the current temperature. There were several calculations that took the behavior of the material into account to roughly calculate the temperature.

Gravis also had to include the usage of his Spirit and concentration in the calculations since they were the best indicator of how hard it was to manipulate the material. Gravis wished that he just had a thermometer for the temperature.

Though Gravis quickly realized something. Something as basic as a thermometer for forging should definitely exist. There was no way that no one had gotten the idea to make something like that. Yet, Gravis was also pretty sure that he could understand more about the material by only relying on his feelings.

The less help someone used while creating something, the harder it was. Yet, they got way closer to their work too. Tasks that some tools solved would help to create a better product, but the creator wouldn't understand as much about his work. He might not even know what the tools did, specifically.

Gravis started molding the ore slowly into a sword shape.

CRACK!

And tore the ore in two.

"What went wrong?" his father asked.

Gravis rubbed his chin. "I must have miscalculated. The fact that it broke apart meant that it was still too cold to mold properly. My calculations were wrong at some part."

His father nodded. "Right. Do you want me to tell you?" he asked.

Gravis thought about this for a second but then shook his head. "I should find it out myself. I might need to test several other materials and find the common cause of error. Another possibility is to just brute-

force my way until I hit the correct temperature by feeling and then retroactively look at the calculations."

The Opposer nodded. "Good! Finding things out yourself is always better than someone telling you."

Gravis smiled and nodded.

And like this, Gravis continued smelting weapons.

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Chapter 365: Becoming Better at Forging

Gravis had been smelting for a couple of days now, trying out different materials, different amounts of Spirit, and different amounts of concentration. However, he had to take breaks now and then. Keeping the form of the weapon inside his imagination while doing the calculations was very demanding on his concentration.

In over 90% of cases, Gravis pulled the ores apart too soon, breaking them in the process. 5% were too high, while the remaining 5% were just right. After seeing the results on different materials, Gravis noticed that he nearly always pulled the material apart too soon.

After a couple of days of smelting, he went back to trying only one material. This material had a rank at the Initial Unity Realm. A material like this should be just right for him. After all, he was at the Initial Stage of the Unity Realm. Of course, he went back to this material because he found out the answer.

Gravis had tried some materials for the Early Stage of the Unity Realm previously. Smelting them was many times more difficult, surprising him quite a bit. He even had to move some of his other centers of power into his Spirit to keep going.

While trying out these materials, Gravis noticed that he was wasting a bit more Spirit than concentration, which required him to increase his Spirit. Judging by the time, his concentration would be about half empty if he finished his weapon. Sadly, that calculation wasn't accurate. After all, Gravis didn't know how much concentration the other steps would take.

Surprisingly, his calculations had been pretty spot on while smelting materials at the Early Unity Rank. Gravis quickly tried to find out the reason for why his calculations had been so off, but it took him a couple of more failures to finally find the answer.

When he found the answer, he facepalmed. "Of course," he said, "my Spirit is way more tempered than the average cultivator. Everyone else breaks into the Unity Realm immediately without further tempering their Spirit due to the equalization problem, but that's not all!"

"I also have a more powerful Will-Aura, which allows me to concentrate more and for longer periods of time. Yet, the impact that concentration has on the material in comparison to Spirit is not nearly as strong. After some adjusting, I should be able to reach the standard that the calculations are based on."

His father nodded. "So, you found the answer. Good."

Gravis also nodded. "My Spirit is about three times more powerful than the average cultivator's. Thus, the malleability felt way easier since my Spirit has more force. I judged the temperature according to the

described usage of Spirit. Yet, my Spirit is more powerful, making me misjudge the temperature. My concentration is also slightly more powerful, but that doesn't have much impact."

"That's correct," his father said.

After that, Gravis went back to a material at the Initial Unity Rank. He quickly shoved about 70% of his Spirit into his lightning to make his body fit the standard that the calculations were based on. He moved a little more than necessary to counteract his heightened concentration. Like this, Gravis found way more success.

By now, he was hitting the perfect temperature around 95% of the time. It was actually pretty easy to find the correct temperature now. Without the calculations' help, this would become way harder.

Sometimes, Gravis lost his focus, and the material would change into the wrong shape. Luckily, Gravis just had to regain his focus to try again. After doing this for another couple of days, Gravis was quite good at keeping his focus. Sadly, he also found an issue.

It was very difficult to pay attention to the outside while forging a weapon. Right now, this wasn't an issue, but in the future, this could become troublesome. Gravis was safe in this room, but he couldn't guarantee his safety in the middle world. Creating a weapon would be a risky affair, leaving him open to assassinations.

But that was a problem for another time.

By now, Gravis was pretty good at creating and keeping the shape of a weapon-embryo. Since he mostly used the same material, he also didn't need to calculate anymore. He had developed the feeling that the material should have when it was ready, allowing him to save a lot of his concentration.

After these couple of days, Gravis tried to create a cutting edge on the sword, but that proved more difficult than he had believed. For starters, Gravis didn't try the compression method for the edge. He first tried the grinding.

Yet, even this relatively simple method was proving difficult. The lightning needed to become more powerful to grind the weapon, but that also increased its heating effect on the weapon. If the material got too hot, it would change its composition, making it different.

These materials were specifically selected because they were perfect for creating weapons, and any change in the materials would reduce their effect. If the composition of the part that would be cut off changed, it wouldn't be bad. After all, that part would just get grinded off.

Yet, the new grinding would damage more material. At some point, the flaw in the grinding would damage the core of the edge. If Gravis didn't gain full control over this, he wouldn't be able to forge a weapon. Sadly, there were no calculations for this.

There were almost limitless ways of forging, and a guide for materials couldn't describe a suitable usage for every forging method. Creating the weapon-embryo wasn't difficult or varied. It just had to be heated and molded into a form. Nearly every element or forging techniques worked the same in this way.

