

## Lightning 381

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### Chapter 381: Snake

Nearly all the beasts had noticed what had happened. After all, the chieftain had stayed at the front, far away from everyone else, making her quite conspicuous. When Gravis killed her, they nearly all stopped breathing in shock. A mid-rank Spirit Beast had killed a Lord? That was impossible!

What would happen to them now? Were they supposed to stay and wait? Could they flee? What were they supposed to do?

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" Gravis asked Orthar with a smirk.

"If the chieftain was confident enough in leading a raid-party towards the land with her strength, the opposition on the land shouldn't be something she couldn't deal with," Orthar answered.

Gravis' smirk widened, and he nodded. "Exactly. I've got a Unity Beast to eat now, but I need another one to reach the Unity Realm myself. I should be able to find a suitable one at the shore. After all, the beasts on land surely wouldn't keep their territory undefended."

Orthar looked at the stunned beasts behind them. "Do you intend to use them?" he asked.

"No," Gravis answered immediately. "I'm not a fan of forcing people or beasts into servitude. They can follow me if they want, but they don't have to."

"I'm glad to hear that, Gravis," Orthar said. "I'm also not a fan of forcing others to do my bidding as long as they didn't show aggression towards me."

"I think I should talk to them," Gravis said as he turned to the beasts. Not all the beasts were inside his Spirit's range, but most of them were.

When the beasts saw Gravis looking at them, they grew panicked. If they wanted to flee, this was their chance.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Many beasts suddenly started fleeing with all their powers into the distance while others decided to stay. It wasn't that they wanted to go on land, but that Gravis could probably kill the fleeing beasts. Acting against his potential wishes could doom them.

Yet, contrary to their expectations, Gravis didn't chase any of the beasts. He just let them leave. When the hesitating beasts noticed that, a lot of them also decided to flee. Invading the land? They were not suicidal! Their instincts screamed at them that there was danger, and they followed their directions.

After a minute, only around 10% of the beasts remained. Gravis grew interested in the fact that so many beasts stayed, even though invading the land was basically a death sentence. When he saw no more beasts fleeing, Gravis swam forward.

"It's interesting that you decided to stay," Gravis transmitted to them. "You know that the land has food for me and, therefore, is also enticing to me. Why did you decide to stay?"

Most of the beasts remained silent. They weren't even sure why they didn't flee. Maybe they were just too indecisive?

Even after several seconds, no one answered Gravis.

"Anyway," Gravis transmitted to them. "It doesn't matter what you want to do. You can leave, and I won't stop you. But you can also stay if you want. I have some nice ideas for assaulting the land."

The beasts looked around unsurely. Yes, assaulting the land was akin to suicide, but that was only true when they were forced to attack like a suicide squad. Every beast was interested in becoming more powerful. Wasn't a raid on the continent perfect for that?

"How do you intend to attack?" a beast transmitted.

Gravis was a bit surprised about the clear message he had received. Apparently, this beast wasn't stupid. Gravis immediately noticed the speaker.

It was a thin blue snake, and it was nearly 200-meters-long. Its eyes appeared interested, sneaky, and in control of the situation. Gravis immediately knew that the snake prided itself in its craftiness.

Gravis scratched his chin as he looked at the snake.

"You know what?" Gravis transmitted with a smirk. "I had some plans for an attack, but you look like you have a better idea. Otherwise, you wouldn't have spoken up like this, right?"

The snake narrowed its eyes a bit as its tongue briefly peeked through its mouth. Right now, the snake was thinking about a lot of things at once. It had expected many different answers from Gravis, but not this one.

It was rare that the snake miscalculated its opponents' actions. This threw all its plans into the trash. "Why are you asking me?" it asked back.

Gravis' smirk intensified. He preferred speaking to smart beings.

"Your eyes show a craftiness and greed," Gravis transmitted only to the snake, keeping the other beasts out of the loop. "I think your goal is power, but in a different meaning than most beasts interpret it."

"Go on," the snake said with narrowed eyes. This weird creature in front of it was scary. The snake had never been seen-through like this before.

"I think you're interested in authority," Gravis transmitted. "I think you're chasing power to enable you to rule over the others. You want respect, followers, riches, beautiful companions, and many other things. Am I correct?"

"Isn't that why every beast tries to become stronger?" the snake answered, not denying Gravis' claim. "They all want to live in security and live their lives to the fullest."

"You're wrong there," Gravis said.

The snake narrowed its eyes. "How am I wrong?" it asked.

"You are assigning your values to others. I, for example, have no interest in ruling over others. I want the power to be free and unconstrained. The lives of the weaker beasts are irrelevant to me. Why would I care what an ant thinks about me?" Gravis said.

"Some beasts have the same goals as you, but a lot of others chase power for different reasons. Revenge, freedom, riches, respect, protection, surviving, and even knowledge are motivators for others."

The snake looked around at the other beasts and was honestly thinking about these words. Normally, when someone just said something, the snake wouldn't start doubting its usual outlook on life.

Yet, Gravis had proven his intelligence by seeing through its plan. Gravis was also quite powerful. The words he spoke could be valuable knowledge.

"Is that why you directly asked for my plan?" the snake asked.

Gravis nodded. "Yes. You probably wanted to take part in the invasion and use your ingenuity to gain some followers."

The snake remained silent for a bit. "I must admit that you're correct. Yet, even though you knew my goal, why did you still ask?" the snake asked with interest. It couldn't understand this beast's reason for directly giving the snake part of its authority. This seemed like Gravis was giving away part of his power for seemingly no reason.

Gravis laughed a bit. "Because, as I said, I don't care about ruling over others. I'm only interested in becoming powerful. I'm interested in freedom. Ruling over others will inherently force me to bend my will to their wellbeing. This is only a restriction."

"A true ruler bends to no one," the snake said.

"It depends on what your goal is," Gravis answered. "If you suppress everyone below you, they will feel stifled. As your following grows, the dissidents may start to overwhelm you and revolt. Maybe they will run to an enemy and inform them of your plans. As long as you rule with fear, your rule will only be shallow."

"If someone leaves, I'll just kill them," the snake said.

"That works once, or maybe twice, but the more you do it, the more your followers will fear for their own lives. They will start fearing for their lives even when they have never intended to betray you. At that point, they will only run away. With your power alone, you might be able to stay at your current position, but you won't be able to rise."

The snake still wasn't wholly convinced. This went completely against its ideology. Yet, it remained quiet since its arguments felt very weak right now.

"For example," Gravis said. "If I were to force you into serving me, you would search for every opportunity to get away from me, correct?"

The snake narrowed its eyes again.

"Yet, if I give you the authority you want, you wouldn't go against me. After all, we're allies. As long as I don't get between you and your goal, I won't be a hindrance, but an asset."

The snake still had narrowed eyes, but its mind was going crazy. This strange beast was showing proof of its claims by using the snake as an example. The snake knew best what it would do in the situations that Gravis spoke about, and it knew that Gravis was right.

After some seconds, the snake showed a kind of smirk, at least, that's what Gravis thought he saw.

"I want authority and knowledge," it said. "In return, I will manage the battle and beasts."

Gravis shook his head. "As I said, I don't intend to rule over others. So, I'm not interested in finding or founding a group."

Yet, the eyes of the snake remained confident. "You're new to this area, aren't you?" it asked.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "Yes, so what?" he asked.

"I thought so," the snake said. "If you want to become stronger than a level one Lord, you need a group. Without a group, it's impossible."

"How so?" Gravis asked.

"Because the Kingdoms and Empires don't just allow anyone into their territories," the snake answered. "Of course, you can go to their territories as prey and live there. After all, if all beasts are hunted down in those territories, they would lose their value."

"Yet," the snake said with a crafty sparkle in its eyes. "Prey is meant to strengthen the Empire or Kingdom, not weaken them. Not many beasts know of this, but as soon as a prey has killed a set number of assets from the Empire or Kingdom, someone far out of their class will come to clean them up."

Gravis narrowed his eyes as he looked at the snake.

Meanwhile, the snake only smirked.

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#### **Chapter 382: Plans for the Future**

Gravis and the snake looked at each other. Meanwhile, all the other beasts waited for Gravis to speak up again. They noticed that Gravis was speaking with the snake but didn't know what they were talking about. Orthar also only watched.

Suddenly, Gravis smirked. "You sure are crafty. You nearly got me there," he transmitted.

The snake seemed to frown. "I'm not lying," it said.

"I know, and that's why you're so crafty. You're not lying. You're just not telling me all the relevant information," Gravis said with a smirk.

The snake narrowed its eyes, but it felt nervous inside.

"If I were a ruler over a vast territory, and one beast showed incredible power by killing my underlings, I wouldn't directly kill it," Gravis said. "I would first ask it to join my empire. If it declines, then I would kill it."

Gravis swam closer to the snake. "Doesn't that sound logical and efficient?" he asked.

The snake only narrowed its eyes at him. Yet, it was sure that it would survive. Gravis had already shown that he was interested in its cleverness and ambition. Gravis wanted to use it, which gave the snake worth in Gravis' eyes. Due to that, the snake had taken the risk of trying to manipulate Gravis.

Whoom!

And with that, the snake was unable to move.

"If you want to follow me, I need to trust you," Gravis said as he got closer. "I am already willing to give you the majority of command. I am interested in you because you don't want to remain weak and want to further your power. Only by being this greedy will you put in more effort than anybody else."

"Yet..."

CRRRRR! CRK!

The snake felt unreal pain as it felt something essential in its body getting yanked out. Suddenly, a bloody bone shot out of its mouth.

