

## Lightning 481

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

#### Chapter 481: Mantis

Gravis was in a place that he didn't know, but he was pretty sure that he was pretty close to the defensive line. The fire beam had pushed him for a considerable distance, maybe 500 kilometers or something, but such a distance wasn't that far for his speed. Additionally, he felt some distant shockwaves, which proved that the battle was still relatively close to him.

BZZZZ!

Gravis transformed into lightning immediately and charged towards the west. Right now, by killing and eating the crab, Gravis was back in his peak condition, which meant that he could use his Lightning Transformation without any fear of his Realm dropping.

Some seconds passed in which Gravis only traveled to the west.

CRRRRR!

Suddenly, a thick column of earth rose out of the earth and blocked his way. Gravis simply moved around the column and flew further to the west.

CRRR! CRRR! CRRR!

More walls of earth blocked his path, confusing him a little bit. If attackers had summoned those walls, they wouldn't just block his path. After all, the enemy's goal was to kill him, not to stop him from fleeing.

BZZZ!

Gravis tried to move around the walls of earth, but new ones popped up to block his path forward. When Gravis saw that, he realized that the earth element beast blocking him wasn't from the enemy camp. This beast had no idea about Gravis' powers and simply thought that he was some elemental attack.

Gravis transformed back into his body. "I'm not a sea beast!" Gravis shouted.

Some seconds passed in silence.

"Who are you?" a deep voice said as a hog rose from below the earth.

Gravis was a bit surprised since he hadn't noticed that hog at all. It had been hidden perfectly within the earth with not even his Spirit Sense being able to see it. This had to be the workings of a Law!

"I was part of the invading force, and I'm the reason why this whole battle is taking place. The sea beasts want to eliminate me at all cost," Gravis explained.

The hog looked towards the north-east for a bit. "The northern defensive line has become active, but I refuse to believe that it has anything to do with you. You're only a level five Lord. Why would the sea beasts be ready to sacrifice a big part of their defensive line for you?"

"Because I have the most powerful Battle-Strength they have ever seen," Gravis explained coldly. He was beginning to get frustrated by this hog. A new ambusher of the sea beasts could arrive at any second, and Gravis might not survive the next attack. He had no time for this whole explaining shit!

Meanwhile, the hog looked at him with disdain. It was one thing to boast about one's powers, but Gravis was taking it too far. The most powerful Battle-Strength they had ever seen? The hog wouldn't believe such a blatant lie.

"Stop lying," the hog demanded.

"I don't have time!" Gravis shouted back. "The enemy might appear here at any second! How about this? I attack you with a lot of power, and you can judge for yourself. As long as you don't take this attack lightly, you won't get injured too much."

The hog huffed. "You're a level five Lord while I'm a level two King. How would you-"

BZZZZZZ!

Gravis created a Lightning Bomb with 70% of his power and absorbed it into his saber. "No time!" he shouted. "Take this attack and use all your power to defend! I need to get away from here!"

Gravis slashed down and shot the Lightning Crescent forward at the hog. First, the hog was shocked by Gravis suddenly attacking him, but then he grew disdainful again. Yet, at the last second, due to a gut feeling of his, he decided to also use his earth element to block.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The Lightning Crescent exploded onto the hog and destroyed the earth armor on it. Then, the lightning burned an incredible amount of the hog's skin while some of its flesh even received some burns. The hog was in incredible pain as it felt like it had been submerged in searing lava.

"There! Do you believe me now!?" Gravis shouted.

The hog was nervous, angry, and shocked as he tried to process what had just happened. Yet, the pain awakened his battle-instincts, and he looked at Gravis with fiery eyes.

"You wanted this!" Gravis shouted back. "This is the fastest method to prove my allegiance! If we don't retreat now, the sea beasts-"

"Die!" the hog shouted.

The hog immediately shot forward at Gravis while gathering all its earth essence.

Gravis gritted his teeth in rage and frustration. 'Fuck! Now I'm supposed to kill my own companions too!? I can't waste my time like that!' Gravis thought.

Then, Gravis engulfed the corpse of the manta ray inside his Spirit Space in lightning.

"Halt!" a female voice thundered throughout the surroundings.

Gravis aborted his absorption, but the boar continued charging at him. By now, the boar was so close that Gravis wouldn't be able to react anymore.

SHINGSHINGSHINGSHING!

An incredible amount of sharp wind blades passed between the space of Gravis and the boar. Gravis wasn't hit by them, but the boar lost his tusks and front half of his face.

"I said halt!" the same voice from earlier shouted.

Right now, the boar only felt pain and terror. What had he done? Had he just ignored an order from his commander?

Whoooooom!

A ten-kilometer-tall mantis appeared suddenly beside the boar and Gravis. Her speed had been unreal, and Gravis also felt her power. 'Level four King!' Gravis thought in surprise.