Yet, it was different for the edge. That's where the techniques started to walk on separate paths. Some people used hammers. Others used their elements. Some people also just used a different form of Energy or specific Laws.

So, without the calculations, Gravis could only slowly get a feel for the material. Another difference to merely heating the material was that Gravis wasn't infusing it directly with lightning anymore. While creating the edge, he was diagonally shooting the lightning at the weapon.

Based on the angle, different amounts of lightning would get reflected, similar to light. Therefore, the angle and intensity had to be in sync. To find that perfect balance, Gravis had to practice a lot.

Thus, a whole month passed.

To get the feeling for the first material took Gravis nearly two weeks, but, obviously, that wasn't enough for him. If he only knew how to make an edge for one material, he wouldn't progress as a whole. Thus, he tried different materials.

The more materials he experimented on, the faster he was gaining the feeling for them. By the end of the month, he wouldn't require more than five tries to hit the threshold perfectly.

By now, a small mountain of finished weapons without Formation Arrays lay behind Gravis. Cooling the weapons down wasn't hard. The cooling time and method were very specific for each material, and water was most commonly used. With the bottle that his father gave him, he only needed to follow the instructions.

After a while, cooling the material down correctly had become a habit. The cooling really wasn't complicated at all. There were basically no issues.

After completing his 1000th weapon, Gravis laid back. Then, he sighed as he closed his eyes for a second. "This should be about enough," he said.

"Five failures for the edge for every new material is okay," his father said. "In the future, you should try to reduce that number even further. After all, sometimes, you only get enough ore for a single weapon."

"I know," Gravis said. "I stopped because getting even better at it will require a lot of time. The closer I get to one, the longer it takes."

"Try to get to a perfect record while still being in the Nascent Nourishing Realm," his father said. "You might fall behind if you don't keep practicing."

Gravis nodded. "I won't. I might not find as many materials in the middle world to practice, but I'll search for them."

"Natural Worlds are worlds only filled with beasts, Gravis," his father said, "they don't make weapons or armor. I'm sure you'll find enough materials. After all, there is no competition."

Gravis' eyes widened. "Yeah, I forgot about that. Nearly no beast should care about some ore, at least, not in the sense that they would use it. Some beasts might get attracted to an ore vein with specific characteristics, but they won't destroy it."

"Exactly," his father said. "So, the next and last point on the agenda is Formation Arrays."

Gravis sat back up again with furrowed brows. "What about the compressed edge?"

"You'll learn that naturally when you get a perfect record for grinding new edges. Learning it now won't help you much, and you wouldn't be able to use it. You would need to spend years trying, and I don't think that's what you want."

Gravis took a deep breath. "You're right," he said.

"So, Formation Arrays, yes?" Gravis asked.

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Chapter 366: Forging Learned

"Formation Arrays are inscriptions, which are carved into a weapon. Different shapes have different effects on Energy. Of course, the basic Formation Arrays only have a very subtle effect on Energy. For example, you can't convert Energy into an element with just the basic Formation Arrays," his father explained.

"There are Formation Arrays that absorb Energy, some that move it around, some that store it. Some other Formation Arrays influence the will, Spirit, element, or awareness. The last one isn't relevant to forging weapons."

"I'm going to teach you the relevant Formation Arrays for manipulating Energy, will, Spirit, and lightning. Energy is the base, while you need to know the ones for manipulating will and Spirit for your Lightning Crescent."

"Contrary to the expectations of beginners, carving the Formation Arrays into a weapon is one of the easier parts. Yet, it becomes more difficult the further you progress until it becomes the most challenging part in the end."

"How come?" Gravis asked.

"The initial Formation Arrays are only basic. As I said, they only manipulate the Energy in very simple ways. Yet, such a simple format clearly wouldn't be enough for more powerful cultivators. After all, they have comprehended their Laws, and using basic Formation Arrays wouldn't do justice to these Laws," his father explained.

Gravis nodded. He had already guessed that the Laws would most likely become the strongest weapons of the cultivators in the future. Merely storing and unleashing an element or Energy from a weapon seemed too basic and weak for such powerful people. There were surely ways to make a weapon harness the power of a Law.

"The basic Formation Arrays are used in smithing up to the peak of Nascent Nourishing. As soon as you start comprehending Laws, such basic usage becomes useless. At that point, you would need to transcribe the concept of your Law into the language of Formation Arrays. At that point, inscribing Formation Arrays becomes difficult," his father explained.

"Formation Arrays tailored to specific Laws are sold at a high price. Not everyone has the money, time, guidance, knowledge, or safety to practice forging. Therefore, forgers start becoming more important and sought after the more powerful the cultivators get."

"Theoretically, to inscribe a Law specific Formation Array doesn't require the forger to understand said Law. It's as simple as copying something onto a weapon. Since cultivators all understand different laws, it becomes important for business to know the Formation Arrays for more Laws. That's why these Formation Arrays are so expensive."

Gravis rubbed his chin. "So, theoretically, I could find and ask a forger to create a weapon specifically made for my Punishment Lightning, right? You said that it is a Law."

His father nodded. "Correct. Punishment Lightning is a popular element. So, a lot of forgers know the required Formation Arrays."

Gravis snorted. "But the more advanced and complex the Laws become that a cultivator can understand, the harder it is to find these Formation Arrays, right?"

His father nodded again. "Also correct. Even though the weakest Laws are, by a huge margin, the most numerous, they still have the most public Formation Arrays. After all, they're comparatively not that hard to understand. The more powerful the Laws, the fewer people are able to create or recreate the relevant Formation Arrays until only a select few know them. Such powerful Formation Arrays are highly valued in trade."

Gravis scratched his chin. "I guess the Divine Forger, Linus, knows a lot of them."

His father nodded. "He is one of the very few people that actually know Formation Arrays for more than one of the most powerful Laws. The other people that know as much as him or more are very secluded. Most of them are just acting as ancestors for Peak Sects, and they don't forge weapons for others since they think it's beneath them."