Seeing its own bone leaving its body, the snake became panicked. Its craftiness left it, and what replaced it were fear and terror.

"If I can't trust you, and you try to scheme against me, you're even more useless than a dumb rock," Gravis said as he looked deeply into the snake's eyes.

The surrounding beasts were shocked as they watched. The snake was also a high-rank Spirit Beast, like them. The fact that this strange beast was able to tear a bone out of the snake without using its body horrified them.

"You can leave, or you can stay," Gravis said as he held the bone. "But if you want to follow me, you're not allowed to scheme against me. If that happens again..."

Whoop! CRRRRRK!

The corpse of the chieftain appeared, and Gravis tore the shell of the meat with his Spirit. Normally, his Spirit wouldn't be powerful enough to do that, but he had already prepared the corpse inside his Spirit Space. After all, there was an incredible amount of lightning inside his Spirit Space. Tearing some meat apart in there wasn't an issue.

"This will be you," Gravis finished his monologue as he took a bite off the exposed meat. "Understood?"

The snake was horrified when it saw how easily Gravis tore the corpse of a Lord apart. This strength was unreal! Wasn't this beast just a mid-rank Spirit Beast?

"I understand," the snake said after some seconds. "And I'm willing to follow you."

Gravis smiled and retrieved his Will-Aura. "Good," he said. "As long as you don't scheme against me, I won't mind. You can even ask my friend over there," Gravis pointed at Orthar, "to teach you some interesting knowledge. He knows a lot."

The snake looked over and noticed the colossal octopus swimming near Gravis. Initially, it had believed that this was just another beast in the Horde. Apparently, it wasn't.

"Okay," the snake said deferentially.

"Good. Do you have a name?" Gravis asked.

"Shira," the snake answered.

Gravis nodded. "By the sound of it, you're female, right?" Gravis asked.

Shira nodded.

"Good. I need to talk to my friend for a bit. After that, we can talk about our land invasion," Gravis said as he swam over to Orthar.

"I presume the snake said some things you didn't like?" Orthar said after seeing what Gravis had done. "What you did, didn't match your personality," he also commented.

"I need her to realize the truth of the world. Power is the most important thing, and if I wanted to kill her, all her craftiness wouldn't save her. If I didn't plan on using her, I wouldn't have done that," Gravis explained.

"Oh?" Orthar said. "You're planning on using her? What's your goal?"

Gravis sighed. "Let me first tell you what we talked about," Gravis said. Then, he quickly told Orthar about his conversation with Shira.

"You're playing a dangerous game, Gravis," Orthar commented. "The wild ambitions and greed of the snake may turn the Horde against you. If you require a Horde but don't want to lead, I can act as the leader."

"I know," Gravis said, "but do you truly want that?"

"No," Orthar answered quickly.

"That's why I didn't ask you," Gravis said. "You have a very similar goal to me. Leading something like a Horde will only keep you behind. Don't forget that we'll establish this organization only to enter the more fertile lands, or seas, if you will. Don't get attached to it."

"Normally, I directly understand your goals, but right now, I'm unsure why you want to establish a Horde," Orthar commented. "By entering the lands as prey, you get tempering and can join a Kingdom or an Empire. Why do you suddenly want to create a Horde?"

"Because I want to be free," Gravis said. "By joining a more powerful organization, I'll need to abide by the rules and need to work. I'm cultivating specifically to not get into such situations."

"Hm, that does make sense," Orthar commented, "but what about the danger of Shira turning the Horde against you? Wouldn't all your work be for nothing then?"

Gravis nodded. "The chances are high, but it doesn't matter. Craftiness can enable you to play the political game to perfection, but as soon as someone breaks the rules, it loses most of its power. In the end, strength is the most important factor."

"For example," Gravis said. "If Shira turns the Horde against me and instigates a revolt, I can just kill her. Then, I can offer the beasts to either leave or stay. Some might leave, but many others will stay. At that time, I'll have a pretty loyal following."

"And if Shira doesn't turn the Horde against me, it would be even better. Remember that she has an incredible greed for power. This will drive her to strengthen the Horde with everything she has. One way or the other, the Horde will become more powerful under her rule. Also, the more she learns from me and you, the better."

Orthar thought about this for a while. "It sounds logical based on the foundation of your argument, but that can change. If Shira manages to become stronger than you with the help of this power, you might very well die."

Gravis laughed. "If someone greedy for material authority grows faster in power than me, then I deserve to die to them," Gravis said. "Their goal isn't pure power, but mine is. If I can't even do that, then what's the point of trying to reach my goal?"

"Also, as soon as I reach the Unity Realm, I'll regain the control over my lightning. On top of that, my body will be more powerful than before. I was already able to beat an Early Rank Unity Beast back then. With my more powerful body, I might even be able to beat beasts in the Mid Rank. I'm sure that I won't grow slower in power than Shira."

"Then I'm fine with Shira following us," Orthar said. "After all, for all the danger she brings with her, she also brings powerful advantages."

"Then it's decided," Gravis said. "We're going to establish a Horde that can enter the more fertile lands. What position do you want in the Horde?"

"I think the position of an oracle fits me," Orthar said. "I like the exchange of knowledge, and I don't mind teaching it. I don't want to be involved in the mundane affairs, though."

Gravis nodded. "No problem. I'll just act as some kind of ancestor or something. Do you remember when I told you about the Darkness Sect and Old Darkness?" Gravis asked, and Orthar confirmed that he remembered. "I'll be acting similarly to him. I'm just going to stay in the background and let Shira run the Horde."

"Good," Orthar said. "Then let's plan the land invasion."

"I think Shira already has a good plan. This is probably not the first time that she was part of something like this. Who knows, maybe she even came voluntarily?" Gravis mused. "We should first consult her. After all, she will be running the Horde in the future."

"Sounds reasonable," Orthar said. "I should also introduce myself. We will be talking a lot in the future. I might not be the biggest fan of her, but I can see her uses."

"Good," Gravis said.

And with that, they turned to the beasts again. The beasts were all waiting obediently behind the snake at the forefront. Apparently, they had realized that Gravis had given Shira a lot of authority. Though, it could also be that Shira just directly told them. After all, not many beasts were as smart as Shira and Orthar.

Then, Gravis and Orthar swam over to Shira.

It was time to plan the invasion.

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#### **Chapter 383: Planning the Invasion**

"We'll assault the land," Gravis said to Shira. "Do you already have a plan in mind?"

Gravis wasn't sure, but he thought that he saw Shira smirk.

"This is not the first time I've been part of something like this," she said. "I know how these raids go, and generally, they go horribly."

"How come?" Gravis asked. He already had some answers in mind, but he wanted to be sure. Shira had first-hand experience in these things.

"Adaptation and strategy," Shira answered. "We are not adapted to fight on land. Additionally, the common strategy is a war of attrition. We just send beasts into the enemy until either they die, or we die."

Gravis nodded. "That's indeed a stupid strategy. What's your idea of a better one?"

"Using the Water Makers," Shira answered. "Water Makers are beasts with an affinity with earth. They are very rare, but their skills are invaluable. After the war ends, they can lower the ground and distribute it over a wider area. Because of that, the lowered ground gets flooded with water."

Shira knew that Gravis wasn't from here. So, she had explained the concept of a Water Maker to him. Gravis was a bit surprised about the Water Makers' affinity. By the name, he had expected that they had an affinity with water, not earth. Yet, the explanation of Shira made sense.

"But that isn't so simple, right?" Gravis asked.

"Yes. Water Makers are rare and, therefore, valuable. Sending them in while we're still fighting is putting them at risk. That's why they generally only come after the fighting is finished."

Gravis nodded. "And I guess the beasts on land have beasts that can do the same, correct?"

"Of course," Shira answered. "Additionally, beasts with an affinity for earth are more numerous on land. They create high walls and mountains to make it harder for us to fight. In general, the land dwellers don't do invasions but counterattacks."



Gravis rubbed his chin in thought. "When the invasion from the sea exhausts itself, they can take another territory by attacking. Yet, this forces them to survive the defense. Though defending is easier than attacking."

"Yes, but defending still isn't easy," Shira said. "There are fewer beasts on our level among the land dwellers. This means that we have a numerical advantage."

Gravis furrowed his brows. "But isn't the continent in the center of the world and also bigger? Why do they have less Spirit Beasts?"

Shira's eyes twinkled a bit. Not many beasts knew about the greater layout of the world. The fact that Gravis knew about this, but not about the concept of Water Makers or Hordes, interested her. Gravis wasn't simple.

"You're correct, but that doesn't hold true for beasts on our level. We have a far bigger territory with less Natural Essence while the continent is smaller with more Natural Essence. This means that we have more beasts on our level and about the same number of Lords. The difference comes into play at the next level. Kings and Emperors are more common for land dwellers."

Gravis nodded. "That makes sense. I also assume that the more powerful Lords and Kings aren't interested in territories this far away from the center of their land."

"Exactly," Shira answered. "They see these invasions as an opportunity to increase the power of their followers. After all, when we lose, we leave behind a lot of meat for them to consume."

Gravis fell into thought again. He remembered the map that his father had shown him of the world. There was a stretch of ocean that even touched the center of the world. When Gravis had seen that, he hadn't known about the existence of the Water Makers yet.

The existence of these Water Makers would allow the land beasts to reclaim that part of the ocean. Yet, they didn't. This could only mean one thing. There was at least one very powerful beast able to resist the land invasions in the core of the world.

"So, how do you plan to use the Water Makers?" Gravis asked.

"I plan on conquering very small territories and defending them. The Water Makers will lower the land on these territories, giving us a stretch of water that enters deep into their territory."