Not only was Gravis surprised by the mantis' power, but he was also surprised by her relatively small body. Obviously, she had reverted to the true size of her body, but as a level four King, she still was only ten-kilometers-long. This was the smallest level four King Gravis had ever seen.

"Commander," the boar stammered in fear. "I've lost control of-"

"Shut up!" the mantis shouted at the boar. "I'll deal with you later!" Then, she turned to Gravis and looked at him coldly. "You have attacked one of my soldiers. What is your explanation for that?"

"My explanation is that I don't have any fucking time!" Gravis shouted aggressively at the mantis. "The sea beasts are chasing me like I'm some sort of holy food that will give them supreme power and eternal potency! This was the best way to convince this stupid fucking boar to let me pass!"

The boar took a deep breath as he saw Gravis talking to his commander like that. Did he have a death wish?

Meanwhile, the mantis looked at Gravis more closely. Gravis wasn't sure what she was feeling right now since her insect-eyes made it hard for him to discern any of her emotions.

"I sense no falsehood from you," the mantis said coldly, but Gravis also felt rage hidden beneath her voice. "You will come with us to our defensive line, and you won't be able to leave until everything has been cleared up. If you have lied about anything, I will have you digested."

"Sure," Gravis said with an aggressive tone back. "I agree," he said.

Why was Gravis so aggressive?

The reason for that was that he, again, had no control over his life. He had to wait for the other defensive line to return victoriously and explain everything to them. This was another form of suppression and powerlessness, and Gravis hated feeling like that!

"Your agreement is not of importance," the mantis said coldly, demonstrating her authority and power over Gravis, which he hated with all his being. "You will follow me!" she ordered.

Gravis narrowed his eyes but didn't answer. The mantis turned around, and Gravis flew behind her without saying anything. He had just become many times more powerful, and his Will-Aura has risen by an incredible degree, but he wasn't happy right now, not even a little bit.

He was so close to knowing the answer from Heaven, but now he was being suppressed by something else. This whole thing made him feel like the growth of his power hadn't changed anything. He had been suppressed before, and now he was suppressed again.

After some minutes, they all arrived. In front of them was a massive wall of earth that seemingly blocked the entire horizon. On top of these walls, Gravis saw a lot of small beasts. Of course, all of these small beasts were Kings, which had shrunk their bodies.

The mantis flew upwards, towards the top of the wall, and Gravis followed. When they reached the top, all the beasts slightly bowed to the mantis.

"Take him into custody. He is not allowed to leave until I say so," the mantis ordered to one of her assistants, who was a small badger.

"Yes, commander," the badger said. Then, it looked at Gravis evenly. "Follow me," it ordered.

Gravis didn't like this one bit, but he followed anyway. Surprisingly, this badger was a level three King. The commander had probably acknowledged Gravis' power and had sent one of her valuable level three Kings to keep him in check.

They landed behind the wall and stopped at its foot. "We will wait here," the badger said.

When Gravis heard that, he sat down and closed his eyes. Right now, he was helpless to change anything, but at least he was behind the defensive line now.

After some seconds, Gravis took a deep breath in an effort to calm down. 'Only one more King to go. Then, I will know my answer,' he thought.

'Just a bit more!'

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#### **Chapter 482: Hippo**

Half an hour passed in which Gravis only waited and thought about his current situation. He hated this feeling of having to wait for someone to come through for him, but there was nothing he could do.

'I've really had enough of this constant suppression!' Gravis thought. 'First, the thing with Stella. Then, the lower Heaven forced me through hell. Now, this middle Heaven might force some bullshit rule on me. On top of that, my life is completely in the hands of some Kings from my own side.'

'I hate this so much!' Gravis thought as he gritted his teeth. He started his cultivation journey for two reasons. One was to take revenge for the highest Heaven's schemes, while the other one was to never feel so helpless again. Yet, along with the growth of his power, the feeling of suppression increased instead of decreasing.

'The night is at its darkest before dawn. At least, that's a saying I have heard a couple of times. My goal is not pointless, and as long as I become more powerful, at some point, I will be free. Eventually, there simply won't be anyone powerful enough to suppress me anymore, even if they want to,' Gravis thought to himself.

Trying to think positive was the only thing he could do right now. After all, he had no alternative right now.

"I come from the northern defensive line!" a voice suddenly appeared as it echoed throughout the surroundings. Of course, the defensive line had already noticed the approaching beast, but they all knew the new arrival. This was indeed a beast from the northern defensive line.

"Welcome! What brings you here?" one level three King asked.

"I am here for the retrieval of a black, lizard-like beast around 0.4 King Units tall," the voice said.

By now, the beast was close enough for Gravis to see it with his Spirit Sense. It was a hippo with the power of a level two King.

