

## Lightning 39

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

#### Chapter 39: The Bandit

The next day, Gravis asked for directions to Body City. This was the city where the yearly entrance exams for the Elemental Guilds were being held. Gravis didn't have to search for long since Body City was the biggest city for thousands of kilometers. Nearly everyone knew where Body City was located.

Body City was located about a thousand kilometers to the north. That was quite the distance. If he normally walked, he would take forever to get there. Luckily, he had quite a strong body and good stamina. Gravis could run for around three hours before he needed a break. If he took a one-hour break after three hours of running, he would reach the city in about 26 hours, if he didn't sleep. Luckily, Gravis still had a lot of time, so he wouldn't need to rush.

Gravis started his journey on the same day. There was nothing in Wilderness Town that kept him there. Maybe, he could also find some exciting things in the city. It was, after all, the center of cultivation for the surrounding thousands of kilometers. Gravis grew excited at the prospect of exploring such an important city.

Gravis left the city and began his journey to Body City. Yet, of course...

"Pay a toll to-"

BANG!

Gravis ran the poor bandit over, and multiple bones in the bandit broke, even though the bandit had tempered skin. If it were before Gravis had tempered his skin, the bandit wouldn't be this injured. Yet, with the added hardness of Gravis' new skin, the impact was harder.

The bandit flew for over five meters into a nearby tree and hit it, leaving a huge dent in it.

"Ahhh," Gravis could only hear a small whimper of pain from the bandit's voice.

"Dick!" Gravis heard the bandit shout. With that, he stopped and turned around. He quickly ran back to the bandit, who was lying weakly before the tree.

"You try to rob me, and you call me a dick?" Gravis asked with a sneer. Spite filled his voice. How shameless could a person be?

The bandit weakly sat up, leaning on the tree. "You didn't even give me the courtesy to finish my phrase." The bandit weakly rubbed the back of his neck and groaned in pain.

"What does it matter?" Gravis asked flatly.

"Oh, come on, man! That's how things work. I jump out and say 'pay a toll to pass or face death', and the other side either pays the toll or not. If not, we talk to each other and exchange our ideologies. Then, we fight. If I win, I'll take a bigger toll, and if they win, they either just walk past me or take some of my stuff. It's normal, dude."

Gravis furrowed his brows. "That sounds nice, but that does not change the fact that you're trying to rob me."

The bandit groaned in pain. "You just don't get it, man. Isn't this also some kind of training? We get to fight and train, and the loser has to pay up. I mean, nobody dies, so it's alright."

Now Gravis grew a little confused. "But you said that your phrase was 'pay a toll or face death'. You are kind of saying that you would kill them if they don't pay."

The bandit groaned again. This time, in exasperation. "Dude, that's just posturing! It's to sound cool. Everyone knows that bandits normally don't kill. We just fight, and that's that."

Gravis raised an eyebrow. "Actually, I've seen some bandits attacking a nearby village. They tried to kill the people and \*\*\*\* the women. So, I kind of don't believe you."

The bandit spat in disgust. "Those fuckers are the reason why the life of a bandit grows harder these days. They're not bandits. They're murderers, or raiders if you want. Those sacks of shit don't understand how the world works. If they start raiding and killing, the cities and towns will send out guards with killing orders. Then what?"

Now, Gravis was surprised. "So, if you encounter a guard, you don't get killed?"

The bandit sneered at Gravis. "Did you live your whole life under a rock or something? No, we don't get killed. They just kind of... bully us."

"Bully you?" Gravis looked astonished.

"Yeah, you know, like, slapping us around and taunting us. Sometimes, they even take our stuff. Oh, look at me. I'm a guard. I'm so safe in my own house and in my walls. I'm better than everyone else," the bandit taunted in mock sarcasm. "Tch, fucking arrogant-ass, shitty-ass tin cans."

Gravis ignored the vulgar language. "I really don't understand. Wouldn't stealing from the traveling merchants discourage them from traveling? Why would anyone important let that happen?"

The bandit groaned again in exasperation. "Dude, you really are the textbook definition of an innocent village boy from the mountains, are ya? You've probably even never visited a city before, right?" The bandit looked at Gravis, who didn't react.

The bandit spat to the side. "Man, just my luck running into you." Suddenly, the bandit looked surprised as he got an idea. "Or, you running into me, HA HA haha," he laughed wildly.

Gravis just looked at him in indifference.

"Oh, come on! It's a fucking joke, asshole! Don't just fucking look at me with that deadpan-ass, corpse-ass stare of yours."

Gravis did not comply.

The bandit grew increasingly annoyed. "What? Say something!" he shouted.

Instead, Gravis just lifted his right hand to his chin in thought and continued watching. Gravis had a particular feeling right now, which concerned him.

He kind of liked the guy.

Even though the bandit was continuously insulting and disrespecting him, it bizarrely made Gravis feel like they were growing closer. This was so strange. No one had ever talked to him like this before. This was a completely new experience for him. Gravis looked up into the sky, in thought.

"What? You estimating how far you can throw that stick in your ass? Shit's gonna pierce the Heaven's probably, by how hard and stiff it looks," the bandit continued.

Gravis just continued thinking. The bandit spoke without restraint. He spoke without social norms, and without any care of what others might think. In Gravis' eyes, the bandit was following his own emotions and desires without restraint. Wasn't that precisely what Gravis wished? Didn't Gravis wish for a free life, without restraints?

"Hey! Did that stick pierce your brain too? Or did your parents not find-"

Suddenly, Gravis felt incredible fear. He didn't understand why, but it felt like, if he remained here, he would die. Without hesitation, Gravis sprinted as far away as possible.

"-a toilet to shit in, so-"

**BOOOOOOM!**

Gravis was already 30 meters away from the bandit, yet a gigantic shockwave hit him in the back and threw him away for over a hundred meters. His insides churned, and the world turned white. Incredible heat was melting the surroundings, while the shockwave threw everything far away into the distance.

Gravis hit the ground and slid for a while until he finally stopped. For the most part, his skin was fine, and his bones and muscles only hurt a little. If he didn't have tempered skin, he would have been heavily injured.

Gravis slowly got up and looked at the spot where the bandit was. His eyes grew wide at what he saw.

"What the hell?"