Gravis furrowed his brows. "This is a better strategy, yes, but there is a giant flaw."

Shira narrowed her eyes. She didn't like it when someone questioned her craftiness. "Which is?" she asked with a hint of annoyance.

"By defending the stretch of water, we can force them to attack us. That is true, but the issue is that they can attack our rear. Instead of attacking the stretch of water, they might go to the shore and attack the territory behind us. At that point, we would be stuck in that thin stretch of water, surrounded by land," Gravis explained.

Shira narrowed her eyes in thought. She wanted to refute Gravis' claim since she believed that her plan was perfect. Yet, she wasn't sure what she could do against such a counterattack. Sadly, her pride was in the way and disallowed her from acknowledging her mistake. Instead, she only glared at Gravis.

When Gravis saw that, he sighed. "Shira, if you want to become powerful, you need to remember that you are flawed."

"Explain," she said icily.

"Think back to your life up to now. Would you say that the you from ten years ago is as smart as the you today?" he asked.

"Of course not," Shira answered as if that was obvious.

"So, the you from ten years in the future will also think that you are stupid today?" Gravis asked.

Shira stopped glaring and fell into thought.

"The fact that the you in the future can look down on the current you means that you still have room to grow. You pride yourself in your intellect, but there are beasts just as intelligent as you that have the advantage of experience, and sometimes, even stupid beasts can find a better way. Always reevaluate if there isn't a better way, even if the beast telling you about it is beneath you."

Of course, Shira wasn't immediately convinced. Doing that felt like lowering herself to the level of common, stupid beasts. How could their plan be better than her own?

"I'll think about it," Shira said.

Gravis noticed this and sighed. Not everyone could be introspective. Admitting one's fault was difficult and required inner strength. Admitting that one was wrong inherently felt like they lost a fight.

Gravis remembered his first talk with Joyce after they have met in the Core-Continent. She had said that her clansmen were stronger than Gravis since they were able to confront their pain. If Gravis hadn't seen the reason in that and admitted that she was right, he wouldn't have been able to confront his emotions at home. After all, he would still believe that his old way was the correct one.

Gravis shook his head a bit when he realized that he was thinking about unimportant stuff. Finding a good tactic for the invasion was more important.

Gravis looked back at Shira and decided to unveil his plan. It was similar to Shira's but a bit different. "I'd like to share the plan I have," Gravis said.

"Please do," Shira said with an annoyed tone.

"We are also making channels, but not one going through the middle. I'm guessing that the land is also split into territories?" he asked.

"Yes," Shira answered. "We only attack one territory at a time. If we attack the border between two territories, we will be besieged by two tribes. This makes the invasion almost impossible."

Gravis nodded. "Can you explain the size of our enemy territory in these measurements?" Gravis said as he transmitted the concept and length of a kilometer to her.

"Our enemy is called the Sand Tribe," Shira answered. "By what I've heard, they had been quite powerful in the past but have declined severely until they could only hold a territory at the coast. The

closer a territory is to the coast, the less Natural Essence there is. Therefore, they count as one of the weakest land tribes."

"According to your specifications, the territory is about 400 kilometers wide and 500 kilometers deep. It's a rather small one," Shira explained.

Gravis furrowed his brows. He hadn't expected the territory to be this big.

His original plan was thrown out of the window immediately.

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#### **Chapter 384: Preparations Complete**

Gravis scratched his chin as he tried to think of a new plan. Initially, he had expected that the territory would be around 50 to 100 kilometers wide. With these specifications, his plan would have worked pretty well. Sadly, reality didn't always conform to one's wishes. He had to create a brand new plan now.

"In order to make a better plan, I need some intelligence from you," Gravis said.

"What do you want to know?" Shira asked back with boredom.

"How many beasts do we have, and how many of these beasts are Water Makers?" Gravis asked.

"Please also tell me about how strong each beast is."

"According to your specification for power, we have 88 beasts that you would call mid-rank Spirit Beasts and 20 late-rank Spirit Beasts," Shira explained. "As for Water Makers..."

"We have none," Shira said, making Gravis furrow his brows.

"You said you wanted to use them. How are we supposed to use them if we don't have any?" Gravis asked with a bit of annoyance.

"Because we can't start the invasion without Water Makers anyway," Shira answered. "We need Water Makers in order to commence the invasion. We would need to search for them anyway, and then we would have them. Then, we can also use them."

"And how do you intend to gather them? You said they are very rare," Gravis asked.

Shira seemed to smirk again. "You are the one that wants to invade the land. I can plan the invasion, but I can't find them for you. You must find a solution to this, not me."

Gravis sighed. "Okay," he conceded. "What about our enemy? How many enemies are there, and what's the terrain like?"

"Normally, we have the number advantage," Shira said, "but since you so graciously let so many beasts leave, we are actually at a disadvantage in that category as well. The enemy should have about double our numbers right now. This means you also need to scout more beasts if you want to invade the land."

Gravis fell into thought again for a few seconds. "And their terrain?"

"The land dwellers' territories are nearly identical to one another," Shira said. "I'm pretty confident in their land's layout."

Seeing that Shira paused, Gravis snorted. "Just tell me. You don't need to show the worth of your knowledge."

Shira was a bit annoyed at Gravis' direct answer but started to explain the terrain anyway.

"The beasts on land not only have to defend from beasts from the sea, but also from other Tribes. The best way to do that is to create some mountains at their borders. Of course, these mountains aren't directly at their border, but about ten kilometers away from them."

"Since the other land dwellers use the same defense, you can generally see two mountain ranges around 20 kilometers away from each other with no beast living between those. The walls act as buffers. You could say that the area between the two walls belongs to none of the Tribes or both of them. It depends on your viewpoint."

Gravis continued scratching his chin. "So, our enemy's territory is surrounded by a tall mountain range. How many of the beasts are stationed at these borders?"

"About 10% per side," Shira explained. "They, obviously, also have a mountain range that blocks access from the sea. We basically need to invade a land that has mountain ranges blocking every entry point."

Gravis nodded. "And flying creatures? How many do they have?"

"It depends on the tribe," Shira explained. "The Sand Tribe is a group of ground beasts. I don't think they have any flying beasts."

Gravis' brows furrowed. "No flying beasts? This sounds like an obvious oversight."

"Their Tribe is the Sand Tribe. They are proud of their kind and affinity towards earth. If they had flying creatures, they wouldn't call themselves the Sand Tribe anymore," Shira explained.

"So, it's a matter of pride and purity for them," Gravis commented. "That's pretty stupid in my eyes. However, I shouldn't complain. After all, this should make the whole invasion much easier. Do they have a central hub or headquarters or something similar?"

"Generally, land-dwellers create a Spire in the middle of their territory," Shira explained. "It's a singular, very wide and very high mountain that stretches deep into the sky. It acts as a status symbol and fortification. They can fight from a height advantage while everyone else needs to fight from the foot of the Spire."

"Hmm," Gravis hummed. "Destroying the Spire probably also isn't easy?" Gravis asked.

"Of course, it isn't easy. The stone they use is mighty, and, contrary to expectations, it takes more power to damage it than to repair or build it. The only ones that can damage the Spire effectively are Water Makers. Yet, since the enemy has more Water Makers, they will easily counter our efforts."

Gravis continued thinking as a plan was forming in his mind. Now, he actually knew what kind of territory his enemies occupied. The territory was very well defended and could withstand an incredible attack from land, sea, and sky. The walls, or mountain ranges, were a significant hurdle for any attacker.

After some minutes, Gravis' eyes shone as he finalized his plan.

"We start our preparations right now," Gravis said to Shira and Orthar.

Shira narrowed her eyes. "We don't have any Water Makers, and we are at an environmental and numerical disadvantage."

"I know," Gravis said with a smirk, "but we don't need any more beasts. As for the Water Makers..." Gravis smirked.

"We already have some."

Shira was a bit taken aback. "We do?" she asked.

Gravis pointed at Orthar. "Orthar has an affinity towards earth. Therefore, he counts as a Water Maker."

"I guess I do," Orthar commented from the side. "I haven't known the concept of a Water Maker up until now, but I do have an affinity towards earth. Moving some ground from A to B isn't an issue."

Shira looked at Orthar with interest. After some seconds, she looked at Gravis again. "You said some, not one."

Gravis only smirked.

The Horde went to work immediately. Gravis informed them of the rules and tactics of the invasion. This was not one of the typical invasions where they would just send beasts at the opponent until either side collapses. These beasts were willing to follow him, and he was already seeing them as part of his Horde.

After a lot of explaining, most of the beasts understood the plan. They also grew more confident in the fight. After all, if Gravis' plan worked, they would be able to fight the land beasts inside water, giving them a great advantage.

While Gravis and Shira explained the specifics to the beasts, Orthar went to work around the environment. The ocean wasn't very deep this close to the continent. It was at a natural angle that ended in a shoreline.

If one moved earth around, the earth wouldn't just disappear. The enormous amounts of earth had to be moved somewhere else. Thus, Orthar started moving the earth at the shallow coast further into the ocean, creating a vast and deep abyss, ready to swallow the earth in the war.

The preparations took over a week until they were finished. Now, every beast knew exactly what to do, even the stupid ones, though, not directly. Explaining the plan to the stupid ones had basically proven itself to be impossible.

So, Gravis decided on a different system. He found the smartest beasts in the Horde and assigned the stupid beasts into their teams. Of course, the Team Leaders would receive part of the loot, and when Gravis officially established his Tribe, they would have a higher position than other ones.