Gravis immediately knew that this hippo was referring to him. One King Unit, funnily enough, was about one kilometer. Currently, Gravis was around 400-meters-tall, and the description fit him perfectly. It seemed like the northern defensive line had managed to win the fight, or at least hold.

"Sure, come over," the level three King said.

"Wait!" the mantis suddenly spoke up, surprising the beasts. Why did their commander get involved in such an unimportant issue?

Gravis' eyes narrowed as he noticed that. Did the mantis plan to take revenge on him by making it difficult for him to escape?

"What is the reason for your retrieval?" the mantis asked as she floated forward. Right now, she was only 20-centimeters-tall, not bigger than a mortal pet. Everyone would think that this was just some bigger, normal mantis.

The hippo was a bit taken aback. "Excuse me for my ignorance, but I don't know you," the hippo said.

"I'm the newly appointed commander for this defensive line," the mantis said. "Right now, this defensive line is under my supervision. So, I ask again, what is the reason for your retrieval?"

The hippo seemed a bit confused. He was just supposed to take the black lizard thing away, and normally such a retrieval went very smoothly.

"The black lizard has left an ongoing battle and put our soldiers in jeopardy by doing that. Such a thing is a grave violation of the rules, and the punishment is death!" the hippo shouted.

"Bullshit!" Gravis shouted immediately as he stood up.

**BANG!**

The badger before him suddenly shot at him and hit him in the stomach. For some reason, this attack from the badger stunned Gravis and made it hard for him to think. Even though the badger was a level three King, Gravis shouldn't have been this helpless in front of it!

"Silence!" the badger shouted aggressively at Gravis.

The mantis remained silent for a while, and the hippo looked with disdain towards Gravis' direction.

Two seconds later, the mantis nodded. Then, she turned to the defensive line. "Boys!" she shouted with a smirk. "Seems like our level two Kings get some tempering today!"

The beasts were taken aback. What did the commander mean? The hippo was also confused when he heard that.

"Who wants the hippo?" the mantis asked the beasts.

The beasts were still taken aback, but some of them were very good at claiming opportunities. "Me!" one of them shouted loudly.

"Alright, come on up," the mantis said.

"What's the meaning of this!?" the hippo shouted in outrage. "I demand to speak with Commander Teng!"

The mantis wasn't able to smile, but Gravis was absolutely sure that she was smiling right now. Additionally, he also noticed that the badger, who had hit him just now, was also smirking.

"How nice of you to ask for the old commander," the mantis said with a mocking tone. "I think I haven't told you where he is right now, have I?"

The hippo felt like something was wrong and became nervous. "No," he simply said.

Some laughter came from the mantis. "Well, you see, our dear Commander Teng has had some very suspicious past few years. Right now, he is being detained in the Vicious Fire Empire for colluding with the enemy."

The hippo felt sweat break out all over his body. This situation was rapidly going out of control!

"I have not lied up to now! Everything I have said is the truth!" the hippo shouted.

Gravis grew angry again when he heard that, but after seeing the badger's smirk, he knew that more was going on. Because of that, Gravis remained silent for now.

The mantis chuckled a bit. "You're right. I've detected no falsehood in your words," she said, "but you have also chosen your words very carefully. You said that the black lizard had left his group, which is probably true. Yet, I would like you to tell me that he left 'voluntarily'." She put special emphasis on the last word.

The hippo became nervous. "The black lizard left his group voluntarily," he said as he looked into the eyes of the mantis.

The mantis remained expressionless, but the badger had a disdainful smirk on his face.

"You know very well that you can't lie to a beast much more powerful than you," the mantis said with a victorious voice. "Also, thank you for asking for Commander Teng. That was just what we needed to convict him."

Before the hippo managed to react, the mantis turned to the beast that had claimed the tempering opportunity. "Go ahead," she said as she flew back to the wall.

"This has been a mistake! I'm inno-"

BANG!

The hippo couldn't finish his sentence before the other level two King charged at him. In no time at all, the hippo and the beast were fighting all out.

The mantis flew over to Gravis and landed in front of him. "So, how did I do?" the mantis asked.

Gravis was a bit confused that the mantis asked him.

"Not bad," the badger from beside Gravis suddenly spoke up, "but you should have been the one initiating the conversation. By interfering halfway, you gave the enemy a chance to suspect something."

Now, Gravis realized that the mantis wasn't speaking to him but to the badger.

"You already knew?" Gravis asked the badger and mantis.

"Yes," the badger answered as he turned to Gravis with a smile, "but only my soldier and I knew about this. Everyone else has been kept in the dark to make this as convincing as possible."

"Your soldier?" Gravis asked as he looked at the badger and mantis.

The badger smiled, and suddenly, his aura fluctuated for just a split-second.

'Level five King!' Gravis realized. This short split-second had been enough for Gravis to feel the power of the badger, which had surprised him quite a bit. 'It's possible to make yourself appear weaker?' Gravis thought.

