

Lightning 441

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Chapter 441: Specifics of The Armor

Gravis spent the next couple of weeks forging his new equipment. He had always only used weapons and hadn't even considered using armor before. What was the reason for that?

The reason for that was that he always fought enemies that were way more powerful than him. For example, an armor would do wonders against an opponent in the same Realm and Stage as the armor wearer. If the enemy were one Stage higher, the armor would still be useful, but the blunt force of the attack would still injure the body behind it.

Yet, Gravis had always fought against opponents at least two Stages higher than him. If any of these attacks hit him, his body would just get completely destroyed. An armor wouldn't have made a difference. So, he never had a reason to consider buying or forging a set of armor.

But by understanding the Law regarding the materials, he finally had the ability to create a customized set of armor for himself that could actually prove useful. Though, the reason for creating such a set of armor was different than one would initially believe.

People wore armor in order to increase their defense. Yet, Gravis went about this topic with a different approach. After all, he was about to fight a beast three levels above him. One attack from his opponent would injure him severely.

So, instead, Gravis decided to create armor that would help in his evasion and attack. If he wanted to defend himself against an attack, he could just summon a shield. The shield would break after one attack, but it would severely weaken that attack.

Gravis' new armor set consisted of a pair of boots, a pair of gauntlets, a tail-armor, a chest piece, and a helmet. Every piece of the armor had a different specialty and different Formation Arrays.

His boots had the same Formation Arrays as his sabers. This allowed him to save up a Lightning Crescent inside them. Gravis knew that his enemies would always be careful of his saber, his hands, and his teeth. After all, his enemies were beasts, and most beasts used their claws and fangs to injure their opponents.

So, his enemies wouldn't be able to anticipate his foot suddenly shooting forward with an attack that was as powerful as his saber's. After all, all their attention was drawn to the upper half of his body.

His tail-armor was spiky and looked incredibly intimidating. Yet, Gravis had designed that whole look with misdirection in mind. His enemies would believe that this was also one of his primary weapons when, in reality, it wasn't.

His tail-armor only had Formation Arrays on them that increased the impact of an enemy attack. At first glance, this seemed utterly contradictory. Increasing the impact of an enemy attack would make the attack stronger instead of weaker. Why would he do that?

The reason for that was that if he blocked an attack with his tail, his whole body would get thrown away before the sharp claws or teeth of his opponent could injure his torso. Sure, his tail would probably explode after receiving that attack, but it was better to sacrifice his tail than to receive a mortal injury.

The enemies he would fight in the future would have such a ridiculous power advantage that, if he increased the tail's defense and defended with it, their attacks would destroy the tail and injure his torso heavily. If he got hit, he would get injured either way. Like this, he could, at least, mitigate the damage so that it only destroyed his tail.

If someone hit his tail, Gravis' body would receive the impact, and due to the Formation Arrays, he would get thrown away with speed faster than the opponent's attack. The blunt force would still injure him, but that was better than being gored by a claw.

His gauntlets were filled with Formation Arrays that built a powerful connection with whatever he was carrying in his hands at the moment. If he carried a saber in his hands, these Formation Arrays would make it impossible for the enemy to disarm him without literally "dis-arming" him.

If he carried a shield and the shield was destroyed in an attack, Gravis' arms would receive his enemy's blunt force. What exactly did this mean?

Usually, if an attack were powerful enough to completely decimate a shield, the user standing behind it would be hit by the powerful attack too. After all, the force would break the shield and continue going forward, eventually hitting the person behind it.

With these gauntlets, the force that the shield received would fully hit his arms, even if it broke apart. Like this, his arms would break, but similarly to his tail, his torso would remain safe. After all, the force would have thrown him away before the actual sharp weapon could hit him.

His helmet was filled with similar Formation Arrays to his boots and saber. Of course, they weren't completely identical. Instead, Gravis could release a kind of Lightning Blast from his head. This Lightning Blast wasn't nearly as powerful as his Lightning Crescent, but it had enough physical force to create a shockwave that would create space between him and his opponent.

Gravis couldn't just sacrifice his head like his arms, legs, and tail. Because of that, if an attack managed to close in on his head, he would need to sacrifice some of his lightning to blast himself away. Such a weak attack wouldn't injure his powerful opponent, but it would bring Gravis to safety.

The last part of Gravis' armor was his chest plate. By knowing the purpose of all the other parts, one could guess the chest plate's effect.

The chest plate was all about diminishing the force of an impact. By having the option to sacrifice his legs, tail, and arms, Gravis could deal with his opponent's primary weapon. So, the only dangerous thing left was the blunt force that his chest would receive.

That's where the chest plate came into play. Gravis' whole fighting style was based around countering his opponent's attacks by concentrating all the damage into an unessential part of his body. The chest plate would be able to resist the majority of the blunt force.

Gravis created this entire armor in a couple of days since he needed to use a lot of his lightning to manipulate such powerful materials. So, his progress wasn't that fast. He could have simply unloaded a Lightning Crescent to make it faster, but there was no reason for haste. He had to wait for three years anyway. Also, a Lightning Crescent would destroy parts of the surroundings.

Gravis also created several sabers and shields. The shields were filled with Formation Arrays that lessened the impact. An attack powerful enough to break the shield would throw Gravis away due to the Formation Arrays in his gauntlets, but by lessening the force via the shield, there was a chance that Gravis' arms might survive the impact.

Also, if the shield didn't lessen the impact, Gravis' arms would break either way by blocking an attack, even if the attack didn't break the shield. Thanks to his Spirit Space, Gravis never needed to carry both the shield and his saber at the same time. If he wanted to attack, he would use his saber with both hands. If he wanted to defend, he would summon the shield and also use it with both hands.

That was the advantage of having a Spirit Space.

The new sabers he created were no different from the previous ones, just harder. It was a weapon, and the more powerful its attack, the better.

After a couple of weeks, Gravis had used up all the Late Unity Rank ore. He had created several sets of armor, shields, and sabers. Nearly everything could break with just one attack, so he needed plenty of spares.

After finishing everything, Gravis stood up, decked out in his new equipment. The armor had nearly no openings and snugly fit his body. It didn't look bulky or heavy. After all, Gravis needed as much of his flexibility and agility as possible.

Sadly, Gravis had only found a single vein of Late Unity Rank ore. This meant that he couldn't choose the armor's color. So, he was stuck with an armor that was completely emerald green, not a color he preferred. Gravis preferred black, white, and silver over the green.

'Well, beggars can't be choosers,' Gravis thought.

'Guess I'm stuck looking like some green nature boy.'

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Chapter 442: Cynthia's Change

After Gravis was done with forging his equipment, he didn't have much else to do. His future tempering would come to him by itself, and he didn't have to search for it. Now, he only needed to spend his remaining time as productively as possible.

So, Gravis simply split himself in two for one simple reason: Law comprehension. He remembered the picture of Manuel that he had received on his birthday and also remembered the name of the sixth Realm, which was also called the Law Comprehension Realm.

In Manuel's picture, Gravis had seen him sitting inside a massive storm. Gravis was pretty sure that Manuel was thinking about some kind of Law and trying to understand it. Gravis also knew that, at some point, he would probably need to do that too. After all, the comprehension of Laws would definitely become paramount in the future.

One Gravis would keep watching the CMO to gain some knowledge about life, while the other one would simply watch his surroundings. The CMO was his main priority, but focusing only on it felt like a waste of resources to Gravis. So, he decided to also just look at... basically everything.

When Gravis first split in two, the Red King shot out of his abode in shock. He always kept watch over Gravis, and when Gravis suddenly split in two, his eyes nearly popped out. He had never even imagined that something like that was possible.

The Red King immediately started questioning Gravis fervently, but Gravis always only answered with a plain no. The Red King grew frustrated and angry again, but there was nothing he could do about Gravis. Injuring him showed no effect at all and might even make him act out in violent ways.

The Red King knew that Gravis wasn't just peacefully sitting there because the Red King forced him. He knew exactly that Gravis was only sitting there this quietly because he had no interest in doing anything else.

If Gravis wanted, he could start flying away, which would force the Red King to get him back. Then what? Then, Gravis could just fly away again. What could the Red King do in this case? He would either need to waste all his time on Gravis or get a commander to waste all their time on him. This would eat up way too many resources.

What if he let Gravis roam around? That was an even worse idea! He could just go on a rampage and kill a mountain worth of Lords without eating them. The Red King knew that Gravis knew that his life was just too valuable to kill him over that. So, even though Gravis was basically forced into slavery, he could still kind of do whatever he wanted.

What about threatening his life? The Red King knew that Gravis would simply call that bluff. What then? Then, the choice would fall back to the earlier two anyway.