These smarter beasts were smart in regards to beasts, but not smart in regards to humans. It still took a lot of effort to explain the plan to them, but they understood it at least. When they finally understood the advantages of the plan, they felt like a new world had been opened before their eyes. With these tactics, they had a high chance of winning.

The loyalty of the followers increased as they realized the, to them, brilliant plan. As long as they followed Gravis, they would have a high chance of becoming powerful.

Meanwhile, the environment before the coast had utterly changed. Orthar had moved a ridiculous amount of ground into the ocean. When one entered the ocean from the coast, everything looked normal, at least, until they reached the ten-kilometer-mark.

At that point, they would notice a cliff. From a depth of around five kilometers, the ocean immediately deepened into a depth of nearly 100 kilometers. At one point, they were still near the shore, and at the next moment, they would be right above a seemingly bottomless abyss.

Of course, it wasn't only Orthar that accomplished that. The mysterious, second Water Maker had done even more work than him.

Like this, everything had been prepared for the invasion.

All beasts swam behind Gravis as he looked at the continent with shining eyes. Gravis had already eaten the former chieftain and had reached the high-rank Spirit Beast level. With his new size of about 50-meters, he looked incredibly intimidating. Yet, all the other beasts still dwarfed him. Now, Gravis only needed one more Unity Beast to regain his Unity. At that point, he would also have this perfect body.

"Everyone knows what they need to do?" Gravis asked the beasts.

"Yes," the Team Leaders answered directly. They had been drilled thoroughly until they could recite the plan even in their sleep. Though beasts at that level don't really sleep.

"Are you ready, Orthar?" Gravis asked.

"I've never done this before, but I think it shouldn't be too hard," Orthar answered.

Gravis nodded with a smirk and turned back to the land. "It's time to claim my first territory," Gravis said with fiery eyes.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 385: The Invasion Begins**

"We notice earth movement coast," an 80-meter-tall dung beetle transmitted to the gathered beasts. Yet, the beetle's imposing height couldn't intimidate anyone because, right now, it was lowering itself in front of the beasts standing before it.

The only thing that could be seen around the gathered beasts was some stone and the bright sky. The clouds were far below them, creating a picture where it looked like the gathered beasts were at the top of the world, away from the mundane life of mortals.

"This could be a sea invasion," a 200-meter-long viper said from the side. It was coiled together like a cobra, ready to strike. The red viper had some intimidating spires on its head, making it appear incredibly dangerous.

"A most humiliating incident, indeed," an absolutely enormous pangolin said from the side. This pangolin alone took up nearly half of the peak of the Spire. Together with its tail, it had an intimidating length of about 800 meters. If Gravis were to meet this pangolin, he would be impressed by its

incredible size. This would be the biggest Spirit Beast he had ever met. One would even have to ask how it managed to get up this incredibly tall Spire.

BANG!

"Insolence!" the beast in the middle shouted as the stone cracked around it. This was the smallest beast of all the ones present. Yet, it sat in the center, at an elevated position.

It was a brown scorpion, only around ten-meters-long. Yet, it radiated an aura that would force every Spirit Beast to kneel before it deferentially. This was the Tribe Leader of the Sand Tribe, Crilas, the Sand Lord.

"Ever since my ancestors have been slain, we were forced to relocate time and time again," Crilas said. "We have fallen from grace, and now, even the lowest of the sea beasts dare to covet our lands!"

"All enemies look down upon us, but we've managed to persevere. We shall show them that, even though we have fallen from grace, we are still not something that some mere shrimp from the water can attack!"

Crilas stood up as he walked forward into the middle of the Spire, the other beasts all lowering their heads. "After we break this attack, we will gain new lands and more power. We will use that newfound power to reclaim our ancestors' territories. Immediately prepare for battle!" Crilas shouted.

The other beasts lowered their heads further. "Yes, my Lord," they said in unison. The viper immediately slithered away while the dung beetle also left. After a while, only the pangolin and Crilas were left.

"Do not underestimate an invasion from the sea," the pangolin said. "Our Tribe isn't very good at fighting the sea beasts. We must take care in the upcoming battle."

If anyone else had dared to speak to Crilas like that, they would have been killed and eaten by him. Yet, the pangolin was special.

"You know me, teacher," Crilas said. "I won't take any foe lightly."

"Very well, my Lord," the pangolin said. Yet, strangely, it didn't move from its spot. It merely remained at the top of the Spire while the whole Sand Tribe was going crazy around them.

Different kinds of beasts started coming out of caves in the Spire and started readying themselves for battle. After some minutes, the whole Tribe had gathered before the humongous Spire, looking upwards.

After some seconds, the viper appeared some kilometers high on the Spire.

"To the coast!" it shouted with a mighty hiss.

"Coast!" every beast answered. Then, they started charging in the direction of the coast. It would only take some minutes until they reached the coast 200-kilometers-away. A war was about to break out!

The beasts arrived, but they saw no sign of an invasion. Slowly, they grew confused. Where was the enemy?

The viper that had followed them looked with narrowed eyes at the silent coast. Was their intelligence wrong?

"Sea Scouts, enter the sea and investigate!" the viper ordered.

Quickly, four relatively small lizards stepped forward. The biggest of them was only around two-meters-long, incredibly small for Spirit Beasts. Then, the four lizards charged into the sea. They had the ability to camouflage themselves and dig into the ground. Together with their small size, they were the perfect scouts.

The viper waited for several minutes, and just when it grew impatient, the lizards returned.

"Report," the viper ordered.

"52 viper-lengths, nothing special," one of the lizards said. "53 viper-lengths, immediate depth. Over 100 viper-lengths deep. Can't go lower to investigate."

The viper narrowed its eyes. It had taught the scouts how to properly transmit accurate lengths. So, it had told them that they should just inform it how many vipers the distance had. Of course, one viper-length was just as long as the viper itself, about 200 meters.

"Are there any sea beasts?" the viper asked.

"None. No beasts. But, we found big cave," one of the lizards explained.

"How big is the cave, and where is it?" the viper asked, narrowing its eyes.

"70 viper-lengths deep. Cave has size of five viper-lengths," the lizard reported.

The viper narrowed its eyes and looked at the sea. Then, it looked at the ground. "Dung beetles, is there ground movement?" it asked.

The dung beetles lowered themselves to the ground and remained still for several seconds. Then, one of them stood up. "Weak ground movement," it said. "Coming from direction of Spire."

"Initially, there have been reports of small earthquakes at the coast," the viper muttered to itself, "yet, now, there are no beasts in sight."

The viper looked to the sea again. "Yet, they have created an Abyss right in front of our coast. There is definitely an invasion happening. Yet, there are no beasts. This can only mean that the beasts are somewhere else. One cave wouldn't be able to host an entire invasion of sea beasts."

Suddenly, the eyes of the viper widened. "Unless that's not a cave, but a tunnel!" it shouted.

"To the Spire!" the viper shouted to everyone with urgency. All the beasts heard the urgency and ran with everything they had.

The viper knew that they had been fooled. It had left the Spire with about 80% of its forces. If the enemy ambushed their home, it would be hard for them to defend. They had to get back to the Spire as soon as possible!



Yet, after only running for 150 kilometers, they found that their home had completely changed. A vast river blocked their path forward, around 30-kilometers-wide. But that was not the only bad thing.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

They saw lots of sea beasts swimming right in the river. Their enemy had arrived, and the enemy was between them and their home.

The viper narrowed its eyes in anger. "Go around it!" it shouted.

The army quickly started circling the vast river before them, but they quickly noticed that it went around the whole Spire. Right now, their home was surrounded by an abyss of water, ready to engulf it.

The viper grew more nervous. It had to get back to its Lord! Without their Lord, they would only be food for the adjacent Tribes. They couldn't let their Lord die!

"There's no other way," the viper said. "Ready for combat!" it ordered.

The beasts grew nervous. They couldn't fight properly in the water!

"Earth Movers, create a pathway to the Spire. Everyone else, defend the Earth Movers!" the viper ordered.

The beasts calmed down. Meanwhile, the dung beetles and several other beasts stepped forward, closer to the water. The remainder of the beasts started protecting the Earth Movers in their midst.

"Charge!" the viper shouted.

And with that, all the beasts charged at the water chasm.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 386: Brutal War**

CRRRRR!

The earth moved in front of the Earth Movers, and the ground around them heightened until it was around a kilometer higher than the sea level. The water was pushed to the side and flooded the landscape. Yet, to the beasts, this flood of water didn't even reach their knees. This was no hindrance.

CRRRRK!

The beasts immediately jumped back to the shore after their bridge crumbled. A Water Maker had destroyed the foundation of their bridge, making it collapse. When the viper saw that, its eyes became bloodshot.

"We need to stay near the water," it said, creating fear inside its army's ranks. "We have no other choice. We need to confront them directly. If we can't get to our Lord, we will become prey to these shrimps, and even if we manage to survive, the surrounding tribes will also see us as prey. We have carved our territory here, and if we can't defend it, we will die!"

The beasts were still fearful, but an incredible amount of motivation appeared in their eyes. It was now or never! If they couldn't defend against this Horde, they would die. There was no way out!

"Charge!" the viper shouted, and the Earth Movers lifted the land so that it was just a couple meters above the sea level. The beasts charged forward, and an army of sea beasts greeted them.

Fish started springing from one end of the bridge to the other, biting anything they could find and pulling it into the river. Crabs and shrimp stood vertically at the bridge, using their shears and claws to attack. Beasts with the water element started shooting water from the side, pushing the beasts into the water.