"What did you feel?" the badger transmitted to Gravis so that no other beast could hear their conversation.

"You're a level five King," Gravis transmitted back.

The badger nodded with a smile. "Quite impressive," he transmitted back. "Our Empire has already planned to take this defensive line for a while, which was why I've been sent here. Yet, who would have expected that we would find a corrupt commander?"

Gravis remained silent for a bit as he thought about this. "How did you know that this commander was corrupt?"

"Simple," the badger transmitted back. "He constantly asked for reinforcement, always saying that he got some intelligence about the power of the enemy's defensive line. Like this, he was weakening our other fronts. Meanwhile, the enemy can just put a small number of Kings on this defensive line for show and help the other fronts."

Gravis nodded. That actually made sense.

"Should I go ahead and give the signal to attack?" the mantis asked the badger.

The badger nodded. "Our little friend here has given us a great opportunity by pulling the main force of the northern defensive line out of position. Go ahead and gather the soldiers."

The mantis nodded and left without looking at Gravis.

"You want to watch the battle?" the badger asked Gravis.

"No," Gravis answered immediately. "I have other things to worry about. Can I leave for our northern defensive line now? I still need to deliver something to my companions."

Gravis was still a bit mad about the suppression and the punch of the badger. Of course, he understood the reasons and knew that he shouldn't be mad, but his lightning disagreed.

Apparently, his lightning was a bit grumpy about the current situation and wanted to strike something.

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#### **Chapter 483: The Result of the Battle**

Gravis readied himself to leave, but he got interrupted by another question from the badger before he could.

"You're from the Icy Pride Empire, right?" the badger asked.

Gravis didn't want to talk right now, but the badger and the mantis have helped him, even if it was in a way that he didn't like. "Yes," Gravis answered.

"Hmm," the badger hummed. "According to your level and Battle-Strength, you're probably a mate to the Icy Pride Empress, correct?"

"My status says I'm a mate, yes," Gravis answered.

"Interesting," the badger answered. "Who knows, maybe we will see each other again." Then, the badger gestured towards the north with his head. "Go to the northern front line, and don't worry. If some sea beast tries to ambush you, I will kill them before they can react."

Gravis nodded and flew towards the north without saying anything. Meanwhile, the badger just rubbed his chin with a smirk. "Meeting one of the Empress' mates is rare indeed. What a nice day," the badger mumbled to himself.

Gravis didn't hear anything of the badger's mumblings as he flew to the north. The distance from here to the other defensive line was probably around 2000 kilometers, but that was nothing he couldn't clear in a couple of minutes.

A minute later, Gravis saw someone else enter into his Spirit Sense's range. It was a level two King, and by the looks of their body, it was a sea beast. Gravis narrowed his eyes and looked at the incoming beast.

CRR!

Suddenly, the earth beneath the King moved with insane speeds, and spikes of hardened earth penetrated the entire beast. The King was dead in less than a second. 'Sure enough, the badger wasn't lying,' Gravis thought.

BRRRR!



Then, the earth beneath the corpse rose and carried the corpse to the south. Gravis hadn't killed that beast, so he had no claim to the corpse.

Gravis stopped and looked towards the south. Then, he turned to the east, towards the territories of the sea beasts. 'They're really dead set on killing me. They have sent so many Kings to their deaths just for a chance of ending my life.'

Gravis sighed. 'Though, I guess it makes some sense. According to logic, there should be over 10,000 level one Emperors in this world, but beasts that can kill three levels above themselves are probably only in the single digits. In their eyes, killing me is probably worth more than killing an Emperor.'

Gravis shook his head slightly and left towards the north again. Thinking about this didn't change reality. Right now, he needed to become more powerful and get back to the Empire. Additionally, the whole thing with the rule weighed heavier on his mind than some enemies coming his way.

Nothing of note happened until Gravis finally arrived at the defensive line. As soon as he approached the forest, a level two King cat contacted him. "Welcome back," she transmitted with excitement. "You have done a great service to the land beasts. Please return to your comrades and wait for further instruction. I will escort you back to the Icy Price Empire in a couple of hours."

Gravis sighed. Surprisingly, he felt rather relieved that his comrades had survived. He didn't know the name of any of the beasts that had fought alongside him in the invasion, but for some reason, he felt some connection with them.

Such a feeling was new to Gravis, but it wasn't something unusual. The only time Gravis could remember when he fought together with someone against a common enemy had been with Old Man Lightning and Lasar in the Darkness Sect. Even in the Heaven's Trial, Gravis had been more of an onlooker and coach to the group instead of a participant.

Yet, Gravis also remembered the time when two level three Lords had invaded the River Tribe's territory. Back then, the situation could be described as Gravis fighting together against a common enemy with Morn, Orthar, and Silva. Of course, it was still different in the sense that those three beasts had been his friends even before the battle happened.