Officially, Gravis was a slave and commodity to the Red King. Officially, the Red King could do whatever he wanted to him. Yet, unofficially, Gravis was basically only under light house arrest.

While Gravis was around, the Red King almost felt like Gravis was the owner of this place instead of him. This frustrated the Red King to no end.

So, in the end, the only thing that the Red King could do was force Gravis into staying in the Red Kingdom and going to the Empress in a couple of years. Other than that, Gravis could do whatever he wanted.

The Red King had already thoroughly thought about the potential disasters that Gravis could create. The Red King knew that Gravis was very smart, and he believed that Gravis could also come up with all these scenarios.

For example, Gravis could run around the Red Kingdom and insult powerful Kings. Then, these Kings would have two options.

One option was to swallow their anger and do nothing. Yet, that would make them frustrated and might even motivate them to leave the Red Kingdom. After all, they were smart enough to know that they couldn't attack him.

The other option was to try to kill him. Yet, that would go directly against the Red King's explicit orders and would be seen as an act of betrayal. The punishment for that was death.

So, even though Gravis was not powerful enough to kill the Kings himself, he could still kill them by proxy. This would, again, fall back to forcing a powerful King to keep watch over him.

Another disaster would be if Gravis simply destroyed all the plants, mountains, grass, and terrain. He wasn't killing anyone by doing that, but the whole Red Kingdom would feel desolate, weak, and broken.

So, if the Red King tried to force Gravis to answer his questions, Gravis might just decide not to be as compliant as before. This whole thing was basically an unspoken pact between the Red King and Gravis. As long as the Red King didn't suppress him further, Gravis wouldn't create disasters for the Red Kingdom.

It was true that the Red King only looked at his Kingdom as a tool to become more powerful. Yet, that didn't mean that he didn't care that someone damaged or destroyed his tool. After all, this was his tool, his property. He couldn't just let anyone threaten it.

Because of that, the Red King was forced to go back into his abode without having received a satisfactory answer, which frustrated him even more. The Red King wanted to know these things so badly, but some weak Lord completely stopped him in his tracks.

The Red King knew that he could kill this weak Lord with a simple sneeze. Yet, that would make all his previous sacrifices meaningless. He had sacrificed his most outstanding disciple, who would have been the present for the Empress, to Gravis. If he now killed Gravis, he would have no good present for his Empress.

This would be devastating to him because the Red King knew how much this present was worth. With this present, he would be able to get something that he had always wanted, becoming an Emperor. This was how much Gravis' life was worth to him.

Several months passed in which Gravis seemingly only stared into nothing.

Yet, six months after arriving in the Red Kingdom, something happened. The Red King would leave his abode for a couple of days. So, to keep watch over Gravis, the Red King called over Cynthia.

"Don't antagonize him. Don't give him any reason to go and create trouble. Just stay to the side and do nothing. You're only allowed to intervene if he starts going crazy or if he leaves the Red Kingdom. If that happens, suppress him until I return. Of course, he is not allowed to die under any circumstance," the Red King transmitted to Cynthia.

"If he dies, you will be next," he transmitted coldly.

Cynthia took a nervous breath to calm herself down. "I understand, my King," she said deferentially.

The Red King narrowed his eyes at Cynthia and inspected her closely, making her feel incredibly uncomfortable. After nearly half a minute of doing this, the Red King averted his gaze and flew away.

"Don't forget your duties, commander," the Red King transmitted one last time before he left.

Then, silence came upon the mountain. Cynthia just sat silently to the side, watching Gravis, while Gravis only seemed to aimlessly stare into space.

Several hours passed in which nothing happened. No one spoke a word, and Cynthia didn't avert her gaze. By now, night time had arrived.

Crck!

Gravis heard the sound of claws lightly gliding across stone. He looked over and saw that Cynthia had stood up. On top of that, her claws were out. When Gravis saw that, he already knew what was about to happen.

It seemed like Cynthia didn't change her mindset.

Cynthia only looked coldly at Gravis like he was a piece of rotten meat. She looked at him like he was the most despicable existence in this world.

"You have poisoned my King's mind," she transmitted to Gravis so that no one else could hear her. "He has always been a kind and benevolent King, and he would have never let our Kingdom come into danger. You are the most wretched manipulator I have ever seen," she transmitted coldly with disgust.

She had waited several hours to make sure that the Red King wasn't here anymore. If the Red King were close by, she wouldn't be able to see the next day.

Gravis just evenly looked at her, which made Cynthia's rage explode. She hated this look! When Gravis looked at her like this, it felt like everything was in his control. How could such a weak beast be in control in a situation like this!?

"And you truly believe that I have the ability to cloud your King's judgment to this degree?" Gravis asked emotionlessly. "I may be smart, but I'm not omnipotent."

"SHUT UP!" Cynthia shouted in rage. She didn't know why, but as soon as Gravis spoke a word, she just got irrationally angry.

Cynthia had gone through hell for the last couple of months. She just couldn't believe that her benevolent King was so malicious and selfish. Yet, her King had said these words himself.

So, she came upon a crossroad. Either she accepted that the revered image of her King inside her mind was a lie, or she decided to believe in her King regardless. Cynthia tried to justify her King's behavior in her mind. Yet, no matter how hard she tried, she just couldn't find a good reason why he would say something like that.

So, after weeks of deliberation and pain, she found her answer. Her King had been pure and benevolent, but everything had changed as soon as Gravis appeared. Her King had sacrificed his best disciple to Gravis. Then, he brought Gravis to the Red Kingdom.

After arriving at the Red Kingdom, Cynthia had seen that Gravis could do anything he wanted. He was under constant protection, and no beast was allowed to touch him. Was this a slave? No, this was not a slave!

In order to protect his image, Gravis had manipulated the Red King into putting on a show. Gravis would appear as a slave to everyone so that no one minded some new upstart. Yet, in reality, Gravis was in control.

This wretched beast had manipulated and changed her King into doing his bidding! He had corrupted her King until he forgot all benevolence and only saw personal gain in his eyes!

Cynthia knew that if she didn't do anything, the Red Kingdom would die out! The longer Gravis remained, the more his influence would spread. In Cynthia's mind, Gravis was the most manipulative and dangerous beast out there!

These were the conclusions that Cynthia had come to after thinking for a long time. She just couldn't accept the true mindset of her King and shifted all blame onto Gravis. It was all Gravis' fault!

"Your vile manipulation has gone on for long enough, pest!" Cynthia said coldly. "Today, I will kill you to protect my King and Kingdom! When you die, everything will return to normal, and my King will be able to see you for what you truly are, a vile and sneaky manipulator!"

"Prepare yourself!" she said coldly as she readied herself to pounce.

Gravis only looked at her with his usual, even look.

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Chapter 443: Bet

"I won," Gravis said evenly as he looked at Cynthia.

Cynthia was taken aback as she heard Gravis' words. What did he mean by he won? She was about to kill him, and he said that he won? Did he expect that he would be able to fight her? Gravis might have an impressive Battle-Strength, but Cynthia was sure that he wouldn't be able to fight over a full Realm above himself.

Cynthia shook her head to regain her bearings. It didn't matter what Gravis said. She just had to kill him, and everything will return to normal.

BANG!

The ground below Cynthia exploded as she burst forward with ridiculous speed. The Red King's abode was made out of incredibly powerful ore, and not even Gravis would be able to damage it. Yet, Cynthia just randomly destroyed it by accelerating.

Instead of getting ready for battle, Gravis just continued sitting there. If he were to fight her, he wouldn't be able to survive. Her speed was just way too fast for him. He wouldn't even be able to react to any of her attacks.

BOOOOOOM

But it wasn't Gravis fighting her.

Cynthia got flung back as a powerful fireball exploded before her, and her skin received a tremendous amount of cuts and burns. If that fireball had hit her directly, she wouldn't be alive anymore.

Cynthia's eyes widened in shock, terror, and fear as she realized who had attacked. There was only one beast inside the Red Kingdom that outclassed her to such a degree.

A small, red hawk landed between Gravis and Cynthia as it looked at Cynthia with unending fury. One of his commanders had betrayed him!

"M-My King," Cynthia quivered in terror. Why was the Red King here? Didn't he say that he would be gone for a couple of days?

"Explain yourself, commander," the Red King said with an icy voice that didn't allow for any disobedience.

The Red King's powerful voice took Cynthia out of her shock. "My-My King, this beast has clouded your mind! Please, you must see the truth! I'm only doing this to protect you, my King!" she rapidly said in nervousness.