Gravis nodded but kept quiet.

Whoop!

A small book appeared, making Gravis furrow his brows. Did he need to read even more now? Reading the small booklet had already been time-consuming. How long would it take him to read this book?

"This book has all the relevant basic Formation Arrays noted down," his father said as the book floated over to Gravis.

Gravis opened it and was immediately surprised. The size of the writing was large enough that even mortals could read it. This was way less information than Gravis had anticipated.

"As I said," his father said, "the basic Formation Arrays aren't difficult, and even people in the lower worlds can use them. You should be done in about three hours or so."

Gravis had already started reading. Going through this book was a piece of cake. His Spirit had been tempered, which had increased his comprehension ability way past what a mortal could do. Completely memorizing the book from front to back wouldn't take much time.

Sure enough, in about two hours, Gravis finished the entire book. This was nothing in comparison to all the properties of all the materials found in the middle worlds. As he finished reading, Gravis realized that the Formation Arrays were really simple. Inscribing them was also straightforward and logical.

When Gravis had gotten his new weapons on his journey, he had always marveled at how great and mysterious they were. Such weapons could store Energy or lightning? This had been wondrous.

Yet, after knowing all the background information, Gravis realized that inscribing the Formation Arrays was probably even easier than creating the edge of a Spirit Weapon. No wonder Old Man Lightning had been able to create a fitting weapon for Gravis' peculiar technique in nearly no time.

Right now, Gravis could take the Core Ore, or Low Ore, to create a Peak Spirit Weapon. This meant that he was already at the same level as the forgers of the Heaven Sect.

Yet, Gravis had also trained with many different Unity Rank materials. Together with his knowledge, his forging was already superior to everyone inside a lower world.

When Gravis realized that, he sighed. 'I shouldn't forget that I didn't fully achieve that by myself. Without all these calculations, information about the materials, and endless supply of ore, I wouldn't have been able to become that good so fast.'

'On top of that, my inherent control over lightning makes it many times easier to control it finely. Others probably need years and years of practice to reach such fine control.'

Yet, Gravis wasn't deterred. 'Luckily for my ego, these are only the advanced basics of forging. Similar to my combat training before going to the lower world, this is just a starting boost. Every future progression will depend on me.'

After that, Gravis started practicing the whole process of creating a weapon. In the beginning, Gravis often wasn't detailed enough in inscribing the Formation Arrays. It required a lot of control and feeling. If the Formation Arrays weren't perfect, the weapon would become weaker.

Like this, Gravis practiced with a lot of different weapons and Formation Arrays for another two months.

After these two months, Gravis was able to make the edges for new materials after only around four failures. Yet, he felt like his feeling for the materials had increased by a lot. He started being able to feel some of the peculiarities of materials without trying to remember what the booklet had said.

Gravis realized that he had gotten closer to understanding the concept behind them. Yet, he had no idea how much more he had to learn to understand the concept. He remembered that he had thought that he been at the cusp of understanding the concept behind the materials after just reading the booklet.

Yet, after so much practice, he felt his knowledge increase crazily, but that one small step looked even harder to take now.

'Heh, I've been naïve,' Gravis thought. 'I thought I was close to understanding a Law, but, obviously, I'm not.'

After such a long time, Gravis had a completion rate for weapons of about 98%. Sadly, since he could only use the grinding method for the edge, all the weapons he finished were one grade lower than their Rank.

Yet, he had also managed to forge many weapons with Early Unity Rank materials, which would create an Initial Unity Weapons. Such a weapon would be even useful to Gravis now.

But didn't Gravis have the Void-Stone Saber?

Yes, he did, but Gravis now finally knew about Void-Stone. It was a material of the Early Nascent Nourishing Rank. It might still be useful until that Realm, but then it would become useless. Even more, Gravis couldn't really save a Lightning Crescent in it. He could only infuse it with one, but a lot of the lightning would get wasted inside the saber.

The Void-Stone Saber didn't have the required Formation Arrays, and the Lightning Crescent was also more powerful than Gravis' Realm. On top of that, since the Lightning Crescent was infused into the Void-Stone Saber, it had an even more destructive effect on it. Gravis was sure that the Void-Stone Saber would start breaking down at the Middle Unity Realm. On top of that, it didn't even have as much utility as a proper Unity Weapon.

After thinking about all this, Gravis decided to stop practicing. 'I've been learning how to forge for a little less than a year now. Soon, I'll be 23.'

Then, Gravis remembered something. 'Speaking of, nearly a hundred years should have passed for my friends. I wonder how they are,' Gravis thought in nervousness. A hundred years was a long time. It could very well be that all of his friends had already died, and his father just kept quiet to not distract him from forging.

"Father," Gravis said. "How are my friends?" he asked.

His father looked at Gravis with his usual, even look.

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Chapter 367: Hidden Rule

Gravis was a bit nervous as he waited for an answer. Around a hundred years had passed for his friends. Anything could have happened to them during that time.

"All of them are still alive," his father said.

Gravis released a sigh of relief. "Is that true?"

"I wouldn't lie to you regarding that. Your will is powerful enough that the death of a friend won't affect your path," his father said.

"Why did you say, regarding that? Would you lie about other things?" Gravis asked with furrowed brows.

"Only to protect you from the old bastard. If I reveal some key secrets, he might just go directly after you. I can't protect you against everything, and this would put you in danger," his father explained evenly.

Gravis sighed again, but he understood. He couldn't know everything about the highest Heaven or the world yet. He simply was not powerful enough. "I understand," Gravis said.

"When will you be going to the middle world? You're finished with your preparations now," his father asked.

Gravis had already thought about that topic. So, he already knew the answer. "I'll go after my 23rd birthday. Spending my birthday with mom, Orpheus, and you, doesn't seem to be such a bad idea."

"According to the time dilation and your physical age, your birthday is in 13 days," his father said. Then, he nodded. "That seems to be a good starting point. I'll inform your brother and your mother on the date."