'Is this a feeling of belonging?' Gravis thought. 'We are all under the same banner, and because of that, I feel for my companions? Could be possible.'

Gravis shook his head slightly to refocus. The cat was already looking at him weirdly since he had remained silent for several seconds now. "Thank you," Gravis said. "Where are my companions?"

The cat smiled. "Slightly to the west from here. You can't miss them," she said. "Wait for my signal, and we will return. The battlefield is still unstable right now, and we need to search for any stragglers."

"I guess our side has won the war?" Gravis asked.

The cat laughed a bit and nodded. "Yes. Their commander had personally tried to kill you, which had forced him to move out of the defensive line. Our two level four Kings have then engaged him together and killed him rather quickly. As soon as that happened, the battle was already won."

'Was it, though?' Gravis thought with skepticism. 'There were still a couple of powerful Kings that tried to kill me. Even two traitors have exposed themselves in the battle.'

Two traitors?

Gravis was right. There had been two traitors. One obviously had been the hippo, while the other traitor had been the beast that had shot the fire beam at him. Sea beasts with an affinity for fire were extremely rare. The chances of the attacker being a traitor was higher than a sea beast having a fire attribute.

Gravis nodded once more to the cat and then flew to the west. The cat flew to the north to do whatever she had to deal with.

Some seconds later, Gravis found his companions sitting in a forest. As soon as he approached, the beasts became excited and cheered for him.

"You're alive!" many of them shouted in joy.

Gravis could only smile bitterly when he heard these cheers. He felt a bit embarrassed and also felt a bit distant from them. Obviously, they felt more for him than he felt for them.

Whoop!

The gigantic corpse of the manta ray appeared in front of the beasts, surprising them.

"As I've promised, this corpse is yours," Gravis said.

Instead of being happy, the beasts felt a bit apprehensive. "Are you sure you want to give us the whole corpse?" one of them asked. "This corpse is worth more than the entire enemy army that we have killed."

The beast was right. Even though Gravis had already used parts of the corpse, it still had around 50 times the power of a level five Lord remaining. With the remaining circa 50 beasts, every beast would get the equivalent of one corpse of a level five Lord.

Gravis nodded. "I have eaten my fair share in the war, and I have said that I will repay you. I won't go back on my word," he said. Even if Gravis wanted to go back on his word, his lightning would disagree vehemently.

The beasts were still a bit unsure. "Hey!" the elephant from before shouted aggressively at the group. "This is the repayment we earned! Don't forget that it wasn't only the black lizard that risked his life. We have also risked our lives!"

Then, the elephant moved forward and tried vehemently to bite something off the corpse. It wasn't easy, but he managed it eventually.

The concept of herbivores and carnivores stopped being relevant as soon as a beast became an Energy Beast. At that point, every beast could eat whatever they wanted, as long as it was something living. Due to that, even sheep and cows started eating meat.

Slowly, more and more of the beasts walked forward to grab a bite. The stronger Lords helped the weaker Lords to cut off some pieces of the corpse. If the manta ray had still been alive, this would have been impossible, but the hardness and resistance of the body became weaker as soon as it died.

After around an hour, the entire corpse had vanished. Not even the bones had been spared. The beasts weren't powerful enough to break the bones, but the bigger beasts could just swallow them whole and slowly grind them down in their stomachs.

After they had finished eating, a lot of beasts wanted to strike up a conversation with Gravis, but he politely declined. He was not in the mood for talking right now since the whole thing with the rule still hung above his head.

'My Will-Aura has become even more powerful,' Gravis thought. 'Judging by its compression, its power should be equivalent to the later Stages of the Nascent Nourishing Realm. Yet, it probably still needs quite a bit to become equal to the Law Comprehension Realm.'

The fight with the moray eel hadn't done much for Gravis' Will-Aura, but the subsequent ambushes had been excellent tempering for it. 'All in all, I think the war has given me quite some benefits. I'm very close to my answer, and my Will-Aura has increased tremendously. Soon, I will know my answer.'

Half an hour later, the cat appeared before them with a smile.

"Alright, everything is dealt with. I will escort you all back to the Icy Pride Empire and inform the relevant commanders and elders of your contributions. Along the way, I will also inform the Kingdoms we pass through. The movement of a defensive line is big news."

All the beasts stood up and readied themselves for travel. The cat looked at the gathered beasts and nodded.

"Alright, let's go!" she said as she flew towards the north-west while all the beasts followed behind her.

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#### **Chapter 484: Reward**

The group traveled for a couple of weeks, but the travel time back to the Empire wasn't as long as their travel to the invasion. A couple of level three Lords had died in the invasion, while the remainder became level four Lords due to the manta ray's corpse. Because of that, everyone could travel faster.