When the Red King heard that, he grew even angrier. This level three King dared to think that she would be able to protect him, the Red King!? He was one of the most powerful level five Kings in existence! He could even resist Emperors for a while! How dare this weak beast assume that it could protect him from anything!? Did this weak cat believe that she was more powerful than him!?

"How has this Lord clouded my mind, commander?" the Red King demanded in an icy tone.

Cynthia's breathing quickened as her fear rose. "I-I don't know, my King!" she shouted in panic. "But ever since this-beast appeared, you have spoken words that you would have never said! You said that the Red Kingdom is only a tool to increase your power! The Red King I know would have never said something as selfish as this!"

"You are a kind and benevolent King. You always wanted the best for us, and I believe in you," Cynthia said weakly and sadly. "Please, you must see reason, my King! This Lord has put thoughts in your mind about grandeur and power, and that you-"

BOOOOOOOOM!

And Cynthia was no more.

"Weak, pathetic, naïve, stupid," the Red King spat one word after the other. Gravis could hear the Red King's genuine disgust and hatred for Cynthia.

The Red King respected power above everything else, but to achieve power, one had to be cruel and make sacrifices. The Red King knew these things and was ready to go through with these sacrifices. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been so powerful.

Yet, this level three King spoke about kindness and benevolence? Even Lords knew that power was everything, so how did this beast reach the power of a level three King while still believing in these childish and naïve things?

When Cynthia had said that he was benevolent, the Red King took that as an insult. Being benevolent meant that he wasn't ready to give everything for power. If there were no gain, only a naïve fool would help someone!

When Cynthia had said that he was kind, the Red King also felt insulted. He had killed so many beasts and had enslaved so many others. The Red King was proud of himself, but he wasn't a hypocrite. He

knew that he wasn't kind in the least. His lack of kindness only showed his ambition and hunger for power. Kindness was weakness, while a lack of kindness was strength in his mind.

Cynthia saw the words benevolent and kind as a positive character trait, but to the Red King, these two words only meant stupid and hypocritical. He just couldn't believe that there was a high-ranking beast inside his Kingdom with such a weak mindset. The Red King felt a mixture of shame, disgust, hatred, and rage towards Cynthia.

"Called it," Gravis said from behind the Red King, which nearly made him explode in rage again.

The Red King turned to Gravis with burning eyes and glared at him. Gravis only looked back with his usual, even look.

Some seconds passed, and the Red King's body shook slightly. He hadn't been this angry in a really long time. Then, he turned around and took some deep breaths to calm down. Gravis didn't interject since he wasn't willing to gamble with his life right now. He shouldn't push the Red King too far.

Two minutes passed in which the Red King glanced at the burned crater to his side. Nothing was left of Cynthia. Usually, he wouldn't have wasted a valuable corpse like that, but he had just been too furious.

"How did you know that the cat would betray me?" the Red King asked as he looked at the blackened crater. Subconsciously, he had already degraded Cynthia from commander to just a common cat. He couldn't bring himself to call such a weak beast a commander of his Kingdom.

"I didn't," Gravis answered.

The Red King furrowed his brows and turned to Gravis. "Explain," he commanded.

"I wasn't sure if Cynthia would betray you or not. After all, I only know her superficially. There was a 50% chance in my mind that she would change her mindset, a 30% chance that she would remain the same and do nothing, and a 20% chance that she would betray you," Gravis explained.

The Red King snorted. "And this 20% chance was enough for you to make a bet with me?" the Red King asked with annoyance.

"Yeah," Gravis answered, "because if these 20% turned out to be true, I would be dead right now."

The Red King sighed when he heard that. "Understandable," he commented.

"Also," Gravis added, "telling you how I'm able to split into multiple bodies like that would literally be no loss to me. It makes no difference if you know or don't know."

The Red King grew a bit angry again as he glared at Gravis. "Then wh-"and immediately stopped himself. He knew exactly what answer would come. Gravis would just say that he didn't want to tell him.

"So, as for my payment," Gravis said as he trailed off.

The Red King only sighed again.

A couple of months ago, Gravis had contacted the Red King and told him that Cynthia would kill Gravis as soon as the Red King left. Of course, the Red King didn't believe that one bit. Cynthia was one of his most powerful commanders, and he looked very favorably upon her. She would never betray him.

Then, Gravis explained to him how he was judging her incorrectly and that he assigned his own mindset to her due to his pride in himself and her. Of course, the Red King still didn't believe it.

So, Gravis made a bet with him.

The Red King should act like he would leave for a couple of days but just keep watch from a hidden location. If Cynthia followed her orders, Gravis would tell him how he could split into multiple bodies.

The Red King wanted to know how that worked so badly. He had tried everything to get Gravis to tell him before, but he had been completely helpless. Yet, in his mind, as soon as Gravis offered the bet, he grew ecstatic. He would get to know Gravis' secrets without having to do anything or angering him? This was great!

Also, it would feel like he would have won against Gravis, which would have felt great. Gravis had been the greatest source of frustration he had ever had.

Yet, if Gravis won...

"So," Gravis said slowly. "Tell me."

"What will happen to me as soon as you hand me over to the Empress?"

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Chapter 444: Gravis' purpose

The Red King sighed again and looked at Gravis with a serious expression. What he was about to say will change the whole dynamic between him and Gravis.

"The Empress has a fondness for special food, and you fulfill all these-"

"Shut up, you lying piece of shit," Gravis interrupted the Red King with a sneer.

The Red King was shocked when he heard that. At first, he couldn't believe what he had just heard. Did he just get insulted by some Lord? He would have never believed that a mere Lord would insult him like that. This felt so surreal to him.

"Lying?" the Red King asked in a threatening tone.

"Yeah, lying," Gravis answered.

The Red King was still taken aback, but he soon recovered. Then, the Red King just laughed menacingly.

"So, that's it," the Red King said. "You aren't able to handle the truth and avert your eyes-"

"No, you're just lying," Gravis interrupted him again.

The Red King took another deep breath to calm down. Gravis' constant interruptions made his blood boil. "And what, pray tell, makes you think that I'm lying?" he asked with narrowed eyes.

"For starters," Gravis said as he pointed at the Red King, "You objected to me calling you a liar but didn't object to me calling you a piece of shit. That's a pretty good indication that you're lying."

The Red King's face transformed into a grimace. He hadn't even thought about that.

"Additionally, if I would be killed in five years, you could just kill me now and freeze my body. Like this, you wouldn't need to fear me going for a 'walk'."

"Also, you want power above everything else, and you sounded pretty convincing when you said that I would be your future enemy. This means that you know that I won't just die as soon as I arrive there."

"On top of that, such a powerful beast like the Empress wouldn't waste her valuable time with such nonsense. She has become this powerful by fighting for her life, time and time again. If she had such a weak mindset, she would be a Lord on the fringes of the continent."

"Finally, when I said I would become your enemy in the future, you didn't show even the slightest reaction. If you knew that I would die, you would have had a self-satisfied smirk on your face. With your petty mindset, you wouldn't have been able to hide your mirth."

"So, yeah, that's why you're a lying piece of shit," Gravis shouted. "I thought you had some self-respect. I thought you would think such mere deceptions to be beneath you." Then, Gravis' sneer intensified. "Oh, how wrong I was."

The Red King's body shook in rage as he heard that tirade. He had never been this disrespected in his entire life.

Crk!

The sound of scales scratching on stone could be heard as Gravis stood up. "So, anyway, since you aren't ready to pay up, I think I'll go for a walk."

The Red King took a deep breath to calm himself. "Okay, yes, I lied to you," he confessed with a grumbling tone.

Gravis only looked at him evenly.

The Red King took another deep breath. "I wanted to shock you and make you fearful of your life as a payback," he grumbled. "I would have told you the truth either way."

Gravis huffed. "Oh, is that so?" he asked in a sarcastic tone.

"Don't push it!" the Red King threatened.

Gravis just rolled his eyes. In truth, Gravis believed the claim that the Red King would have told him the truth later. Gravis already had a pretty good picture of the Red King's personality. Something as petty as that seemed to fit his mindset.

"Alright," Gravis said as he sat back down. "The truth, then."

The Red King sighed as he felt a headache coming on. He only wanted to frustrate Gravis a bit to get one over him, but Gravis wouldn't even give him that.

"You will be one of the Empress' breeders," he said with a dejected tone.

Gravis blinked a couple of times out of surprise. "Breeder?" he asked.

"Yes, a breeder," the Red King repeated. "Your Battle-Strength and body are shockingly powerful. The more powerful the parent, the better the offspring. Your Battle-Strength is powerful enough that the offspring will take on your traits while receiving the nourishment from the Empress. This will produce a Divine Beast with your appearance and powers."