Gravis nodded and stood up. He stretched a bit and then walked to the door. "I'm going to talk to mom for a bit. Thank you for teaching me how to forge, father," Gravis said with a smile. Then, he turned to the door.

"Gravis, wait," his father said.

Gravis turned around to look at him. "What is it, father?" Gravis asked.

His father sighed, surprising Gravis. This could only mean something bad. Had he lied about his friends?

"There is something I need to tell you about the Natural Worlds," his father said.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "I'm guessing going through the middle world won't be as easy as I've imagined?" Gravis asked.

His father nodded solemnly. "There are different rules in a Natural World than in any other world. After all, beasts have a different purpose to the old bastard than humans. You must know that, even though I see you as a human, you would officially count as a beast as soon as you enter one's body."

"Meaning?" Gravis asked.

His father looked a bit conflicted, surprising Gravis. His father knew about Gravis' powerful will, and the fact that he didn't want to tell him showed how serious this issue was.

After some seconds, his father sighed again. "To be honest with you, I've decided against telling you the rules."

"Why?" Gravis asked.

"Because I fear that if I were to tell you, you would decide against going," his father said.

Gravis' eyes narrowed. If his father believed that, it had a genuine chance of actually being true. Yet, Gravis couldn't think about anything that would make him stop his path forward. Nothing that he could imagine could stop him.

Powerful enemies? He didn't care about that. Not being able to create bonds? He could deal with that. A longer required cultivation time? That also wouldn't be an issue. Gravis had also already expected that reaching the Immortal Realm might take thousands of years. He was willing to risk that too.

So, what did his father mean? What rule could possibly stop him? Even if he were forced to worship Heaven, he could probably deal with that. Gravis couldn't think of anything that could stop his path forward.

"I can't think of anything that could stop me in my path," Gravis said.

"You might think that now, but that's just because you haven't realized the rule. If you had, you wouldn't be so confident anymore," his father said.

"What? Will I be stuck at a low level for a long time or something?" Gravis asked.

His father shook his head. "No. You should be able to reach Unity again in a matter of days. This isn't the issue."

Gravis groaned in frustration. "You know, maybe instead of saying that you won't tell me about something, you just don't bring it up at all?" Gravis said with annoyance.

"I told you because, like this, you can prepare yourself. The fact that I let you go to a natural middle world shows that I believe you will be able to pull through," his father said.

"Yet, even though you believe in me, you won't tell me," Gravis said back.

"Because, in order to continue, you need to be directly confronted with the rule without a way out. If I were to tell you now, you might decide to take the much harder and longer route to temper your body just to evade that rule."

"You would think that you still have an alternative with that method, but this alternative only exists in theory. You would think that you could temper your human body to that level, but that's practically impossible. I'm absolutely sure about that due to my experience," his father said.

"So, stop asking. Just be prepared to go through very tough decisions."

Gravis remained silent for a bit. "If you were in my position, would that rule stop you?" he asked.

"No," his father answered. "This rule wouldn't be a problem for me, but that's got nothing to do with power, but with personality. This rule will force you to change your personality drastically, and you won't like it one bit."

Gravis closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Saying that Gravis wasn't nervous would be a lie. Gravis knew that his father was excellent in grasping his personality. If anyone else had said these words, Gravis would believe that they were underestimating him.

But not if they came from his father. His father had watched him grow and had seen what Gravis had gone through in the lower world. If his father said that Gravis might decide against going, it might actually be true.

On top of that, his father was making a sacrifice right now. If this rule was as tyrannical as his father said, Gravis might resent his father due to that. It could happen that he would feel betrayed by his father since he allowed him to take this path.

Right now, Gravis couldn't imagine thinking something like that, but he couldn't know how he would act in such a situation. The fact that his father didn't tell him could create resentment inside Gravis towards him. His father was ready to risk their relationship so that Gravis could continue becoming stronger.

"Thank you, father," Gravis said.

His father sighed again. "There is no reason to thank me. I am sending you on this path, knowing full well what awaits you. Yet, I still let you walk on it," his father said.

Gravis nodded. "But right now, I'm thankful because I've seen what you are trying to accomplish. Even though it doesn't look like it, you are protecting me and giving me a scapegoat. I don't know what the future holds, but right now, I'm thankful."

His father sighed again. "I'm sorry, Gravis," his father said, surprising Gravis. His father had never said sorry about anything.

"Don't be," Gravis said while shaking his head. "You do what you think is best for me. The future will show if that is true."

Gravis also released a sigh. "I'm going to talk to mom now. Bye!" Gravis said as he exited the room.

The Opposer only nodded at his son and closed his eyes. There was nothing else he could do.

Gravis spent the next 13 days talking to his mother, his brother and looking through the city. Nothing much happened, and Gravis felt relaxed during these days. Yet, he also felt a bit nervous.

Right now, he was safe, but soon, he would be thrust back into danger. His powerful position that he had held in the lower world would be reduced to nothing, and Gravis would only count as someone mediocre.

There would be a lot of beasts way more powerful than him that could annihilate him with a mere thought. This thought made Gravis nervous again.

The middle world encompassed everything between the Body Tempering Realm and the Immortal Realm. The Unity Realm was only in the middle. Gravis might not be part of the weakest group, but one could liken it to going to the lower world while being in the Energy Gathering Realm. There were still a lot of more powerful people or beasts out there.

Yet, going through hardships was necessary. Gravis might be nervous, but he was also excited. Finally, he could become stronger again. He had waited for a year, preparing himself. Now, he could finally continue.

And like this, his birthday arrived.

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Chapter 368: Birthday

"Happy birthday, Gravis!" his mother shouted as she hugged him.

Currently, they were inside his father's room. It was pretty big and rather empty, something very fitting for a small get together.

"Happy birthday!" Orpheus said as he hit Gravis' shoulder with some force. Gravis felt his shoulder ache a bit, but he only smiled.