Surprisingly, the group didn't stop even once during the travel. The small cat had said that she would inform the Kingdoms on their path back, but apparently, it was enough to do that in passing. Kings had a far greater reach with their sense than Gravis. Even with their speed, the cat probably had enough time to inform the relevant Kings.

The fact that a lot of Kings started moving around quickly as soon as they passed a Kingdom also showed that the cat had already informed them. All those Kings were probably preparing to set off. No one knew how the sea beasts would react to one of their defensive lines collapsing. However, one thing was true: A bloody battle between the two camps was imminent.

After some weeks, the group finally arrived at the borders of the Icy Pride Empire. As soon as they arrived, the cat stopped for the first time and turned to the beasts. "Alright, we're back. Everyone, go

back to your relevant commanders and tell them of your accomplishments. I will inform one of the elders about what has transpired."

The beasts released a collective sigh. They all wanted to become more powerful and had fought wildly in the invasion, but they also wanted to rest in their homes. Finally, they were back home!

All the beasts scattered in all directions while the cat shot off into the distance with much more speed than before. Now, she didn't have to throttle her speed anymore, and in nearly no time at all, she left all the beasts behind.

Gravis remained hovering at the borders of the Icy Pride Empire and narrowed his eyes. On the way back, he had had plenty of time to decide his next course of action. For that, he needed to go to the Empress. Gravis only hoped that she would agree to his offer.

After some seconds, Gravis also shot into the distance, right towards the Mountain of Pride. Of course, the Empire was still absolutely gigantic, and it took him quite some time to get to the Mountain of Pride.

Yet, even before he reached the Mountain of Pride, he received a voice transmission. "Gravis, come to the Mountain of Pride," the voice of the Grand Elder resonated inside Gravis' mind.

"I was planning on going there anyway," Gravis simply commented as he continued flying.

Some minutes later, Gravis arrived at the Mountain of Pride. The white ape was already waiting for him at its foot. "Come, the Empress wants to see you," he said, "and, by the way, you're welcome."

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

The white ape smiled calmly. "I've sent the badger to the defensive line south of yours, just in case. I didn't want the possibility of a traitor to be your downfall. Yet, who would have expected that there actually was a traitor there? I sure didn't," the Grand Elder commented.

"Huh?" Gravis asked. Then he remembered the badger. "Oh, right! That badger!"

"Yes," the Grand Elder said. "I already knew that as soon as you revealed your power, you would force the sea beasts' defensive line to overextend. The commander of your defensive line is very trustworthy, but the commander of the one south to that wasn't as trustworthy."

Gravis listened to the Grand Elder as he continued explaining with a calm smile on his face. "The badger has also given instructions to your defensive line and told them about my worries and suspicions. That's why their commander has always been close to your group during the invasion."

Then, the white ape chuckled a bit. "Of course, they wouldn't have gotten involved as long as the enemies' defensive line didn't get involved themselves. After all, I don't want to stand in the way of your tempering."

Now, all that had happened made much more sense. Gravis had already been surprised when that huge pangolin had revealed himself. The enemy commander should have been just as powerful as the pangolin, and on top of that, they had made a surprise attack. By all intents and purposes, the pangolin shouldn't have been able to arrive there in such a short amount of time.

Gravis sighed. "Thank you, Grand Elder," Gravis said. He didn't like to rely on others, but the Grand Elder had helped him this time. If the old commander of the southern defensive line had still been present, Gravis would be dead right now.

This also explained why that one fire beast had shot him towards the south. That beast probably belonged to the northern defensive line but didn't know that the traitorous commander had already been replaced. As long as Gravis went there and not towards the northern defensive line, he would surely die, at least by the fire beast's estimates.

Gravis narrowed his eyes further. 'I have underestimated the beasts,' Gravis thought. 'I've trusted in their inherent directness and honesty and failed to take the outliers into account. Such schemers are many times rarer among beasts than humans, but there are still some of them. I've been careless.'

The Grand Elder and Gravis quickly reached the top of the Mountain of Pride. Gravis landed in the middle of the Mountain of Pride's peak and looked at the Empress, who was still sitting on her throne, bored as usual.

Now that Gravis had seen so many Kings unveil their bodies' true size, Gravis also wondered how big the Empress' true body was. How gigantic would she be if she unleashed all her power?

"Welcome back, Gravis," the Empress said calmly. "You've done a great service for all land beasts. Tell me, what reward do you desire?"

"I get a reward?" Gravis asked with skepticism. The tempering and food had already been reward enough, in his opinion.

The Empress chuckled a bit. Normally, she would never do that in front of another beast, but there was no sense in acting mysterious and prideful in front of Gravis. She had already shown her true self to him anyway.

"Of course there is a reward. The movement of a defensive line is a momentous occasion. Winning an invasion only gives us a temporary outpost to gather more intel about the enemy. But, if the defensive line moves, we get that territory permanently, or as close to permanently as you can get," the Empress explained.