Gravis was still taken aback by this turn of events. He had expected many things, but he didn't expect to become a child-factory. He thought that he would maybe become some commander in her army or some trainer for some beasts. He had even considered being a slave.

The Red King saw that Gravis remained silent and sighed again. "You really don't know how lucky you are," he said with some dejection. "So many beasts want to breed with my powerful Empress but can't because they are unworthy."

"But I don't want to have any children yet," Gravis interjected.

When the Red King heard that, his head shot up in confusion. "What do you mean by you don't want to have any offspring?" he asked in confusion.

"I don't want to have any offspring," Gravis repeated. "I'm still not at the end of my journey, and creating offspring will create a new bond that will restrict me. What if I want to leave? I wouldn't be able to do that due to my responsibility and obligation towards my children. Having a child will only hinder me in my path to power."

Even though Gravis explained his reasoning in great detail, the Red King only grew more and more confused. "What do you mean with, they will stand between you and your path to power? Also, we beasts don't much care for our offspring. The bond between parents and offspring isn't even as deep as the bond between one of my common soldiers and me."

"Well, I'm not like you," Gravis said. "If I had a child, I would want to give it the best possible life. I couldn't rest easy or cultivate in peace if I didn't know that my child could be in danger. To me, a bond between a parent and a child is deeper than any bond in the world," Gravis explained.

The Red King was still confused and looked at Gravis like he was a freak. "You're really a strange beast," he commented. "Even something as basic as this is different when it involves you."

Then, the Red King suddenly smiled victoriously. "But you have revealed something new to me. Apparently, there's some common information that you don't know about."

Then, the Red King snickered. "Oh, I want to see your face when you find out," he commented.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "What do you mean?"

"I'm not going to tell you," the Red King said with a smirk as he turned around.

Gravis grew a bit nervous when he heard that. Apparently, there was something that he didn't know about, and the fact that he didn't know that information delighted the Red King. Something like that couldn't be simple.

Yet, what could he do? Just like the Red King wasn't able to force Gravis into answering his questions, Gravis couldn't force the Red King.

On top of that, Gravis was sure that the Red King would never tell him. Gravis had frustrated the Red King to no end by keeping information from him, and with the Red King's petty mindset, he would want to do the same thing to Gravis.

The moment that Gravis had shown interest in that particular piece of information was the moment he was destined to never hear it from the Red King's mouth.

Well, at least, Gravis got to know what would be waiting for him in the future. Yet, he didn't look forward to it at all.

The situation with Cynthia was over, and Gravis went back to staring into space. Trying to comprehend Laws was the only thing that could help him become stronger. Sadly, Gravis knew that he could understand some parts of some Laws but wouldn't be able to fully grasp them without some kind of sudden comprehension or enlightenment.

And most of those happened in perilous fights.

The days stretched into months, which eventually stretched into years. Gravis just continued looking at the CMO and his surroundings in a trance as his fight with the level five Lord drew near.

And before he knew it, the time for the fight had arrived.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 445: Awkward Tempering

Today was the day Gravis' fight was supposed to take place. Gravis had already readied himself by putting on his emerald green armor and only waited for the Red King to bring his opponent to him. He wasn't sure where they would fight, but it would probably just be atop the Red King's abode.

After some hours passed, Gravis felt a beast approach his spot. Normally, all beasts kept themselves away from the Red King's abode since this wasn't a place where they were supposed to walk around. After all, the Red King held great pride in his power.

Gravis inspected the beast, and, sure enough, it was a level five Lord. This would probably be his opponent.

The beast was a two-kilometer-long, silver bird. It looked quite sharp and fast but also had a certain amount of aggressiveness to it.

'Silver color, above-average speed, powerful attack,' Gravis thought as he had a weird expression on his face. Was the Red King serious?

"Your opponent has arrived," the Red King transmitted to Gravis as he left his abode and landed before Gravis. Some seconds later, the silver bird also landed on top of the abode. Yet, instead of concentrating on Gravis, it only bowed to its King.

"My King," the silver bird transmitted to the King in a deferential tone. Then, it remained silent, as if it was waiting for orders.

The Red King nodded to the bird in acknowledgment and turned to Gravis. "This will be your opponent," he said to Gravis.

The silver bird also heard these words and looked at Gravis with a mixture of skepticism, confusion, and insult. This was the reason why it had been called? It was supposed to fight some level two Lord? Such a level two Lord couldn't even be considered a snack to the silver bird.

"I would advise you to search for a different opponent," Gravis said to the Red King.

The silver bird only sneered when it heard that. Gravis was already showing signs of fear in front of it. Yet, what would that accomplish? This, obviously, wasn't a fight but an execution. Why else would it have been called to deal with a mere level two Lord?

The Red King narrowed his eyes. "You said you wanted a level five Lord," the Red King answered.

"Yes," Gravis said, "but I want it to be an actual challenge. This bird won't even be able to launch an attack before I kill it."

The silver bird felt shocked and insulted when it heard that. A mere level two Lord was looking down on it?

"Silence, weakling," the silver bird shouted. "How dare you disrespect-"

"Shut up," the Red King said.

The silver bird immediately fell silent and didn't dare to utter another word.

Then, the Red King looked at Gravis again. "Explain," he demanded.

Gravis pointed at the bird. "This bird has the lightning element," he said.

"So?" the Red King asked.

"You don't know, but I have an unprecedented affinity towards lightning. The fact that my lightning is so powerful and that I can transform my body into lightning should give you an inkling. Any beast with the lightning affinity will die when confronted with me."

"No matter its power. This includes Emperors," Gravis said evenly like he was explaining the most obvious thing.

Both the Red King and the silver bird were shocked by what they heard. Had this level two Lord just said that he could kill an Emperor? This wouldn't even be possible inside a dream.

Yet, the silver bird remained silent. The Red King had rebuked it once, and it wouldn't want to get rebuked again.

Meanwhile, the Red King narrowed his eyes in thought as he looked down at the ground. Usually, he would throw such a ridiculous claim out of the window before the beast saying it could even finish their ridiculous boast. Yet, Gravis was different. He had shown many peculiar things that appeared impossible. This could actually be true.

However, the Red King didn't believe the Emperor part. Gravis just had no idea how powerful an Emperor was. That was why he was boasting so grandly.

After some seconds, the Red King made his decision. "I want to see it," he said.

Gravis only lifted an eyebrow when he heard that. "This will waste one of my tempering opportunities," Gravis said.

The Red King sighed when he heard that. "You're even more greedy than me," he said. "You already understand two Laws, and one of them is already more powerful than average Laws."

Gravis knew that the Red King was referring to his Punishment Lightning.

"Your Battle-Strength is already unprecedented, and there is not a big difference between Lords. The real difference in power only appears as soon as a beast becomes a King," the Red King explained.

"Additionally, you haven't had enough time to understand new Laws. The Law you learned last time showed the accumulation of all the wisdom you've acquired. You're not on the cusp of understanding a new Law. I can feel that," the Red King said.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "How would you know?" he asked.

"Beasts that are on the cusp of understanding a Law have a certain type of aura around them. You can't distinguish this aura since you're too young. This feeling allows me to say with certainty that you won't be able to understand a new Law right now."

Gravis looked to the ground for a bit. "Did I have this aura when I was fighting the Golden Dragon?"

The Red King nodded. "Yes, you did. Otherwise, I wouldn't have put you into such a suicidal fight. You were already outstanding enough as a present. Sacrificing you like this would have been a colossal waste."

Gravis sighed when he heard that. Deep inside, he had already known that he wasn't ready to grasp a new Law. He had spent years forging and had learned a ridiculous amount of information from his father about materials. This was the only reason why he had been able to understand this Law so quickly.

Yet, he hadn't had these kinds of advantages in regards to other Laws. Everything else had to be gathered by him alone. So, even though Gravis had spent three entire years comprehending his surroundings and the CMO, he wasn't even close to understanding anything.

Gravis had an excellent guide with the CMO, but the more he watched it, the more he understood how little he actually knew.

All of this meant that Gravis would need to spend a lot of time comprehending Laws. He had charged through the Realms without a break, but now, time was catching up to him. Cultivation took longer and longer, the more one progressed on the path to power.

Gravis had been able to shorten the time of the Spirit Forming Realm. Theoretically, he could also reach the Nascent Nourishing Realm in a matter of hours, as long as he had enough food. Yet, at some point, he would be forced to comprehend Laws, and that would take its time.

Now that Gravis thought clearly, he also realized that his combat experience basically couldn't be increased anymore. There was only so much genius, creativity, and effectiveness that Gravis could use. Gravis couldn't increase the efficiency of his fighting style anymore.