"Happy birthday," his father said evenly. For once, he wasn't sitting in the middle of the room but standing.

"Thank you all," Gravis said with a grin.

This was why he wanted to celebrate his birthday before leaving for the middle world. Who knew how long it would take for him to see his family again? He wanted one last memory with all of them together before he resumed his journey.

"23 and already in the Unity Realm while following the Will-Forging Path! That's really impressive, Gravis," Orpheus said as he hit Gravis on the shoulder again. "The earliest that people reach the Unity Realm while following the Will-Forging Path is 26, and that's incredibly rare."

"26, huh?" Gravis commented. "How do they reach the Unity Realm that quickly?"

"Mostly by getting artificial tempering experiences and a lot of pills," Orpheus said. "It's like the practical exam for Research Assistants, just longer and with more powerful opponents."

Gravis nodded. "Yet, they won't be able to learn about situations where they are hopelessly outclassed, even though they went through a lot of life and death dangers, right?" Gravis asked with furrowed brows.

"Right!" Orpheus said, "So, you have an additional advantage over these created geniuses. You went through genuine tempering. That's why I'm so proud of you!"

Gravis only grinned. "Thanks, brother," he said.

"I still remember when we met a little more than a year ago," Orpheus mused. "You just finished your first practical exam. You didn't even have your Will-Aura then. To be honest, I've expected that you wouldn't return from the lower world," Orpheus said with a sad voice.

"But no, you proved me terribly wrong," Orpheus said with a laugh. "You didn't only return, but you also managed to kill a lower Heaven. You have surpassed all my expectations."

"Yes, thank you," Gravis said back. He was a bit embarrassed by Orpheus' praise.

They all stood beside a relatively high table with food and beverages on it. Cultivators didn't need to eat, drink, or breathe, but that didn't mean that they didn't enjoy the occasional food or drink.

"Man, I've really missed your coffee, father," Orpheus said as he drank from his cup with a smile.

"It needs to be rare to be special," their father said with his usual, even tone.

"True that," Orpheus said between sips.

After that, the family started talking about different things. Orpheus was talking about his job and his family most of the time. Apparently, he only had eight children. That wasn't because he didn't want more, but that his wife didn't want more. She first wanted to see what would happen to their current children.

Orpheus knew that Gravis wouldn't be interested in getting to know someone new right now. After all, he had to focus on the middle world. That's why he didn't bring his family with him. The party might feel a bit empty with only four people present, but to Gravis, this was his whole family.

After some hours of talking, his mother clapped into her hands. "Time for presents!" she announced with an excited smile.

Gravis also smiled. He was impressed that his mother could still be so excited after she had lived for such a long time. It was awe-inspiring that she managed to find happiness and meaning in her long life. Wasn't this what everyone wished for?

Whoop!

Some small, rectangular things appeared on the table. Gravis saw them and immediately felt some warmth course through his insides.

"How did you get these?" he asked with surprise and a bit of shock as he looked at his mother.

His mother only smirked happily. She knew that this was the perfect present for Gravis.

"I forced your father to make them," she said as she pointed at his father.

Gravis looked at his father, who just shrugged. "I also thought it was a good idea."

"Yeah, but I came up with it!" his mother interrupted.

"Yes, it was your idea," his father said, seemingly with a helpless tone.

Gravis and Orpheus snickered a bit as they saw that. Even the Opposer had someone that could force him to do stuff.

Gravis grabbed one of the things and looked at it. All of these small things were pictures. Yet, they were not just any pictures. They were all pictures of his friends.

One of them depicted Skye sitting atop a gigantic tree as she overlooked a crowd of bowing beasts. Apparently, Skye had managed to create a circle of friends or underlings.

When Gravis saw that, he felt happy for Skye. She had remained lonely for a long time, and now, she was part of an organization. On top of that, she was probably the leader.

Another one showed Manuel levitating inside a massive storm with closed eyes. He sat in a lotus position, and the violent storm that destroyed everything around him didn't seem to affect him. Gravis guessed that Manuel was gaining insight into a Law.

One picture depicted Aion stumbling over some treasure and groaning. When Gravis saw that, he had to laugh a bit. Aion was probably the only human that groaned when stumbling upon a treasure. His luck and laziness were the main reasons for that.

Another picture showed Nero sitting in a circle with many other people beneath a beautiful tree. Judging by the looks of the people, they all had different elements. Yet, they all wore the same robes. Nero was now part of an organization with people of different elements. Gravis also guessed that they were friends, judging by their expressions and calm aura.

The next picture showed Old Man Lightning kicking someone in the dick with a smirk. Gravis laughed again when he saw that. He still remembered the fight between Old Man Lightning and the priest. This really fit his character.

The last photograph was of Joyce, fighting a many-kilometer-tall golem with blood all over her body. Yet, her expression only showed fiery determination to win.

"She won, right?" Gravis asked.

"She did," his father answered. "This was probably the hardest fight of her entire life."

Gravis smiled. "They have become strong, right?" he asked.

His father nodded again. "You are the weakest of all your friends right now."

Instead of growing envious, Gravis was happy for them. They had already continued on their path to power.

"Soon, I'll reach their heights," he said. Then, he put all the pictures into his Spirit Space. "Thanks, mom, father," he said as he embraced his mother.

"Oh, shush!" his mother shouted in a fake-angry voice. "I'm your mother! That's my job!"

Gravis really cherished this present. When he ever felt alone in the future, he could just look at the picture and think about his friends. They have already gone further than him. So, what would stop him from following them?

"Now, I believe it's my turn," Orpheus said as he stepped forward.

Whoop! Plop!

A green ball of slime appeared on the table. Gravis looked at it with surprise. "What's that? Can I touch it?" he asked.

"Go ahead, but be careful that you don't destroy it," Orpheus said.