'Well, this is quite convenient,' Gravis thought.

"Actually, I already have something in mind," Gravis said.

"Good, then tell me," the Empress answered. The white ape had walked over to her by now and stood beside her throne, also looking at Gravis.

Any Lord or King would feel incredibly nervous in Gravis' position. Two Emperors were looking at him with no one else present. Of course, Gravis didn't feel that way. The Empress and the white ape were not his enemies, after all.

"I want to stay inside the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning until I become a King," Gravis said.

The Empress and the white ape were a bit surprised when they heard that.

## Lightning Is the Only Way

### **Chapter 485: Lightning Something**

The Empress and the white ape looked at each other in confusion. Then, they both turned to Gravis again.

"Why do you want to enter the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning?" the white ape asked. "You already have comprehended the full Law of Punishment Lightning, and you can't comprehend anything else in there."

Gravis sighed a bit. He really didn't want to explain why right now.

"Because I can absorb lightning to increase my Realm," Gravis said, making the Empress and the white ape widen their eyes in shock.

"What?" the white ape asked. "How is that possible?"

Gravis sighed again. That was why he didn't want to explain.

"It's a very long story, but I really don't want to tell it right now," Gravis said, "but I promise that I will tell you all relevant secrets as soon as I am a King. Right now, there's something weighing heavily on my mind. I just want to get this over with as soon as possible."

The white ape was a bit confused, but the Empress knew the reason. After all, she had seen Gravis' reaction when she had told him about the necessary procreation that every King needed to go through.

"That's fine," the Empress said, "but I still need to know what impact your absorption of the lightning will have on the Law Comprehension Area."

Gravis nodded. "I can tell you that. I guess Punishment Lightning isn't weak, and maybe even some Emperors need to be careful of it. Due to that, it must have an enormous amount of Energy inside it, enough to injure an Emperor, at least."

"The only thing I will do is absorb lightning until I become a King. Since the Punishment Lightning has so much Energy inside it, I won't be able to absorb much of it anyway before becoming a King. Due to the difference in Energy, my presence won't have a big effect on the whole area," Gravis explained.

The white ape nodded along as he listened to Gravis' explanation. Then, he turned to the Empress. "That makes sense," he said. "Additionally, I wanted to return there anyway some time soon. While I'm at it, I can also keep watch over him."

The Empress hummed for a bit. Then, she looked at Gravis with a complex expression. "I presume that you decided to reach the level of a King via that way instead of tempering because of the uncertainty you're facing right now, right?" she asked.

Gravis sighed and nodded. "Yes. I can't wait anymore and need to see the truth with my own eyes."

The Empress closed her eyes and nodded as she leaned back. "Alright," she said. "You can go. If you realize you can't become a King, you can return. Then, we can have a long talk and think about the future," she said.

Gravis looked at the Empress and nodded. "Yes, and thank you for your support."

The Empress opened her eyes again and furrowed her brows at Gravis. "We've already talked about this. Saying thank you is meaningless," she said.

"To you, it is, but not to me," Gravis answered. "I'm not saying thank you so that you like me more, but to show to myself that I won't forget this."

The Empress looked at Gravis like he said something incomprehensible. "Have you already forgotten my past orders?" she asked.

Gravis chuckled a bit. "I should stop being weird, right?" he asked.

"Yes, that," the Empress said. "Try to keep that in mind."

"Sure," Gravis said. Then, he turned to the Grand Elder. "Can we go?" he asked.

The Grand Elder sighed when he heard that. Nothing went normal with Gravis present. He didn't bow to the Empress or him, and he didn't show any of the common courtesies and shows of respect.

Usually, that wouldn't be an issue for the Grand Elder since he could simply admonish the beast, but for some reason, he just couldn't be mad at Gravis. It just kind of felt natural that Gravis acted this way. Also, the Grand Elder didn't want to admit it, but the change of pace felt a bit refreshing.

"Sure, follow me," the white ape said. Then, he turned to the Empress. "I will report my findings as soon as I return."

The Empress nodded. "Go," she simply said.

Then, the white ape left with Gravis following him. After leaving the Mountain of Pride, the white ape changed directions and flew towards the south.

Two minutes later, the white ape suddenly became bigger until he was the same size as Gravis and turned to him. "You're too slow," he said. "Grab my hand."

Gravis came closer and grabbed the white ape's hand.

WHOOOOOOOM!

Immediately, their speed multiplied. Gravis even felt pain all over his body due to the insane acceleration, but his body was still able to withstand that.

Gravis looked at the white ape and saw a lot of lightning leaving his backside as he left a streak of it behind him. This was obviously different from the way Gravis, lightning cultivators, or beasts moved. He wondered how this worked.

"This is the Lightning Speed Law," the Grand Elder said as he noticed Gravis staring at him. "When you transform into lightning, you're unknowingly using it already. Yet, I haven't seen you use it with your actual body before."