He had perfect control over his power, was incredibly good at dodging, and he had a tremendous amount of creativity and experience. There was nothing more that he could learn in regards to his body and fighting style.

This showed Gravis the cruel reality.

In order to increase his Battle-Strength further, Gravis needed to comprehend Laws. There was basically nothing else he could do. The only other thing would be to increase his Will-Aura, but that required a perfect opponent.

A level five Lord would give him some tempering, but it wouldn't be that much. Gravis could sacrifice a part of his body and attack the opponent with a Lightning Crescent. His lightning was already two and a half times more powerful than initially, and this would be enough to injure even a level five Lord.

This meant that he was in an awkward spot. Level five Lords were slightly too weak, while level one Kings were way too powerful. Even if Gravis became a level three Lord, he still wouldn't have any chance against a level one King. He would, at least, need to become a level four Lord.

After remaining silent for half a minute, Gravis sighed. "I don't like to admit it, but you're right. In regards to tempering, I'm in an awkward spot right now. Fighting a level five Lord would give me some tempering, but not much."

Gravis sighed again. "Fine," he said.

The Red King nodded and then turned to the silver bird. "You two will be opponents. The winner gets to eat the loser."

"You can start whenever."

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 446: Melancholy

The silver bird narrowed its eyes and looked at Gravis with bloodthirst. This beast had dared to disrespect it, its King, and all Emperors as a whole. It would enjoy killing Gravis.

Meanwhile, Gravis felt down. The realization that he couldn't continue fighting and slaughtering his way to the top weighed heavy on his mind. Gravis only looked at the horizon with a melancholic expression as he realized that, in the future, there would be a lot of aimless and boring sitting around.

He was not in the mood to fight. He had thought about a flashy and impressive way in which he could win the fight, but he just couldn't bother right now. This bird would die anyway, and who would even see his performance? The Red King? What was the point of impressing him?

In Gravis' mind, the Red King was just a bird close to its death. The Red King had suppressed Gravis, and that had severely crossed his bottom line. Even if the Red King acted nice now, it changed nothing. So, what was the point of putting up a performance for some bird that would be dead in the near future?

Before this fight started, one had to pay attention to a particular thing.

That thing was that Gravis had never fought someone with the lightning element ever since he had reached the Spirit Forming Realm.

In the Core-Continent, all the Lightning Cultivators were part of the Lightning Sect, which had a close relationship to Gravis. The priests also hadn't had the lightning element. The closest enemy in the lower world to having a lightning affinity had been the lower Heaven. Yet, it was more of a mix of all elements with lightning as its most powerful one.

As for the middle world? Gravis had seen some beasts with a lightning affinity, but they had either been too weak to count as his opponent or had been part of his River Tribe. This would be the first time he would fight someone with a lightning affinity after adapting his Spirit to lightning.

BANG!

The silver bird leaped off the stone and started circling Gravis with crazy speeds. It planned to strike Gravis with a dive. He wouldn't be able to evade something like that. The fight would be over in no time.

Gravis only sighed.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

And the silver bird exploded.

No one could manipulate an element that had a will controlling it... except Gravis. Due to his unprecedented affinity towards lightning, he could control it wherever and whenever it was present. This included the body, dantian, and Spirit of all living beings.

Gravis hadn't been able to kill the lower Heaven with that since it had isolated itself with that weird egg-shield. If it hadn't, the fight with the lower Heaven would have gone down exactly like this one. Of course, the lower Heaven knew Gravis' powers, so it had taken precautions.

Yet, what of the beasts? Firstly, they didn't know his powers, and secondly, they didn't have the same powers as a Heaven. Beasts with a lightning affinity were helpless in front of Gravis. He could kill all of them with merely a command.

Gravis only needed to command the lightning inside of them to explode. This didn't even require him to use any of his powers since their own element would go against them and destroy them in the process. That was why Gravis could even kill Emperors if they had a lightning affinity. He, himself, might be too weak to kill them, but their own power was easily enough.

The Red King's eyes widened in shock. Did that bird just explode for no reason?

BZZZ!

The lightning consumed the corpse and shot at Gravis. In no time at all, Gravis absorbed all the lightning and powers of the dead bird. This was plenty enough for him to become a level three Lord.

"Do you understand now?" Gravis asked.

The Red King looked at Gravis in shock. Gravis hadn't even moved, but he had killed a Lord three whole levels higher than him. No one would even believe the Red King if he told them what had happened.

Yet, the Red King wasn't stupid and had a lot of experience. He saw the power of the explosion and had also noticed that the lightning had been different from Gravis'. He quickly concluded that Gravis had, somehow, taken control of the silver bird's lightning and had used it to kill the Silver Bird.

The Red King also realized that, following this logic, as long as Gravis was able to release a thought, he would even be able to kill an Emperor. He truly hadn't overestimated himself.

This was the first time the Red King had felt a bit of fear towards Gravis. He was thanking all his lucky stars that he didn't have the lightning element. If he did, he would already be dead.

Some minutes passed in which the Red King was still thinking about hypothetical scenarios while Gravis started growing. He was becoming a level three Lord.

The evolution only took a couple of minutes, and when he was done, Gravis' body had reached an impressive size of about 40 meters. Of course, such a size was only impressive when compared to cultivators. Gravis still counted as one of the smallest Lords.

"You're really the perfect counter to anyone using lightning," the Red King commented as soon as Gravis was done evolving.

"It's just a side-effect of choosing my path," Gravis said. This was true. After all, Gravis' goal was countering Heaven, not other Lightning Cultivators.

"What is your path?" the Red King asked.

"I'm not telling," Gravis said.

And with that, the Red King's frustration returned. Another thing that he wanted to know desperately was added to the pile. Sadly, he knew that he wouldn't be able to get a satisfactory answer from Gravis.

The Red King grumbled a bit and then looked at Gravis one last time. "We'll be leaving in around two years," he said before he entered his abode.

Meanwhile, Gravis sighed again as he looked at the sky. 'I have no idea what Law I should concentrate on,' he thought. 'I gained some insights into various things, but nothing that could come even close to an actual Law. The only direction I have is the Life Law with the CMO as a guide.'

Then, Gravis looked at the ground. 'But what then? When I comprehend a Life Law, what am I supposed to comprehend next? I only have an affinity towards lightning, but it's difficult to comprehend something I can't observe. I already know everything about my own lightning, which makes observing it meaningless.'

'I wonder, is this how everyone feels? Cultivators probably have a Law that is very compatible with them, and they can focus on comprehending that. Yet, as soon as they comprehend it, they will probably also be aimless.'

Gravis sighed another time, something he had been doing quite often today. 'Cultivation really isn't easy.'

Gravis stewed in his melancholy for a couple of hours until he shook his head wildly. 'If everyone goes through this, I can as well! I only need to comprehend and understand one thing at a time. At some point, I will have accumulated enough to actually comprehend a new Law.'

'Anyway,' Gravis thought as he summoned a ton of ore. 'I should first forge a more powerful armor!'

Gravis' melancholy vanished as soon as he concentrated on forging more powerful armor.

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Chapter 447: Comprehending Laws

Two more years passed in which Gravis simply tried to comprehend anything. By now, he had stayed five full years in the Red Kingdom. He had never been in one spot basically doing nothing for such a long time before.

In the lower world, he had always changed environments and learned new things. Even the entire rise and fall of the River Tribe had only taken a bit less than a year. So, five years felt like an eternity to him.

Yet, it only felt like an eternity when compared to his earlier life. In truth, the time actually passed rather quickly for him. In the beginning, every day had felt like forever, but as soon as he got used to ignoring everything else, time seemed to pass much faster.

Gravis had always been on edge, trying to put himself into as much danger as possible in order to not fall behind. This was the first time Gravis was basically forced to only wait. Was it a bad thing? Gravis wasn't entirely sure. He just didn't have enough information to make an informed decision on that.

For once, the absence of pressure had, ironically, put Gravis under more pressure. He felt like while he was just sitting here, other Cultivators went through one life and death fight after the other. Only sitting here made him feel like he was falling behind.

Yet, Gravis also realized that this was only his own ambition talking. In truth, other Cultivators also needed to just sit down and comprehend their Laws. At some point, everyone would have developed their own fighting style to the peak. So, Gravis tried to change his mindset regarding tempering.

Tempering no longer gave him any combat experience. He was already able to foresee nearly all of his opponent's attacks, and fighting more wouldn't increase that skill any further. Now, it was all about the Laws. Gravis was sure that the cultivators all concentrated on their Laws as long as they reached his power.

Gravis was wrong.