The opposition was powerful, and a massive amount of beasts fell into the water. Yet, they were Spirit Beasts. Even if they fell into the water, they weren't helpless. They were still powerful and could defend themselves.

The remaining sea beasts waited in the water, attacking everything that fell into the river. Yet, the fighting was brutal. There were a lot more ground beasts than sea beasts, making this fight incredibly difficult.

The viper's narrowed eyes shone. "There are not that many!" it shouted. "Continue going forward but go slower. We can exhaust them!"

The beasts roared and continued going. The sea beasts were threatening their home, and they had to defend it! Their lives were on the line!

After some minutes, the assault of the sea beasts became less relentless. By now, the beasts only fired at them occasionally. The crabs also retreated back into the river.

When the viper saw that, it hissed angrily. "They are gathering their forces to kill our lost tribesmen! We can't save them, but we can use this opportunity to assault the front! Follow me!" the viper shouted as it charged to the front, where it used its tail to throw away the few sea beasts in its path.

Meanwhile, down in the water, a pair of eyes narrowed. 'This viper is a problem,' the owner of the eyes thought. 'He motivates the army and leads them. If I can stop him, I can secure a more secure position in the Horde and demonstrate my power. Time to go in!'

The viper continued pushing beasts away from the center of the army, and it had already received several injuries. Yet, it continued forward with courage, motivating all the beasts behind it.

Splash!

Suddenly, a snake-tail shot at the viper's head. The viper didn't panic and simply opened its mouth and showed its venomous fangs.

PSH! PSH!

It bit the tail and injected its venom, but it also felt a searing pain from its own tail. It noticed that it had bit the tail of another snake, while that snake bit the viper's tail. Additionally, due to the power of Shira's jump, they both tumbled over the edge of the bridge, falling into the river again.

PENG! PENG!

The owners immediately severed both their tails. Usually, only lizards had this ability, but both snakes had seen the effectiveness in that and had modified their bodies accordingly. As it reached the water, the viper could finally see what was happening.

All the ground beasts that had fallen in the water were fighting other beasts. Yet, even though there were still more sea beasts in the water than land beasts, every fight was a duel. The sea beasts that didn't have an opponent just watched the fighting with bloodlust in their eyes.

When a sea beast died, another one would take its place and attack the land beast. Yet, that attack was never made as a sneak attack. They always came straight at the opponent.

When the viper saw that, its eyes narrowed further. 'They are using this opportunity to gain combat experience. This would also solve the issue of food distribution. Yet, why are they bothering to temper themselves when the war hasn't even been won?'

Yet, the viper quickly looked at its opponent. Noticing that Shira had also abandoned her tail to get rid of the venom, the viper knew immediately that this opponent wasn't stupid. Snakes were crafty creatures, and the viper knew that very well. This fight wouldn't be easy.

Meanwhile, the beasts stopped moving as their commander had fallen into the water. What were they supposed to do now?

"Continue onward!" a mighty roar resounded seemingly throughout the heavens. The beasts looked at the Spire. There, they saw the pangolin standing tall. "Kill these beasts and gain their power!" it roared into the heavens.

The beasts roared in rage as they continued their charge. The Elder had ordered that they attack, and even the Lord listened to the Elder. As long as they trusted in the Elder, they would survive!

The charge continued, and the battle became more bloody. A lot of sea beasts that hadn't had an opponent yet started going for one. After several minutes, every sea beast was fighting with their opponents.

Lives were lost left and right. Land beasts and sea beasts all died in swathes. Yet, due to the terrain advantage, the sea beasts lost way fewer lives than the land beasts. Some sea beasts that had already decimated their opponents grabbed another one.

The mass of creatures on the land grew fewer until only the ten Earth Movers remained. All their guards were gone.

Yet, surprisingly, no sea beasts attacked them. Some of the sea beasts that had won their battles only looked at them without attacking. The Earth Movers were unsure of what was happening, but they still continued their charge.

Without any opposition, they reached the other side of the river and charged up the Spire. They had to protect their Lord! Their Lord was powerful, but numbers could overwhelm him! On top of that, such an invasion always had another Lord leading them. If that Lord used the other beasts to wear their own Lord down, the enemy would have an advantage.

The Earth Movers quickly reached the top of the Spire. "Lord!" they transmitted with worry and fighting spirit. Yet...

They only saw some kind of weird, black snake-like creature with massive arms sitting on their Lord's corpse. The creature had some meat in its hands as it took a bite off it.

"How many remain?" Gravis asked, not looking at the new arrivals.

The gigantic pangolin stood humbly to the side. "I have instructed our tribesmen to continue fighting. The defenders at the border have also already noticed the commotion and entered the fight. A little over half of the Tribe has died," it explained calmly.

The Earth Movers were shocked and weren't able to process what was happening right now. Their Lord was dead, and the Elder was talking to this creature like it was their Lord. A nightmare had descended. They knew that their lives were over.

Gravis nodded. "That should be enough. I'll keep my promise to you. Don't worry," he said as he slithered forward. He passed the shocked Earth Movers and looked down from the Spire.

"Everyone that is not currently fighting an opponent will immediately come to the bottom of the Spire!" Gravis shouted.

"Free beasts, to the bottom of the Spire," the pangolin also shouted.

The land beasts, who were not fighting right now, were shocked. Their Elder was standing beside this weird creature? What was going on?

In comparison to the land beasts, the sea beasts immediately swam to the Spire and sprang on land. The remaining duels were still happening while all of this was going on.

After a while, two camps have gathered before the Spire. One camp was filled with ground beasts, while the other was filled with sea beasts.

Over the next several minutes, the fighting calmed down. By now, the river had a lot of visible, red splotched dotted all over it.

Gravis looked over them but still felt two beasts fighting. He also noted the absence of Shira. Gravis started scratching his chin as he fell into thought. 'Shira is very smart, and therefore also powerful in fights. The fact that she is still fighting her opponent shows that they are rather powerful. I think it would be a waste to lose such a talent,' he thought.

Whoom!

Gravis leaped off the Spire and used his Spirit to accelerate his fall. Of course, he also used it to protect himself from the impact.

BANG!

An explosion thundered throughout the surroundings as Gravis hit the ground. Sadly, he was too heavy to fly. Then, he shot at the river, which he quickly entered. In nearly no time at all, the two combatants appeared in his Spirit's range. 'Another snake. Who would've thought...'

Shira and the viper were both entangled in some kind of knot as their heads dueled. The knot was continually moving around so that the other snake wasn't able to bite their body.

Whooom!

Suddenly, both of them couldn't move anymore.

"The war is already over," Gravis transmitted to them.

Shira was unhappy, while the viper had a horrified expression on its face.

"Don't worry. Everyone that is still alive will survive," Gravis said.

"Survive?" the viper asked incredulously.

"Yes," Gravis answered. "We are not annexing this territory for the sea. I will create a tribe with both sea and land beasts."

"The Tribe's name will be the River Tribe."

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 387: Breaking the Laws**

Shira had already known Gravis' plan. That's why she wasn't even a bit surprised when he said that. Instead, she grew angry and frustrated. 'I tried to kill this viper because he's going to be a powerful opponent. This will be troublesome,' she thought.

Meanwhile, the viper wasn't sure what it should think. It wasn't going to die? Also, what did that beast just say?

"Are you kidding me?" the viper transmitted to Gravis with an angry voice.

"No, I'm not," Gravis answered.

"Are you not fine with killing us now? Do you want to kill us all later? What's your goal in this?" the viper answered.

Gravis only smirked. "Oh, I know about your so-called established laws," Gravis said. "Let's go to the Spire. We can discuss all of this in public so that all beasts in the River Tribe will see that I'm serious."

Whoosh!

Gravis swam towards the Spire, and the viper watched. Meanwhile, Shira glared at the viper. "Don't get in my way, or you won't know how you died," she said before following Gravis.

The viper was still angry. What Gravis had proposed was akin to suicide! Yet, he followed the two of them.

Splash!

All three of them left the water. Gravis went to the Spire to climb it to a sufficient height where every beast could see him. Shira and the viper went to each of their camps and stood at the forefront of their groups.

The sea horde didn't show much respect for Shira. To them, she had only shown that she was intelligent. On top of that, they didn't know her for long. Lastly, she hadn't proven her strength. After all, nearly all survivors managed to kill a beast at their level, while Shira didn't win.

Meanwhile, the land beasts stood respectfully behind the viper, showing everyone that they acknowledged it as their leader. No beast dared to stand close to the viper.

When Shira saw that, her eyes narrowed further. 'Just you wait,' she thought with spite.

By now, all beasts had gathered in front of the Spire, and Gravis looked at them.

"Every survivor will stay alive and join my Tribe, the River Tribe," Gravis announced.

The land beasts looked with skeptical eyes at Gravis and then at the sea beasts with disdain. They weren't sure if Gravis actually meant that, and even if he did, they wouldn't join hands with some shrimps.

The sea beasts knew that Gravis was serious, but they also weren't the biggest fans of that development. They had only taken part in the battle to get some food, which, by the way, was still lying dead in the water. They'd rather go get their food instead of listening to Gravis.

"You do know that it's against the laws for sea and land beasts to unite?" the viper transmitted with an angry voice to everyone around them. This was a public discussion.

"I do," Gravis said. He had spoken at length with Shira about this topic when they were readying their plan.

The viper waited for Gravis to continue, but apparently, he was done speaking. This made the viper only angrier. "This will make everyone here the enemy of every sea and land Tribe out there. This is suicide! If you want to kill us, why don't you do it now!?"

Gravis only smirked. "I know. So?" he asked.

The viper was taken aback. "What do you mean with so? This will kill all of us!" it shouted with anger and frustration.