While Gravis moved his hand towards the glop of slime, his father looked at Orpheus with furrowed brows. Orpheus just looked back with a smile and a roll of his eyes. After that, his father just closed his eyes and shrugged a bit. Apparently, he had accepted the present.

Gravis wasn't able to notice this exchange since they kept it secret and were way more powerful than him. He took up the glop and moved it around on his hands. Just as expected, it felt squishy.

"What is this?" Gravis asked.

"That's a constantly mutating organism or CMO for short," Orpheus explained. "It becomes stronger and weaker second by second. It just changes forms constantly. Sometimes it grows appendages, just for them to die off later. It's the most unstable life form in existence."

Gravis hummed a bit as he moved it around. "What's it good for?" he asked.

Orpheus laughed a bit. "I'm surprised you didn't guess it already. You can watch and understand how living beings change. You can see it get injured and healed. You can see it gaining a weakness to something just for that to become its main attribute in the next minute."

Orpheus pointed at the CMO. "So, by watching it, you can learn about life," Orpheus said.

When Gravis heard that, his eyes widened in shock. Then, he looked at the CMO. "So, this can help me understand Laws related to life?" he asked with shock.

Orpheus laughed a bit and hit Gravis' shoulder again, making him nearly drop the CMO. "Exactly! That thing wasn't cheap, even for me, but if it helps you learn an additional Law, it's worth it!"

"Thank you, brother," Gravis said with an impressed expression. "This is incredibly useful!"

"No problem!" Orpheus said back with a laugh. "You can keep it in your Life Ring. Just keep it separate from everything else living in there. CMOs are very fragile and weak."

Gravis quickly put it away. This thing would be a tremendous help in learning about life. A Law like that surely wasn't weak.

"My present," the Opposer said.

Whoop! Clank!

A black scale appeared on the table. It was only a couple of centimeters big, but Gravis could feel its incredible hardness.

When Orpheus saw the scale, his eyes nearly popped out of his head.

Sure enough, their father had the best stuff!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 369: The Middle World

Everyone looked at the black scale with different expressions. Gravis' mother only smiled. Orpheus looked at it with shock, and Gravis looked at it with confusion.

"What is this?" he asked as he grabbed it. It was surprisingly heavy but nothing that Gravis couldn't lift with ease. It weighed maybe only a couple of tons. That would be hard to lift in the Energy Gathering Realm, but not in the Unity Realm. Yet, that was only one scale. How heavy would the whole beast be?

"It's a scale from a black dragon," his father said. "I gave the dragon some stuff in exchange for the scale."

Gravis looked at it some more. "What can I do with it?"

"Immortal Beasts can change their outer appearance however they want. This means that you will be able to morph into a human without any issues as soon as you reach that Realm. You can probably guess the rest," his father said.

Gravis furrowed his brows, but he still had a glint in his eyes. "So, I should use this scale to create my own scales," Gravis said. "You're saying I shouldn't aim for a perfect human body, but for a body that is best for combat."

His father nodded. "Precisely. You have the chance to create a powerful body. You won't be able to fully replicate the scale, but you can copy parts of it with its Life Essence. When you feel like your body is about to reach the level of a Spirit Beast, you should eat the scale and take it as a blueprint for your scales."

Gravis nodded and smirked. "Thanks, father," he said as he put the scale into his Spirit Space. "This reminds me of another thing that I wanted to ask you."

"Ask," his father said.

"Can I use Heaven's body in a similar way?" Gravis asked.

His father nodded. "Yes. I would suggest eating it when your body is about to advance to a Unity Beast. Heaven's closeness to the laws and rule over the world will give you a nice surprise. When you eat it, you will be able to choose a path for yourself. Others would hesitate, but I'm sure about the choice you're going to make," his father said.

Gravis looked at Heaven's body inside his Spirit Space with ambition. "I almost can't wait," he said.

The presents had been way better than Gravis had expected. Initially, he had believed that only his brother would gift him something. After all, giving other people presents felt a bit like a routine to Gravis. He had expected his parents to think similarly, but apparently, they didn't. Gravis didn't demand presents for his birthday, but it was nice when he got some.

His mother's present was helpful to his emotional wellbeing. His brother's present would help him understand more about life, and his father's present would help Gravis create a powerful defense for his body.

Gravis didn't receive any kind of trump card that could save his life. Many people would feel bad about that, but not Gravis. Having a trump card to fall back on would make most tempering meaningless. After all, as long as he had such a trump card, he would never truly be in danger.

The presents helped him on his path forward without interfering with his tempering. None of them expedited his path either. They were all there simply to give him a more solid foundation and Battle-Strength. So, in Gravis' eyes, the presents had truly been perfect.

After that, they talked some more. Everyone was enjoying their time together.

"Hey, is that scale from the Black Magnate?" Orpheus asked his father, covertly.

"Yes," his father answered.

Orpheus just sighed when he heard that. "I wouldn't even be able to meet him. I guess power truly is everything."

"You don't need to lament," the Opposer said. "You've made your choice, and it's a valid one. The CMO is something that even Immortals want. It's more than good enough for your brother."

Orpheus sighed again. "I guess you're right."

Gravis didn't notice that exchange and just continued talking with his family. This was the last day with them in who knew how many years. It might even be his last talk, period. Today, he would enjoy himself to the fullest because tomorrow, his journey would continue.

After seeing the pictures of his friends, Gravis' anxiety completely vanished. Now, he only felt motivation and excitement for the middle world. He remembered the hidden rule that his father talked about, but Gravis was sure that he could deal with it. Nothing would stop him on his path to power!

The party went into the next day, and when Gravis didn't find anything to talk about anymore, he took a deep breath and stood up.

"It's time," Gravis said.

His mother sighed and looked a bit sad. His brother punched his shoulder again while his father nodded.

"I have chosen a fitting world for you, Gravis," his father said.

"Heh, if you choose my world, it might be even worse than if Heaven chose it," Gravis said with a smirk, "but I like challenges."