Cultivators and beasts at his Realm generally weren't even close to finalizing their perfect fighting style. Gravis had gone through more crises than nearly every other Cultivator and beast at his level.

In the Unity Realm, comprehending a Law was a luxury. Very, very few Cultivators and beasts in the Unity Realm had the chance of comprehending a Law. After all, the Unity Realm wasn't a Realm where one was supposed to comprehend a Law. Comprehending Laws came much later generally.

Cultivators would only start looking at Laws as soon as they reached the later Stages of the Nascent Nourishing Realm. After all, in order to reach the Law Comprehension Realm, one needed to have

understood at least one Law. Without that, they wouldn't be able to reach the Law Comprehension Realm. At that point, everything would focus on Laws.

Gravis simply reached this step much sooner. He was already focusing his eyes entirely on the Laws while being inside the Unity Realm. Yet, was that a good thing?

Usually, one would say that it was a good thing. After all, Gravis would have had much more time to comprehend Laws. Yet, that mindset was wrong. The reason for that was longevity. Someone in the Unity Realm could already grow to be a thousand years old.

If someone comprehended a Law in ten years and reached the Nascent Nourishing Realm while another Cultivator needed 500 years to accomplish the same thing, would that make a difference?

In truth, it made no difference because, in the end, both of them would have comprehended one Law and would be in the same Realm. Many geniuses often argued that being able to comprehend a Law faster would allow them to remain young.

Yet, what was the point of that? As soon as someone reached the Spirit Forming Realm, the dulling of the mind via age had already vanished. An old man near his dying bed could comprehend just as much as a youngster. Arguments like these were only spoken by the geniuses to give them a sense of superiority.

In their mind, reaching supreme power was a sprint, when, in actuality, reaching supreme power was an ultra-long-distance marathon. Being faster in the beginning made no difference. When running such incredible distances, it was more about actually reaching the goal instead of having a good time.

Old Man Lightning was an excellent example of this fact. He had remained at his level for over a hundred years. Yet, he still had an amazing Battle-Strength and managed to ascend. The only difference between him and other Unity Realm Cultivators was their remaining longevity.

Old Man Lightning only had less than 800 years left, while others had more than 900. Yet, no one needed 800 years to reach the Nascent Nourishing Realm. This was such a large timeframe that everyone willing to risk their lives would easily reach it.

After that, the longevity would only increase, and in no time at all, Old Man Lightning would count as one of the young people again.

Because of all these factors, comprehending Laws in the Unity Realm only helped with the current Battle-Strength, identical to having a powerful Will-Aura. It gave a momentary advantage, but if one couldn't keep building on it, they would lose that advantage very quickly.

Sadly, Gravis knew most of these things, but not all of them, which was why he had made the wrong conclusion regarding other Cultivators. Yet, in the grand scheme of things, it didn't matter what other Cultivators did. It was all about one's own power.

All in all, tempering oneself every week or tempering oneself once every decade made no difference, as long as the Realm didn't progress faster. Cultivators and beasts had enough time to waste. Of course, that was only true up to a certain point.

When one reached the point when someone needed to comprehend Laws, the timeframe of tempering became important again. One should never forget that every tempering experience came with a risk of death. There needed to be a worthwhile reward to make taking the risk worth it.

If one crazily tempered themselves, they would only increase their Will-Aura, while the comprehension of a Law would only increase by a slight bit. Yet, if one tempered themselves after accumulating a lot of understanding, one might be able to understand a new Law.

Therefore, taking more time between tempering was actually way better than doing it constantly. Gravis was now only beginning to understand this concept. He had some inklings about the truth, but his tempering-crazy mindset made it hard to accept. It just felt too different.

After these five years of comprehension, Gravis managed to grasp some things, but nothing really conclusive. He still remembered how it felt when he had been close to understanding the Law regarding the materials of the middle world. Right now, he didn't have this feeling at all.

Back then, he felt like he was so close to understanding something. It felt like there was something there, and he just needed some type of breakthrough to understand it. This feeling was wholly absent right now, even for any of the Life Laws.

Gravis sighed as he realized that today would be the day when the Red King would bring him to the Empress. Five years. He had spent five years here, continually comprehending as much of the world as possible.

Yet, what had he gained?

In Gravis' mind, he felt like he had gained nothing. Yes, he understood some things, but was that really worth it to waste five entire years of his life? Gravis had been so used to just smashing through the Realms, and when the cruel reality hit him, it hit him harder than any other Cultivator.

Gravis was special in regards to his Spirit, Energy, and body.

Gravis was also special in regards to his Will-Aura and fighting style.

Yet, Gravis wasn't special in regards to Laws.

When it came to Laws, he was just as aimless and slow as everyone else.

"You ready?" the Red King suddenly asked Gravis, bringing him out of his thoughts.

Gravis looked at the mountain on which he had sat for years now. Yet, he didn't have any sentimental attachments to the mountain. This wasn't his home, and the Red Kingdom wasn't a place where he wanted to stay.

Crk!

Gravis slowly stood up and stretched himself for the first time in two years.

"Let's go," he said evenly without motivation.

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Chapter 448: The Empire's Rules

The Red King nodded when he heard Gravis' answer. "This time, I won't carry you since some other beasts might think I'm your servant."

"I don't mind," Gravis answered.

"Also, it would be better for you not to transform into lightning. I want that to be a surprise for the Empress," the Red King advised.

Gravis rolled his eyes. "Fine. I don't see the point of that but take my acceptance as some sort of parting gift. After all, the last five years weren't as bad as I had initially believed."

The Red King groaned. "You really don't know how lucky you are. Do you honestly believe that a breeder of the Empress would be held in some confined room or something? You will just join her Empire with a distinguished status. This means you can do whatever you want."

When Gravis heard that, his brows furrowed. "That really is different than I had expected. Does it mean I can also leave if I want?"

The Red King nodded immediately, surprising Gravis. This was completely different from what he had expected. Gravis thought that he would be some kind of breeding slave. Yet, if he so chose, he could simply leave the Empire?

"Wait, you're serious?" he asked.

The Red King sighed. "Yes. That's why I said you don't know how good you'll have it. The only rules that bind you are the rules that every member of the Empire has to follow. No one will suppress you."

"So," Gravis said slowly. "I could also choose not to join the Empire if I wanted to?"

"Sure," the Red King answered directly and calmly. "I'll get my reward either way. However, I'm very convinced that you will stay."

The Red King motioned for Gravis to follow him after he said that. Then, he started flying towards the north. Gravis followed him and used his full speed without transforming into lightning. The Red King simply looked at how fast Gravis was flying and adapted his speed to Gravis'.

"Why do you think I would want to join someone else's Empire?" Gravis asked.

"Because the rules in an Empire are different than the rules in a Tribe. Do you honestly think that an Empire lead by an Emperor wouldn't know how to create powerful beasts? The Empires are set up to produce as many powerful beasts as possible," the Red King explained.

"I know the rules of your River Tribe, and the rules in the Empire aren't much different. Though, there are a few more. For example, you can't just randomly kill a beast on your Realm. In comparison to the rules you've created, in the Empire, it requires both parties to agree," the Red King explained.

Gravis thought about this for a bit. "Then, as soon as I've proven my strength, I wouldn't be able to challenge other beasts that easily anymore?"

The Red King hummed for a bit, which sounded surprisingly melodic. Gravis guessed that this was because he was a bird, and birds had a particular talent to sound nice. "It depends," the Red King answered.

"On?" Gravis asked.

"Whom you challenge," the Red King said. "Some beast two levels higher than you certainly won't accept the challenge as soon as they have seen your power. However, a beast three levels higher might accept the challenge for tempering."

"Another thing would be a fight for status. Since everything depends on power, including status, you might get some beasts that want to replace you as a breeder. Of course, these challenges follow different rules. An average beast three levels higher than you obviously wouldn't be worthy of being the Empress' breeder, even if he managed to kill you."

"In order to challenge your status, a beast would need to fulfill the initial requirement of the Empress and then have the same level and Realm as you," the Red King explained.

Gravis sighed. "Sounds like a waste of time," he commented.

The Red King scoffed. "If any other beast heard these words coming out of your mouth, they would believe you have your head up your own ass. Every potential candidate for a breeder position is outstanding," the Red King said in annoyance.

Gravis only looked at him with his typical, even look.

After some seconds, the Red King groaned. "But yes, it would be a waste of time for you. At least, at your current Realm. If you can't learn any new Laws, sooner or later, the candidates will come for you."

"I know," Gravis said. "All my Battle-Strength is only temporary. If I don't stay at the forefront, I will sooner or later become average."