"And if we kept to the laws, the other Tribes wouldn't attempt to kill us?" Gravis asked.

"Yes, they would still attempt to kill us, but we wouldn't be the prime target for every Tribe in the surroundings," the viper shot back immediately. "This will give the surrounding Tribes a reason to band together and attack us as a united force!"

Gravis laughed a bit. "In the end, it's all about becoming more powerful. You say the laws are just a means to an end to find an arbitrary reason to attack us. Is that it?"

The viper remained silent for some seconds, thinking about Gravis' words. "Yes, it is," it said. "Yet, that doesn't change the reality of the situation. We will be the enemies of the whole world."

"Let me give you some hypothetical situations," Gravis said.

"Sure," the viper said with annoyance.

"When we are weaker than an adjacent Tribe, will they attack us? Would breaking the laws make a difference in this situation?" Gravis asked.

"No, it wouldn't," the viper answered quickly. "When a resource of power is too weak to defend itself, it will be swallowed by the stronger beasts."

Gravis nodded. "When we are stronger than an adjacent Tribe, will they attack us?"

"Not alone. Yet, they might find allies in other Tribes to take us down. After all, we would be a threat to them," the viper answered.

Gravis smirked. "Doesn't that sound like the same situation as when we broke the laws?"

"Yes, but..." the viper answered but stopped. It wanted to counter that argument, but it couldn't. It wasn't some stupid beast that always believed it was right. The viper was this smart because it always analyzed its own thinking and looked for mistakes.

After some more seconds, the viper's eyes narrowed further in thinking. Now, it started thinking of this situation from a point of view that honestly compared the relationships with other Tribes in both situations. Yet, even after half a minute, it saw no difference. Everything would end in the same fight. Just the way to that fight was different.

The eyes of the viper were still narrowed but for an entirely different reason. Now, they were narrowed because it was planning and going through all possible advantages and problems that such a merger would bring. It was no longer against the idea.

"In the end, it doesn't really matter," Gravis said as he didn't see the viper reacting in a while. He would have let it think some more if this were a private conversation, but it felt awkward waiting for it in this public setting. "If you're too weak, you will die. If you're strong, the weak will fear for their lives and band together."

The viper was taken out of its thoughts and looked at Gravis, paying more attention now.

"Think about it," Gravis said as he slithered down from the Spire. "If we break the laws, and the enemy is stronger than us, they won't search for help. They will just attack us immediately. If we break the laws, and the enemy is weaker than us, they will search for help. Yet, the exact same scenario would happen if we didn't break the laws. It makes no difference."

By now, Gravis stood in front of the viper. The viper was 200-meters-long but didn't use its full height to stand up. So, the viper and Gravis looked at each other's eyes from the same height.

Gravis hadn't been so close to the viper before, and it felt Gravis' power for the first time. It was rather shocked, not by how strong Gravis was, but by how weak Gravis was. This was obviously the sea Horde's leader. Yet, he wasn't even a Lord.

This shocked the viper to no end. How did this creature manage to kill their Lord? No normal beast had the power to kill a Lord. It was impossible!

Gravis noticed the subtle changes in the viper's eyes and knew what it was thinking about. "You doubt my strength," Gravis commented. "If you want, you can try to kill me right now. I swear that I won't kill

you in return. I'll also not use the power that allowed me to kill your Lord. You only need to face my body, nothing more."

The viper hesitated for some seconds while looking at Gravis. Then, its face relaxed.

"No, I don't doubt-

Whoosh!

The viper's head shot forward out of nowhere, trying to bite Gravis. This was the perfect opportunity. Their bodies were very close, and the viper's strike was fast. If it managed to bite Gravis, he would die to the venom.

Yet, Gravis easily rotated his upper body to the side to dodge the attack. The viper's eyes widened in shock when it saw that. At one point, Gravis' broad chest was just before it, but now, it had moved to the side. The viper had never seen a technique like that before.

A human's upper body was very flexible and broad. Yet, it was also rather thin compared to other beasts. Together with the flexible waist, a seemingly massive and wide chest in front of someone could evade an attack without moving the lower body much. The human just had to rotate their upper body a little bit. Of course, Gravis' body was similarly designed to a human's.

PACK!

Before the viper could ready itself for another strike, Gravis' hand grabbed its throat. The viper felt an incredible pressure at its throat, creating panic inside its mind. Its most vulnerable body part was in the enemy's hands.

PACK!

It used its newly regrown tail to strike Gravis from the right side. Gravis was using his right hand to hold the viper's neck. So, he wouldn't be able to block this attack since his hand was busy.

Yet, Gravis simply rotated his upper body by 180°. Like this, his left hand grabbed the tail. Its body was going crazy, trying to get out of Gravis' grip, but it just didn't work. If it were a human's hand, the viper might manage to get out. Yet, Gravis' hands were bigger, more powerful, and with longer claws that extended his grip.

Gravis pulled the head forward so that it looked into Gravis' eyes. "Convinced?" he asked.

"Yes," it answered in fear and defeat.

"Good," Gravis said with a smirk.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 388: The Founding of the River Tribe**

Gravis threw the viper back, freeing it from his grasp. The viper felt an avalanche of relief washing over it when that happened. It was still alive.

"I said, I won't kill you, but I still need to show you that you shouldn't go against me in the future," Gravis said.



CRRRRRR! CRK! Puchi!

A powerful force immobilized the viper's body. Then, it pulled at one of its bones inside its body, tearing it off. After that, identical to what Gravis had done to Shira, the bone shot out of the viper's body. After leaving its body, the bone only hovered above Gravis' opened hand.

The viper felt incredible pain and fear. What was this power? How did this beast manage to tear a bone right out of its body without even touching it? Not even their Lord had that ability.

When Shira saw that, she felt some satisfaction. She had gone through the same, and it felt good to her to see someone else go through her humiliation and pain.

Gravis just looked at the viper. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Silva," it said weakly.

"You're male judging by your name, right?" Gravis asked.

"Yes," Silva said.

"Alright," Gravis commented and slithered back to the Spire. None of the gathered beasts dared to get close to him. His display had intimidated them.

"As you all have heard by my discussion with Silva, it makes no difference if we break the laws or not. The Tribes have created these laws to keep their forces together. The land beasts don't want to lose their forces to the sea beasts and vice versa."

"They make everyone believe that there is only one enemy. Yet, that is not true. Plenty of Tribes on the so-called same side fight with each other, maybe even more than with the so-called enemy. When your Tribe gets annihilated by a Tribe from the same side, do you not consider them as enemies? They are ready to kill you. Therefore, they are your enemy."

"Beasts that think that the only enemy is the other kind are blind to the truth. From the very beginning, everyone is your enemy. There may be unions and alliances, but those exist only because they can't defeat each other. As soon as one member of such an alliance becomes weaker, they will all pounce on that member. Do not confuse superficial benevolence with peace."

Most of the beasts were too stupid to realize the meaning behind Gravis' words. These members only followed the words of the powerful, and Gravis had proven that he was powerful. Therefore, convincing these beasts wasn't hard for Gravis.

The real problem was the semi-smart beasts. They understood some concepts but weren't smart enough to realize that they didn't know much. These beasts believed themselves to be superior to others since they didn't have the ability to notice their own flaws.

Yet, these semi-smart beasts were, at least, smart enough to not butt into the conversation. After all, Shira and Silva kept quiet. However, that didn't change their opinion about the other faction. In their eyes, the other faction was beneath them.

"I know that many of you are still against allying with the other kind," Gravis said. "Yet, I see no problem in that. The major difference between land and sea beasts is simply the fact where they live. That's everything."

"But after reaching our power, the environment becomes unimportant. We can live and fight wherever we are, and when a beast becomes a Lord, it becomes completely unimportant where they fight. Water or no water, it makes no difference to Lords."

Gravis chuckled a bit. "But I know that my words alone won't accomplish much. You need to see and feel it for yourself. Therefore, I'm going to end this speech with some announcements."

All beasts paid attention to Gravis.

"First, the Water Makers will carve wide rivers through the territory. This will be the living space for the sea beasts. The Water Makers already know how the territory should look like and will start shortly."

"Second, Shira will officially be the commander of all sea beasts while Silva will be the commander of all land beasts."

"Third, the pangolin, Morn, will be the Elder. He is very wise and experienced and can give any land beasts guidance when they require it. The octopus, Orthar, will be the Oracle. This is the same position as the Elder, but for sea beasts. Of course, every beast can visit both the Oracle and the Elder. There's no restriction."

"Fourth, the Spire will remain and will act as a status symbol and command center for the land beasts. Of course, it will also house the Team Leaders, the Elder, and Land Commander."

"Fifth, we will create a deep and powerful Abyss surrounding the Spire. Of course, we will leave bridges for the land beasts to reach the Spire without having to go through the water. The Abyss will be the command center for the sea beasts and will house the Team Leaders, the Oracle, and Sea Commander."

"Sixth, we will create a hole that starts at the top of the Spire and reaches the bottom of the Abyss to make it easier for the upper echelons of each side to meet. I will live in a separate cave at sea level inside this hole. If something requires both sides to decide on something together, everyone will meet in this cave."

Then, Gravis smirked. "And lastly, seventh, even though you are from the same Tribe, you are allowed to fight to the death with one another. The fights will be duels, and both sides need to be at the same level of power. We will create four arenas with both land and water in them."

"But keep in mind that you need to request a duel from either the Elder or Oracle. If you attack without consent from any of those two, you will be killed. The consent of your opponent is not required."

"That's all," Gravis said. Then, he lifted his arm to the sky and summoned his Life Ring.