His father nodded. "Good! Here's an overview of the world's layout," his father said as a diagram started shining in the air.

Gravis looked at it, and his eyes shone. "Interesting," he said.

The whole world only had a singular landmass, but there was a significant difference to the lower world. The circular landmass looked like a humongous crocodile had taken a bite out of it. Three-quarters of the map was land, while the remaining quarter was water. The water even stretched into the center, splitting the center of the world into two halves.

"I chose this world because the continent is surrounded by a lot of ocean," his father said. "The map only shows the continent, but there is a bigger ocean surrounding it. The center of the world is where the land and ocean meet in the middle. This divides the central areas into half land and half ocean."

"The ocean surrounding the land has no meaning to you," his father said. "That's where the sea beasts below the Unity Realm reside. Also, don't underestimate this world's size."

"Oh?" Gravis said. "How big is it?"

"The continent alone is about three times as big as an average middle world, and a middle world is already many times bigger than a lower world. The bigger the world, the more opportunities and enemies. My only concern in choosing a world is that you won't find enough powerful enemies. That's why I chose this one," his father explained.

"On top of that, the beasts in this world are in the top 10% in terms of power and civilization. It makes no sense to thrust you into a weak world just so that you will be killed in a powerful higher world."

Gravis' eyes shone a bit. "Civilization?" he asked.

His father nodded. "Spirit Beasts already have some intelligence and awareness. That, of course, will only increase the more powerful they become. It might not be the same as a human civilization due to the beasts' inherent straightforwardness, but it's a civilization nonetheless. You can liken the civilizations to packs of wolves with their territory."

"Interesting," Gravis said as he rubbed his chin with a smirk, "and I'm guessing that Heaven won't lower the Karmic Luck of my companions anymore?" he asked.

"No, he won't," his father said. "You know the reason."

Gravis nodded. "Either repayment or using them as hostages later on."

His father nodded. "Remember, there is not a single human in there. Some beasts might look similar to humans, but they're not."

Gravis nodded and cracked his neck a bit. "Is there something I should know when entering the world? How will this entering into a beast work?"

"As soon as you enter the world, you will feel your body breaking apart and dissolving. You won't experience any pain. Don't move your physical power into your lightning or Spirit. Just let your whole physical power be dissolved. Moving your physical power into your other centers of power while it's being dissolved will make your centers of power lose balance again."

Gravis nodded.

"Then, you need to wait until a beast dies with a nearly complete body that has an affinity for your element. Your Spirit and lightning will enter the body, and it will get fully healed by the Laws. At that time, you're on your own."

"Remember that your new body won't be able to handle your Punishment Lightning yet. You first need to achieve Unity again. Yet, your Spirit is under no such restriction. You have full access to your Spirit in the Unity Realm and the corresponding pressure for your Will-Aura."

"No early-grade Unity Beast or below will be able to withstand your Will-Aura. Middle-grade Unity Beasts can kill you, but that would be the same even if you still had your current body. So, you could say that your strength doesn't really decrease at all. You're just more restricted in your way of fighting."

"Reaching Unity again won't take more than some days. At that time, you will be more powerful than you are now. Also, I will limit your Spirit's sense to be the same as a beast in your current Realm. If you can see every danger beforehand, you might avoid it," his father said as he finished his lengthy explanation.

Gravis nodded. "Makes sense." Then, he turned to Orpheus. "See you soon, brother."

"See you soon, brother," Orpheus said back.

"Goodbye, mom. I'll miss you," Gravis said as he turned to his mother.

His mother smiled. "I wish you all the best on your journey, Gravis. Return soon, okay?"

Gravis nodded. "I will."

Then, he turned to his father. "I'm ready," he said with conviction.

His father nodded. "Good!" then, he summoned a portal, which stood right in front of Gravis. "I'll keep watch over you."

"Thank you, father," Gravis said.

"Goodbye," Gravis said one last time to his family with a wave and then stepped into the portal.

The portal vanished, and Gravis was gone.

He had stayed home for an entire year, which was more than enough for him.

Now, it was time for him to continue on his path to power!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 370: New Body

There was darkness as far as the eye could see. Everything was black around Gravis, and he felt an itchy sensation all over his body. It wasn't really bad, just annoying. Gravis lifted his hand and looked at it. Sure enough, it was slowly dissolving into nothingness.

Flakes of his skin left his body as they vanished into dust. Seeing your own body get dissolved into nothingness and vanishing would be a traumatic experience for every mortal, but Gravis had already been prepared for that. His father had told him what would happen.

'Sure enough, it doesn't hurt,' he thought, 'that's, at least, something.'

There was no air around or anything, but Gravis didn't need that to begin with. His body was also dissolving at a much slower rate than he had expected. At this rate, it would probably take a couple of hours. Though, that was hard to determine without any visible indicator for the passage of time.

Gravis tried to sigh but failed since there was no air. 'This will take a while,' he thought. 'I wonder how long I will stay in this space. Father said that I have to wait until a compatible body dies. The middle world is huge, but it might take some time until something with a fitting elemental affinity dies with a somewhat whole body. Most beasts eat the corpse, making it hard for the corpse to stay whole.'

Gravis sat down onto whatever he stood on previously and began to wait. There was nothing to do.

'Oh, right!' Gravis thought suddenly. 'I should retrieve my Life Ring and Obsidian Ring into my Spirit Space.'

Whoop!

And like that, everything was gone but his clothing. He had enough spare clothing inside his Spirit Space, but he really doubted if he would need those. After all, he was about to inhabit a different body. Since his Spirit Space would follow him into the new body, everything would remain safe inside it.

While waiting for the process to finish, Gravis looked at the CMO inside his Life Ring. The blob was just sitting on top of a stony mountain. Gravis had already ordered the mushroom to keep away from it, but he just wanted to be sure. So, he placed it outside its reach.