However, that wasn't entirely true. Gravis still had his unique status as the only human and was, therefore, the only one able to shift his body's powers around. This fact alone already guaranteed him the power to fight one level above himself.

One should remember that being able to fight one level higher than oneself was very impressive in normal circumstances. Yet, this wouldn't even be considered as meeting the requirements to become a candidate for the Empress. After all, the Empress was in the Law Comprehension Realm, which made her one of the world's most powerful beasts. She would only consider the very best of the world as potential mates.

Right now, Gravis was probably the most powerful beast on his level. Yet, there were a lot of incredible beasts out there. For example, Gravis had heard that there were Divine Beasts able to fight two levels above themselves. This was already very impressive.

Right now, Gravis was the strongest, but as soon as he relaxed, these impressive beasts would overtake him. This had already been the case when he had reached the Unity Realm again.

One should remember that Gravis had had some issues with dealing with level three Lords when he had been a level one Lord. Back then, his Battle-Strength had been just as powerful as these impressive

Divine Beasts. Only after the fight with the Golden Dragon had Gravis' Battle-Strength grown to this degree.

Of course, another aspect was the soft-breakthroughs of his lightning, which allowed him to grow more powerful without reaching the next level.

Because of all these things, Gravis knew that he couldn't relax. He had to stay at the forefront and concentrate on understanding Laws. These candidates might not be a threat to him right now, but they might become a threat in the future.

Yet, instead of fearing such fights, Gravis welcomed them. Finally, he felt some pressure again. The threat of these candidates would push him forward to become more powerful.

The more Gravis heard about the Empire, the more he liked it. This sounded like a great place to temper himself. Yet, the breeding-part still weighed heavily on his mind since he really had no interest in making children right now. Also, he held no attraction towards beasts. He preferred humans.

"It actually sounds quite nice," Gravis commented.

"That's why I said that you were lucky. There are also places in the Empire that allow you to easier comprehend Laws," the Red King said.

Gravis immediately grew interested when he heard that. "There are?" he asked.

The Red King nodded. "Yes. Of course, you can't just go there for free, even with your future status. You need to earn Contribution Points," he explained.

Gravis hummed for a bit. "Let me guess, I can only get Contribution Points by fighting against sea beasts, correct?" he asked.

The Red King nodded. "That's right. The war with the sea beasts is continually ongoing, and it is the duty of every land beast to join the war. Yet, without enough enticement, most beasts wouldn't want to go. That's where these special areas for Laws come into play."

Gravis actually didn't mind this development. To him, there was no difference between killing land beasts and sea beasts. Joining a war or invasion might also give him some tempering. To him, the condition was a win-win.

"By the way, how will this whole thing with the Empress go down?" Gravis asked.

"I will present her to you, she will inspect you, and then she will test you. Of course, this isn't just a private meeting between us, but a regular meeting with the other subservient Kings. Nearly every King will have a candidate prepared for this."

"Usually, there would be one spot on a podium, and the candidates can challenge the beast on the podium until every beast had had a chance to fight. However, I think that this won't happen today. After all, you far outclass any candidate that might appear," the Red King explained.

Gravis had no more questions after this one. Staying in the Empire actually sounded way better than he had assumed. He might even decide to go there without the Red King forcing him to.

Sadly, the whole breeding-thing still laid heavily on his mind.

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Chapter 449: Entering the Empire

Gravis and the Red King traveled for a couple of hours. The Red King was many times faster than Gravis and probably could have already arrived at their destination, but due to him adjusting his speed to Gravis, they hadn't even left the area of the Red Kingdom.

After these couple of hours, they finally managed to reach the edge of the Red Kingdom, and the Red King suddenly stopped.

"This is the border between my Kingdom and the Empire. Luckily for you, my Kingdom is directly beside the Empire, which makes this whole journey much faster and easier. As soon as we approach the border, some guards will come to us. Just remain silent and don't say anything. I'll handle the talking," the Red King said.

Gravis nodded. "I have no reason to go against you right now. In the future, we will have our fight. Sowing problems for you now would just be petty."

The Red King felt a mixture of emotions when he heard Gravis' words. On the one hand, he was quite relieved about the fact that Gravis agreed to remain silent, but on the other hand, Gravis had reminded him again that he wanted to kill him. This part made him feel more disdain and a bit of aggression towards him. Of course, that was just the Red King's battle intent.

The Red King nodded. "Good," he said. Then, they flew towards the border again but slower.

A couple of minutes later, some beasts came charging at them with impressive speeds. Gravis felt the power of them as soon as they reached his Spirit Sense, which had grown to a radius of 40 kilometers by now. One of them was a level two King, while the rest were level five Lords.

"Welcome, Red King," the leader of the guards shouted. "Is it time for the regular meeting again?" he asked.

The leader of the guards was a blue snake, making Gravis wonder why he was meeting so many snakes in this world.

The Red King nodded. "Yes," he simply answered. He didn't even greet the guard. However, that was to be expected. After all, power was everything, and it didn't matter that this guard was part of a stronger organization. In terms of personal power, the Red King could sneeze this King to death.

The guard also didn't mind. He was probably used to the Red King's conduct and then moved his attention to Gravis. The leader of the guards looked at Gravis with judging eyes. Any beast had an innate sense of power and superiority, which other beasts could feel.

Gravis' felt the King's superiority reaching out to him, which made him lift one of his eyebrows in a questioning look. This King was nearly a whole Realm above Gravis, and such a display would weaken the fighting intent of any weaker beast.

This wasn't the first time Gravis had been in such a situation. Back then, when Gravis had been ready for his final practical exam, Forneus had also used his Will-Aura to suppress Gravis. This situation was very similar to back then.

Yet, Gravis had grown way more powerful, and even the Red King wasn't able to make Gravis react in any way. So, in the end, this whole display of power went past Gravis like it didn't even happen. His only reaction was a calm, questioning gaze.

Gravis simply looked into the eyes of the King like he was asking what he was doing. This surprised the King quite a bit. He felt a bit of respect for Gravis due to his resistance to his pressure, but he also felt some disdain, which was quite contradictory. The King was way more powerful than him, and by not reacting, Gravis had basically shown that he didn't acknowledge his power.

"Hoooh," the King said with an impressed tone. "You've found quite a good one this time, but I'm also a bit surprised. I thought you wanted to bring your disciple."

"He died," the Red King commented nonchalantly. If it were his disciple in Gravis' shoes, the Red King might have intervened. However, the Red King knew Gravis, and he also knew that not even he could intimidate him. All in all, he didn't even care about this guard's disrespect towards him.

"My condolences," the guard said. Of course, this was only meant to mock the Red King. Everyone knew that this guard didn't give a shit about the Red King's disciple.

"Can we go now?" the Red King asked in annoyance.

The King looked at Gravis again, but this time, Gravis didn't even react at all. He simply looked past the King with his usual, even look.

The guard huffed. "Okay, you can pass," the guard said. "You know where the mountain is. Please don't go anywhere else."

"Sure," the Red King said.

Then, all the beasts went back to their earlier positions while the Red King and Gravis continued their journey.

After some minutes, Gravis looked at the Red King. "Was this some kind of test?"

"No, that guy is just an ass," the Red King said. "If I were part of the Empire, I would just massacre this guard. Sadly, if I did that now, it would be seen as a betrayal towards the Empire."

As soon as Gravis heard that this was no test, he immediately lost interest. Because of that, no follow-up questions came from him.

After this brief intermission, the two beasts traveled for nearly three days. The Empire was way bigger than Gravis had estimated previously. He had to fly with his full speed for over three days just to reach the center of the territory. One had to remember that Gravis was already a level three Lord with his speed nearing the level of a level four Lord.

After these three days, the two finally arrived at their destination. The beasts became much more powerful, and Gravis couldn't even feel the power of a single one of them. This meant that all of them were probably, at least, level five Kings, which surprised Gravis quite a bit.

Normally, an Emperor shouldn't have so many level five Kings, right? After all, they were pretty rare. This gave Gravis the suspicion that the Empress wasn't weak, even in comparison to other Emperors. Gravis also guessed that there were probably also some Emperors among the beasts he had seen.

"Impressive, isn't it?" the Red King asked with a smirk.

Gravis nodded. "How powerful is the Empress?" he asked.

The Red King only smirked when he heard that question. "She's a level three Empress. Quite powerful, right?" he asked.

Gravis narrowed his eyes. He had already expected something like this after he had witnessed the power of the surrounding beasts. A level three Emperor would be in the Middle Law Comprehension Realm. Three more breakthroughs and she would ascend. This really was near the peak of this world.