Whoosh! SPLASH!

A massive amalgamation of tentacles, or roots, or something similar fell from the sky, right into the water. The beasts had no idea what that was, but it looked incredibly creepy. Was that a beast?

CRRRRR!

Earthquakes appeared as new rivers were being created. This was the second Water Maker, the Common Fungus. It had lived its whole life inside the earth. Therefore, it wasn't weird that it had an affinity for earth.

When Gravis had caught the fungus, he had believed that it would prove itself useful in the Middle World, and it did. It had helped in moving a lot of earth into the ocean, and now it helped in terraforming his new territory.

The fungus was a Unity Plant, and therefore, could move a lot more earth around than Spirit Beasts. On top of that, it could work as an effective defense in an emergency in case Gravis was occupied.

The beasts were astonished by the mystical powers that Gravis had shown. He had ripped a bone out of Silva's body without touching him, and now he had summoned a humongous creepy being out of thin air. They had no idea how he did that.

The pangolin was already huge, with his length of about 800 meters, but this thing that Gravis had summoned was just unreal. Its roots or tentacles seemingly stretched into the horizons.

One shouldn't forget that the Fungus could cover an area over 20 kilometers wide. A Spirit Beast was nothing in comparison to its size.

After recovering from the shock brought on by the fungus, the land beasts concentrated on the beasts from the "other" side. The land beasts looked with hunger, disdain, and battle intent at the sea beasts. Yet, the sea beasts all charged into the water. After all, the bodies of their slain prey were still inside the water.

"Every land beast that has managed to kill a sea beast in the war is allowed to retrieve and consume their prey," Orthar said as his massive body came out of the water. While everyone else had been gathered, he had cleaned up the corpses of the sea beasts that had died in the war.

With the two sides' current relations, making the land beasts dive into the water might intensify the tensions. The land beasts were skeptical of this new arrival. Who was that?

"I am Orthar, the Oracle of the River Tribe," he announced. "I have created a shallow shore and laid out all the corpses of the sea beasts. You are only allowed to retrieve the corpse of your own prey. Anyone found out lying will be killed and consumed."

CRRRR!

Part of the river lifted as a lot of corpses were revealed. Something like this wasn't hard for Orthar. After all, he was also a Water Maker. After that, Orthar climbed out of the water and started climbing the Spire with his incredibly long tentacles.

Surprisingly, he wasn't alone while climbing. He was pulling the corpse of a powerful lion behind him. Apparently, he had also managed to kill a beast. The Abyss wasn't ready yet, so he decided to live on the Spire for the time being.

After around a minute of climbing, he arrived at the Spire's top, where he saw Gravis, Morn, Shira, and Silva all present. All five leaders of the Tribe had gathered.

"The loss percentage of the River Tribe will increase sharply with that last rule," Morn, the pangolin, transmitted to everyone. "What is your goal in allowing our Tribe to fight and kill each other, Lord?"

Gravis only smirked.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 389: Discussing the River Tribe's Future**

"I guess with loss percentage, you mean the fact that a beast that eats another one at the same level isn't worth as much as two beasts if a third one kills and eats that one, right?" Gravis asked with a smirk.

Morn had already realized that Gravis wasn't stupid. When Gravis had invaded the Spire and killed their Lord, he had talked a lot with Morn. After discussing for a while, Morn had realized that Gravis had quite some intricate plans and a lot of knowledge regarding psychology and similar things.

Morn had been the imperial teacher for their Lord for a long time. Back then, the ancestors of the Sand Tribe hadn't died yet. However, back then, the Sand Tribe wasn't called the Sand Tribe but the Sand Kingdom. This meant that they had had a Nascent Beast as their leader. Because of that, Morn knew many things.

"Yes, that is what I mean," Morn said, "there are a lot of beasts with peculiar abilities that make them effective against a specific kind of beast. Those beasts might be able to beat another beast but have a weaker overall Battle-Strength."

"Allowing every beast to fight every beast without the opponent needing to consent to the battle could create a lot of meaningless death," Morn explained.

"I agree with the Elder," Silva said from the side. "Additionally, this will only increase the divide between the two camps."

Gravis listened to them as they spoke. Sometimes, other people or beasts had some insights into things that Gravis didn't know. If the leader didn't listen to their advisors, the spot of an advisor would be meaningless. Yet, this time, Gravis was sure of his plan.

"So, there are two problems," Gravis said. "One problem is the loss percentage while the other problem is the divide between the two camps, correct?"

Morn and Silva nodded.

"Shira, what do you think about this?" Gravis asked.

Shira was a bit surprised that Gravis was asking for her opinion. Was this a test of loyalty? Was this a test of her intelligence? A lot of scenarios went through her head at once.

When Gravis saw that Shira didn't immediately answer, he only laughed slightly. "You see, that's the problem," Gravis said, making Shira narrow her eyes. "You are so used to your own way of thinking that you assume everyone else is constantly scheming against you. This is not some kind of test or something. I'm only asking for your opinion. Nothing more."

Shira still looked at Gravis with shifty eyes, but she decided to state her opinion. "The increase of the loss percentage would be a small problem," she said. "Of course, the outstanding beasts will be able to rise faster, but way more beasts will just die for nothing."

"I think you're planning to increase the quality of the troops by sacrificing a large amount of quantity. Yet, this brings some issues to light. For example, one camp could become ruthlessly suppressed by the other one, creating a vast divide. On top of that, when new Lords come out of this fighting, your leading position will be in danger. Personally, I don't think the cost is worth the reward."

Gravis nodded. "Okay, that sounds reasonable." Then, Gravis looked at the eating Orthar. "Orthar, what do you think?" he asked with a smirk.

Orthar didn't stop eating. "I see no problem with the plan," he simply said.

The others narrowed their eyes at him. They all saw the issues with the plan, but Orthar simply accepted it without any discussion. Was he not seeing these issues, or was he just blindly following Gravis?

"Could you explain your reasoning?" Gravis asked with a smirk. Gravis knew that Orthar had learned a lot from him, and therefore, also knew the hidden effects of the plan. The others just weren't experienced enough with tempering and had perspectives limited by the political environment between Tribes. This clouded their vision.

"We will lose a lot of beasts, but the few with powerful combat abilities will quickly rise to power. One Unity Beast can kill tens of Spirit Beasts. The addition of one more Unity Beast is worth more than all other lower members of the Tribe," Orthar explained without having to think much.

"Right now, we will mostly be fighting smaller Tribes, but that won't go on for long. What's the point of having 200 Spirit Beasts when the enemy has one or two more Lords than us? We are not aiming to stay alive but to rise to power. We are not preparing for our current enemies, but for our future ones."

The others listened intently and thought about Orthar's words. After thinking about these words for a while, they realized that their current neighbors were no danger to them. They had all witnessed Gravis' power, and there was no level one Lord that could stop him. The Spirit Beasts made no difference, while the lack of an additional Lord would be an issue later on.

"As for the second problem," Orthar said, "the one about the enmity between camps, it doesn't matter."

The others narrowed their eyes. "Doesn't matter?" Silva asked incredulously. "Wasn't this a problem? Didn't they need to work together?"

"Yes, it doesn't matter," Orthar answered. "The strong will prevail, and if one camp gets completely annihilated, it just proves that the other one is more powerful. We accept beasts from both camps, but we don't need to protect them when they're not able to protect themselves. The best thing we can do is to create a battleground where both sides have equal chances of victory."

"That's the first case," Orthar said. "The second case is that both sides remain at the same power. In that case, they will notice that the other camp isn't that easy to kill. After all, they would have tried it for a long time by then, without success. At that point, they will acknowledge the strength of the other side, even if they still dislike them. This will reduce the infighting."

"If we were to prevent the camps from clashing, they would both continue thinking that the other camp is weak and unworthy of staying in the River Tribe. With this, both camps will remain at full power, but they won't be able to fight together when an external force attacks us. As long as they acknowledge the strength of the other camp, they can fight together."

"As for the possibility that a new Lord could threaten Gravis," Orthar said and then huffed, "that won't matter even a little bit. You don't know him as well as I do. Right now, no level one Lord in this entire world can even threaten him. On top of that, he has enough meat to reach the power of an actual Lord soon. At that point, not even a level two Lord would be an issue."

"So," Orthar said as he took another bite from the dead lion, "as long as a member of our Tribe doesn't reach the power of a level three Lord soon, they will only commit suicide by challenging Gravis."

The other three beasts felt astounded by Orthar's analysis. They all had a lot of knowledge, so they understood everything that Orthar had said. Yet, they hadn't noticed these effects. How could they not have seen something this simple?

Gravis clapped in his hands a bit. "Great explanation," Gravis said. "This is the same thing I would have said. So, are you still against the plan? You can say if you're still against it. After all, you're my advisors, and I won't ignore your advice."

The three remained silent for a bit. "It seems I still have a lot to learn," Morn said to the others. "I have prided myself in my vast knowledge. Yet, I wasn't able to make these seemingly obvious connections. I agree with the plan."

"Also," Morn said as he looked at Orthar, "I would like to exchange knowledge, principles, and ideas with you, Oracle. Your explanation has shown that I still have a lot to learn."

"You can talk to me anytime," Orthar answered. "I am also interested in your experiences."

"My earlier complaints have vanished," Silva said, "but due to your explanation, Oracle, I see a new problem now."

Silva looked at Gravis to see how he would react to this. Saying that he didn't mind their disagreement was one thing, but would he keep his word?

Gravis didn't react at all and just continued eating the previous leader of the Sand Tribe. It was like this whole discussion had nothing to do with him.