Speaking of the mushroom, without anything else threatening it, it grew at a rapid pace. It didn't become stronger, but it became bigger. By now, it covered a territory that was over 20 kilometers wide. That was quite impressive for a single mushroom.

The CMO just sat there, doing something. Gravis looked at it and concentrated his Spirit on it. His Spirit wasn't powerful enough to see the underlying Laws or Energy that created it, but he could see its effect.

It was changing color slowly. By now, it was completely red. Gravis expected that it probably had developed an affinity for fire. On top of that, it wasn't really a blob anymore. Some bone spurs broke out of its "skin" without any rhyme or reason. Other parts of the blob had weird appendages coming out of it.

'I wonder how it creates all these things inside of it,' Gravis thought, 'speaking of, doesn't my body do the same when it heals? Wonder how that works.'

Gravis' Spirit was powerful enough to see the microscopic level, but he didn't find anything. He had the theory that maybe some small living things made up living beings, but that wasn't true. It was just one cohesive blob.

Yet, even though he had only seen slime when he first saw it, he could now see many different parts. Sometimes, it was creating some random scales. Other times, it grew some weird hair or nails. It was actually bizarre to see the blob produce these beast-like or human-like features just for them to get reabsorbed or die later.

Yet, there was some kind of conscience or instinct living inside the blob. When some of its new appendages died off, they fell away from the body. Curiously enough, the blob either created some kind of tentacle to grab the fallen appendage or slightly moved over to it.

'It is able to discern that it needs its own mass back to survive. If it doesn't reabsorb its own "meat", it would shrink. On top of that, I feel that it is absorbing a little bit of Energy. When it creates something harder, it absorbs more Energy than usual. Truly interesting,' Gravis thought as his Self inside his Spirit Space scratched its chin.

Like this, Gravis just kept watching the CMO. Its continuous growth was rather interesting.

After a while, Gravis looked away and checked on his body.

'Already gone?' Gravis thought in shock. 'How long did I watch the CMO? How much time has passed?'

Gravis had no idea how much time had passed. His Life Ring didn't have any day and night cycle, and he couldn't discern the time by looking at the outside. There was just blackness.

His Self narrowed its eyes. 'I should be careful in the future. The CMO has distracted me for quite a while. However, it shouldn't have been too long. After all, I didn't get transported to my new body yet.'

Right now, Gravis was nothing more than a minuscule flying orb. This was his tiny Spirit Space. It was huge on the inside, but on the outside, it was smaller than an ant. A couple-of-centimeters-wide lightning ball was orbiting around his Spirit Space.

It didn't look imposing from the outside, but from inside Gravis' Spirit Space, it looked as massive and imposing as the sun. Gravis made it move around a bit and noticed that he still had full control. It was like the lightning was still inside his body.

Seeing that there was nothing else to do, Gravis went back to watching the CMO.

Like this, time passed.

Whoom!

'Oh! Something's happening,' Gravis thought as he felt a pull. He had been watching the CMO for who knew how long. Gravis had utterly lost his concept of time, but apparently, he was about to enter a body now.

'I'm ready!' he thought with motivation as he looked at his floating Spirit Space. He noticed that, as the force of the pull increased, his Spirit Space and lightning started to vanish. They became more and more transparent until Gravis could barely make them out anymore.

It felt bizarre to still be conscious and see your whole self vanish into nothingness. Did Gravis even exist anymore?

Psh!

An immense stabbing pain suddenly assaulted Gravis at the right side of his... chest? Gravis wasn't sure where he felt that. The pain made him open his eyes.

'Eyes? I can see!' Gravis thought as he realized that he was already inside his new body. He quickly used his eyes and Spirit to look around. Sadly, his eyes only saw blackness.

His Spirit covered only 10 kilometers around him, surprising him quite a bit. "Blub bub blub-"

Gravis had tried to say that his father had told him about his suppression of his Spirit, but only bubbles came out of his mouth. Apparently, he was underwater.

His Spirit showed him that he was lying down on the ocean floor, on some sand. Some kelp and other kinds of flora were around him. Yet, everything was completely dark. He could only see with his Spirit. On top of that, he felt an incredible pressure suppressing his body.

'This body isn't able to handle these depths. I need to swim upward,' he thought, 'But first, fuck that crab!'

The stabbing pain he had felt was a crab that tore a chunk off his new body. Gravis immediately used his Will-Aura and pressed the crab into nothingness. It was probably a ferocious beast, the bottom of the food chain.

Gravis had also inspected his body by now. His Spirit Space was residing in his head, as usual, while his Lightning was in the center of the lower half of his body. Everything around the lightning had been decimated. The body wasn't able to handle the lightning. So, the lightning resided in a destroyed part of his body.

Gravis quickly swam upward but noticed that his lightning wasn't moving along with him. As his body rose, the lightning burned more into his body. Gravis reacted quickly enough and used his Spirit to make the lightning stay in its usual spot.

The two injuries were already making Gravis feel weak. This body didn't have much Life Energy remaining. Luckily...

BZZZ!

Beasts also had some small inherent Energy inside their body. Gravis quickly repaired the damage, but the lightning just created some new space for itself.

There was also something else that assaulted him, a feeling of hunger and suffocation. Gravis quickly checked his body and found what he was looking for. By willing it, he made his gills move. The feeling of suffocation quickly vanished.

After swimming for a bit, Gravis finally exited the depths of the ocean. The pressure around his body lessened, and it felt manageable now. Some bubbles came out of his gills. That was supposed to be a sigh.

Gravis looked upwards and tried to narrow his eyes. Sadly, his body wasn't able to do that.

'Is this funny to you, Heaven?' Gravis thought in annoyance.

Why did he think that?

It was because of his new body. It was black and around six meters long. Some slimy skin coated his outside, and he had no arms or legs. He also only had a single fin at the back of his long, slithery body.

Gravis tried to groan, but only bubbles came out of his mouth.

He was a fucking electric eel.