Right now, Gravis felt like he was out of his depth. In the lower world, he had always resided in areas appropriate for his level. Yet, now, he was already in an area with the most powerful beings in the world, while his journey in this world had just begun.

Suppose one compared the current power dynamic with the power dynamic of the lower world. In that case, Gravis could count as someone in the middle of the Body Tempering Realm while the surrounding Emperors were all in the Spirit Forming Realm. It was like Gravis was already inside the Core-Continent while still being in the Body Tempering Realm.

"We're here," the Red King said, interrupting Gravis' thoughts.

Gravis looked forward and saw the most massive mountain he had ever seen in his entire life. From his current position, it simply looked like a wall that split the world apart. The appearance of this massive mountain reminded Gravis of the time he had seen the walls of Opposer City.

The mountain easily reached beyond the clouds. Gravis grew surprised when he realized that his Spirit Sense didn't even reach far enough to see the top of the mountain. This meant that this mountain was over 40-kilometers-tall.

Gravis also noticed another detail, which made him even more surprised. This absolutely gigantic mountain was made entirely out of materials in the Law Comprehension Rank. Gravis wasn't able to feel or study these materials with his current Realm, but he recognized the materials due to their appearance and properties. After all, Gravis had learned about every available material in the middle worlds.

"Welcome to the Mountain of Pride," the Red King said to Gravis with a smirk.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 450: Water Buffalo

When Gravis heard the name of the mountain, he felt his insides shake. For some reason, he felt a resonance coming from the mountain when he heard that name, which was something he hadn't felt before. For some seconds, Gravis remained silent as he took in this feeling.

The Red King noticed Gravis' reaction and smirked. Yet, he didn't say anything to bring Gravis out of his thoughts. Some beasts had this sort of reaction when they saw the mountain and heard its name.

Gravis felt like the mountain became even more powerful in his vision. To him, the mountain felt like it was sending out an aura of absolute hegemony. It was like this mountain was showing him that no one would ever be able to suppress it. It felt like the mountain would stay here forever.

"Some beasts feel this resonance," the Red King said after some minutes. He had already seen that Gravis had somewhat recovered, which was why he continued speaking now.

Gravis looked to the Red King. "What does this mean?" he asked.

The Red King smirked a bit. "It means you have a chance of comprehending the Law of Pride in the future."

Gravis narrowed his eyes. "Law of Pride? Something like that exists?" he asked.

The Red King nodded. "Emotions are part of the world, and therefore, have their own rules. So, you can also understand them and use the Laws associated with them."

Gravis thought about this for a bit. The fact that emotions could also take the form of a Law was something he hadn't expected. He had thought Laws were more like the natural workings of the world. He didn't think that something as elusive and personal as emotions could also have Laws associated with them.

Of course, Gravis noticed something else. "This mountain is not natural, is it?" he asked.

The Red King nodded. "The Empress has spent countless years and countless resources to create this mountain. She knew that she was close to understanding pride but was just missing the last realization to understand it. So, she decided to create the most powerful and most imposing mountain in the world."

"It took countless years to complete it, but when she managed it, she also felt this feeling. Yet, her viewpoint is vastly different from ours. We can only look at the mountain from here and witness its magnificence. Yet, the Empress is the owner of this mountain. It belongs to her, and she has created it."

"Witnessing such a display of pride and power is different from realizing that this incredible display of power belongs to you and is, therefore, below you. When the Empress witnessed the power of her mountain, she finally realized the full Law of Pride. After all, her pride must be grander than the pride of this mountain," the Red King finished explaining.

"So you don't need to fight someone to the death to understand a Law," Gravis commented.

"Of course not," the Red King said. "It's all about your personal understanding. A life and death fight puts you under immense pressure and forces your mind to work as hard as never before. Yet, that is not necessary to understand a Law. After all, if your mind is already powerful enough to understand the Law, it doesn't need the help of a fight."

"All in all, you could say that a real fight is an extraordinary stimulus, but it's not necessary. It's just a tremendous help," the Red King explained.

Gravis remained silent as he looked at the mountain some more.

"We still have a couple of days until the meeting," the Red King said from the side. "We will remain at the foot of the mountain for now. Without the explicit consent of the Empress, no one is allowed to step foot on this mountain. It symbolizes her pride, and therefore, herself."

Gravis remained silent as he simply stared at the mountain. The Red King didn't mind since he had already expected something like this. Most beasts would fall into a trance when witnessing the mountain for the first time. So, the Red King simply flew to the ground and waited for the time of the meeting,

Some days passed, and Gravis noticed more beasts appearing in his surroundings. He was able to feel the power of most of them, but some were still too powerful for him to sense. The ones whose power he was able to sense were all level four Kings, which allowed Gravis to confirm that he could feel the power of level four Kings but not level five Kings.

"Hello, Red King. Weren't you supposed to bring some Golden Dragon or something to this meeting?" a voice appeared from the side suddenly.

Gravis looked over and saw two beasts. One of them was a water buffalo, just a bit taller than the Red King's current, small body. Gravis wasn't able to feel the buffalo's power, but he was pretty sure that this was a level five King.

Behind the water buffalo was some kind of lizard, which looked different from the usual lizards that Gravis had met. Gravis had learned a lot about beasts, and he was sure that this kind of lizard was called a monitor lizard.

In comparison to the water buffalo, this brown monitor lizard was much bigger. It was probably around 800-meters-long. Yet, in comparison to beasts of its same power, it was still relatively small. This monitor lizard was a level four Lord. Gravis was pretty sure that the water buffalo was another affiliated King of the Empress and that the monitor lizard was his candidate.

"What's it to you, buffalo?" the Red King answered neutrally.

"Well, I'm just interested in your candidate. I want to know why you decided to replace your previous one," the water buffalo said with a calm voice. In comparison to the Red King, the water buffalo sounded completely different.

When the Red King talked, his voice directly showed his emotions. His voice radiated the pride of his power and showed his disdain towards others clearly. Many humans would think of the Red King as an arrogant asshole when they heard his voice just once, but beasts were different.

Beasts were straightforward and weren't the biggest fans of schemes. Of course, there were some exceptions to that rule. Shira was a good example of an exception. So, when the Red King talked, they only felt it natural that he was showing his superiority. After all, he was stronger than most beasts.

Yet, in comparison to the Red King, the water buffalo sounded calm and reticent. He sounded like some kind of hermit elder that kept himself away from the ongoings of the world. Of course, Gravis noticed that there was a flaw in this logic. After all, if the water buffalo were some hermit, he wouldn't be here with a candidate of his own.

"My old candidate died," the Red King answered evenly, his voice showing his disregard for the water buffalo.

"Oh, my condolences," the water buffalo said with his calm voice. "So you had to find the next best thing. Seems like you won't get the reward this time," he said with compassion.

Gravis guessed that the water buffalo didn't mean these words. Yet, for some reason, Gravis couldn't be entirely sure.

"You sound like you're sure of your victory, buffalo," the Red King said in disregard.

The water buffalo grinned in a sheepish manner, making Gravis lift an eyebrow. This didn't seem like how a level five King would typically act. "I think I have a pretty good shot this time," he said with a smile.

If other Kings heard these words, they might become interested in the monitor lizard and investigate it, but the Red King simply didn't care. There was no way that a more outstanding beast than Gravis was present here.

The water buffalo saw the Red King's disinterest in the monitor lizard and misinterpreted it. In his mind, the Red King's disregard showed that he had already given up. He was simply here to make up the numbers. Why else would he not care about a powerful enemy of his candidate?

Due to the Red King's conduct, the water buffalo never paid any attention to Gravis. The Red King was showing the weakness of his candidate with his conduct.

"Well, it was nice talking to you. I'm going to say hello to the others. Wish you luck anyway," the water buffalo said with a smile. Then, he flew away without waiting for a goodbye from the Red King because he knew that no goodbye would come out from his mouth.

Some seconds after the water buffalo left, Gravis looked at the Red King. "I guess you two are not on the best of terms?" Gravis asked.

The Red King snorted. "You're lucky that you're my candidate. If any other beast pushed their nose into my affairs, I would kill them directly."

Gravis just looked evenly at the Red King. "What's with this pointless show of strength?" Gravis asked.

The Red King took a deep breath to calm down. He hated it when Gravis directly called him out whenever he just wanted to feel superior due to his power. The Red King simply wanted to release some steam by threatening someone and showing his power. Yet, Gravis didn't even allow him that small solace.

The Red King released a sigh. "No, it's not like that," he answered. "The buffalo meant everything he said. He genuinely feels bad for the death of my disciple. You could call him a genuinely nice guy, and that wouldn't be wrong."

"And that's why I hate him," the Red King said.