"Do tell," Orthar said with interest.

"Shira and I are the Commanders of each camp, and if one camp kills the other one, one of us might get suppressed. Without a camp to lead, we would waste a lot of potential for either of us," Silva said.

"Mind your own problems," Shira spat from the side. "I don't need you to defend me. After all, it won't be my camp that will be eradicated but yours."

Silva narrowed his eyes. "We are part of the same Tribe now. By using your power to interfere with the fighting, you give the Sea Camp an unfair advantage. This might result in a situation where the weaker camp suppresses the stronger one."

"Wait," Gravis said, lifting a hand as he saw that Shira wanted to shoot back again. Then, he turned to Silva. "Shira is part of the Sea Camp. Therefore, she is part of their power. Your idea of keeping yourself out of this is noble, but not realistic or result-oriented."

Silva looked at Gravis with skepticism. "What do you mean?"

"First, let me make one thing clear," Gravis said. "You and Shira are not companions or friends."

"You are rivals and maybe even enemies."

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 390: Truth of the World**

"Rivals? Enemies?" Silva asked with shock. This came entirely out of the left field for him. When had he ever heard of a Tribe that was enemies with itself? This seemed absolutely insane and stupid.

"Exactly," Gravis said.

Silva waited for an explanation, but apparently, Gravis was done talking.

"Why?" Silva asked, "By not being united, our whole Tribe will suffer. If we get involved, there will be cases where we specifically send weaker beasts with an advantage against stronger beasts to weaken the other side. Isn't this exactly what we don't want to see? This is against the interests of the Tribe!"

Gravis only looked at Silva. "Because you have no other choice," Gravis said.

"What do you mean? Are you forcing me to become enemies with Shira?" Silva asked with narrowed eyes.

"No, I'm not forcing you," Gravis said and then pointed at Shira. "She's forcing you."

Silva looked at Shira while Shira looked with narrowed eyes at Gravis.

"I chose her as my commander because her goal is power and authority above anything else," Gravis explained. "This greed and ambition will drive her to increase the power of her camp as quickly as possible to stomp out all other competition. You are in her way to power. She wants to be the sole ruler of the whole Tribe, bar none."

Shira was deeply enraged inside. To her, it felt like Gravis was unveiling all her plots and secrets. This would make it much harder to become the ruler.

"But then, aren't you also one of her enemies? Why would you choose someone like this as your second in command if you know that she will try to usurp you as soon as possible?" Silva asked.

Gravis just laughed. "Her ambition will drive her camp to power. The more powerful the camp, the more powerful the Tribe. Her greed is putting pressure on all of us. If we don't become more powerful, we will die. She will force all of you to become powerful if you don't want to die."

Gravis rose from his sitting position. "Without a constant enemy at your throat, you will become complacent. Only by constantly fearing for your life will your power increase with ridiculous speed. Our goal is not to survive, but to become the most powerful Tribe, Kingdom, and Empire."

Gravis slithered forward until he was in the middle of everyone. His smirk intensified as he gestured grandly to the surroundings with opened arms.

"We are burning our bridges of retreat. It's either power or death. If you can't keep up with the others, you will become food. This is the truth of the world. Our Tribe will be the most dangerous one to live in, but also the one with the best environment to become powerful."

"If you aren't prepared to put your life on the line for power, you don't belong in my Tribe," Gravis said while looking into the eyes of Shira, Silva, and Morn. "I won't force you to stay here. Any beast can leave this Tribe if they want."

Silva and Morn felt incredibly shocked and even afraid. This was insane! Wasn't a home a place where one felt safe? Why would anyone want to put themselves in constant danger? Wasn't the goal of everyone to be happy? How could anyone be happy in this environment?

"This is insane!" Silva said as he rose and glared at Gravis. "You're mad! How many beasts will live to see the next year? You are dooming all of us to die to our own tribesmen!"

Gravis only smirked at Silva with narrowed eyes. "I'm dooming no one. You can always leave the Tribe. If you manage to convince others as well, you can take them with you. I won't stop anyone from leaving. I'm sure that with a large enough following, you can even join another Tribe."

"You're driving everyone away with that!" Silva shouted at Gravis. "You will weaken the Tribe until it completely collapses! This is insanity, and I won't be part of this! You can go kill yourself without me!"

Then, Silva turned around to leave the Spire. No one stopped him from leaving, and Shira even smirked coldly. Her biggest rival had left. This was the best-case scenario for her.

"I will stay," Morn said after he had remained silent for a while.

Silva's eyes widened in shock as he heard that. Then, he turned around and looked at Morn in shock and anger. "Elder!" he shouted aggressively. "How can you condone this insanity!? Have we not stayed in the Sand Tribe for many years together? Have you given up on life and want to commit suicide with everyone else!?"

Morn looked at Silva. "What our Lord has said goes against all tradition and previous experience. Yet, I see clearly now," he said with a severe voice. Silva could hear the battle-intent inside Morn's voice and his brain completely stopped working.

The Elder had always talked emotionlessly and wisely. Silva had never heard the Elder speak in this way. It was almost like the Elder was in the middle of a battle.

"Why has our Sand Kingdom declined to such a state?" Morn asked as he looked at Silva. "We have always been united, thinking that it makes us stronger. And yes, it does make us stronger but only for the moment. It promotes temporary strength over future growth."

Morn stood up with burning eyes. "We have not lived to become powerful but to survive. We haven't fought to win but to not lose. We only defended but didn't attack. We were bound to be reduced to this weak state! Oh, how naïve I have been. I have dreamt of returning to our glory days, yet, I wasn't ready to put my life on the line."



"The world isn't a kind place. If you aren't powerful, you will die. Creating a safe place will only let us live in peace until we are inevitably consumed by beasts that are willing to risk everything for power."

Morn looked deeply into Silva's eyes. "In my opinion, trying to live in peace in a world full of death and war is more akin to suicide than fighting for your life. By accepting peace, you have decided to die."

Gravis smirked from the side. Surely enough, Morn was similar to Orthar. He had seen enough of the world to see its true face. Yet, he had been blinded by the bright colors of peace and complacency. Creating peace and happiness in such a world was accepting your death.

There is no peace for beasts that wanted to become powerful. If a beast wanted peace, they had to sever their path to power by going to an area with such a low Energy density that there wasn't another powerful beast willing to stay there.

Staying in a territory useful to cultivation required someone to fight. If they didn't, they would only die.

Silva's body shook in rage. Had the Elder also lost his mind? This was insanity!

"Fine! If you want to live through this torture, go ahead! The Sand Tribe and I will leave!" Silva shouted as he left the Spire. No one stopped him.

Shira smirked. Her rival had left! This was perfect!

"I get to lead both camps now, right?" Shira asked Gravis.

Gravis smirked and laughed a bit, confusing Shira. "I'm surprised that you don't see how this will go. After all, you understand the greed for power very well," Gravis said.

Shira narrowed her eyes. "But he has left," she said. "This fact doesn't change."

"How many beasts will Silva be able to convince to leave?" Gravis asked.

Shira thought about that for a bit, and she didn't like her conclusion.

"Not many," Gravis said, "and with Silva's strong sense of responsibility, he won't abandon them. He knows that if he leaves, he will doom all of his tribesmen to die to you. The previous Sand Tribe will be happy to fight and kill as many sea beasts as possible. They believe themselves to be superior to sea beasts."

"They believe that they don't need Silva's power to eradicate the Sea Camp. In their eyes, the Sea Camp is only a fat pig waiting to be slaughtered and eaten. They know Silva, and they would maybe even prefer it when he left. After all, no one would stop them from killing the other camp then. Without a leader, they could do whatever they wanted as long as they follow my rules."

"Silva knows that without him, the Land Camp will be eradicated, and he won't abandon them."

Shira grew angrier as she listened to this. She felt like Gravis had control over the whole situation, and she didn't like this one bit. It felt like Gravis was manipulating her to do whatever he wanted. She felt like Gravis' claws held her throat, forcing her to do his bidding.

Shira huffed and left the Spire out of rage. She felt incredibly frustrated and knew that she might make a mistake if she remained at the top of the Spire. She needed to regain a cool head to plan her next course of action.

"You are terrifying," Morn said from the side. "You are honest with everyone and reveal all your plans. Yet, everyone is forced to follow your plans."

Gravis shook his head a bit as his smile vanished, replaced by a frown. "I'm not manipulating anybody," Gravis said. "This is just how the world works. Everyone sees the truth of the world now. I have opened your eyes to how the world works, and therefore, allowed you to make a more informed decision."

"I have given you as much information about the world as possible, and I have given you every freedom to make your choice. If you think back, there is only a single rule in the entire Tribe, and that is the rule about fighting each other. Except for this rule, everyone can do whatever they want."

Gravis' eyes narrowed. "This world is designed to make as many powerful beasts as possible. That's why I don't create any additional rules. The truth of the world is the most effective way to power, and you all know that now."

Gravis stood up and slithered over to the edge of the Spire, looking at the approaching dusk. "Silva can't leave because the ways of the world will kill all his companions."

"Shira can't leave because she knows that if she joins another Tribe, they will sooner or later be consumed by us, including her."

"You can't leave because you understand the world now."

"As long as you want to become stronger and understand the truth of the world, you will decide to stay. You will know that other mindsets will decline, while ours will become more powerful."

By now, the clouds beneath them glowed in a red hue as the sun started vanishing.

"You are free to make any choice," Gravis said.

The sun was barely visible by now.

"But if you want to become powerful..."

The sun vanished as darkness consumed the world.

"You have no choice."