Gravis remembered that he had transformed into lightning while he had fought the crocodile. The Grand Elder's eyes were rather sharp since he noticed that part while only seeing Gravis transform into lightning once or twice.

"My guess is," the Grand Elder continued, "that you haven't comprehended the Law yet, but since it's an aspect of lightning, you use it automatically in your Lightning Transformation. I would recommend focusing on that Law for now."

Gravis was taken aback when he heard the Grand Elder's words. "How do you know the name of my technique?" Gravis asked. He hadn't told the white ape about the name of his Lightning Transformation. In actuality, he had told that name to basically no one.

The Grand Elder was a bit surprised when he heard that. Then, he laughed genuinely. "Wait, that's really the name of your technique?" the Grand Elder asked. "I simply called it like that since it's the best description for, well, transforming into lightning."

"Oh," Gravis commented as he facepalmed. "Okay, that makes sense. Yes, that's the name I gave this technique. I think I don't have any particular talent in naming things."

For some reason, the Grand Elder appeared much more relaxed now. Apparently, he had found that turn of events quite amusing. "Then what about that lightning beam you've used to kill the crocodile? Is it called Lightning Wave? Lightning Beam? Lightning Crescent? Lightning Explosion?" he asked.

Gravis sighed again. "It's Lightning Crescent," he commented defeatedly.

"Haha," the Grand Elder laughed again. "Don't you think that's boring? Shouldn't your ultimate move have a domineering name? What about Moon's Descent or Lightning's End? Thunder's Focus?"

Gravis remained silent as he listened to the Grand Elder. All the names sounded quite domineering, and the Grand Elder hadn't even needed to think about them. Meanwhile, Gravis just thought about the words Lightning Bomb, Lightning Crescent, Lightning Transformation, and Lightning Fork.

On their own, they sounded quite nice, but if he thought about them all together, he thought that they sounded boring.

"I think my naming sense is shit," Gravis said, making the Grand Elder laugh more.

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

#### **Chapter 486: Demonstration**

Gravis and the Grand Elder talked a bit more during the journey. The Grand Elder had a lot of experience, and he told Gravis about some other Laws that lightning had that Gravis didn't know yet.

Apparently, there were Laws associated with every facet of lightning. There were Laws about its destruction, its life, its speed, and more mysterious ones like its accumulation and presence.

Gravis still remembered that, back in the Red Kingdom, he had no idea on which Laws to focus on, except Life. Yet, just by talking a little bit, the Grand Elder gave him more than enough directions.

Gravis had always thought that he already knew all the facets of his own lightning since he already managed to understand the Law of Punishment Lightning. Yet, Punishment Lightning was only a kind of



lightning. He knew its specifics but didn't know anything about the more general workings of all kinds of lightning.

It often happened that someone couldn't see the forest due to all the trees blocking their vision. Oftentimes, the answer stared someone right in the face without them knowing.

"Then, why did you say that I wouldn't be able to learn anything in the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning?" Gravis asked.

By now, the Grand Elder appeared much more open towards Gravis. "Because you can transform into lightning. Why would you need to go to a specific area if you can just look at yourself?" The Grand Elder asked with a smile.

Gravis remained silent for a bit as he looked at the rapidly passing surroundings. "I guess you're right," he said. He had always only transformed into lightning, but he hadn't really looked closely at himself. He simply thought that he was lightning, and that was it.

After some minutes, they arrived. Gravis was a bit surprised about the distance. The Grand Elder had moved with insane speeds for several minutes, and according to Gravis' guess, they had long left the borders of the Icy Pride Empire.

As soon as they stopped, Gravis' attention was immediately claimed by the area in front of them. Tall but thin mountains pierced the dark clouds in the sky as powerful lightning rumbled throughout the horizons.

**BANG! BANG!**

Swathes of Punishment Lightning hit the mountains. Yet, surprisingly, the mountains weren't destroyed or broken by the Punishment Lightning. Gravis noticed that these mountains were made out of a lightning-resistant material in the Law Comprehension Rank.

Such a terrifyingly powerful mountain range would provoke world wars in middle worlds with humans present. Just one of these mountains would equip an entire Sect for a lifetime.

Yet, in this natural world, nearly no one cared about such ore. Usually, only beasts with metal and earth affinities would care about these mountains. But the difference between these beasts and humans was that the beasts wouldn't want to change or take the mountain range. They would simply just lay beside it.

Of course, no earth or metal beast rested near these mountains. Punishment Lightning was incredibly destructive in nature, and if they wanted to stay near these mountains, they would need to continually resist the avalanche of lightning assaulting them.

By now, the mountain range was within Gravis' Spirit Sense, and he furrowed his brows. "There are other beasts present," Gravis said.

"Of course," the Grand Elder said. "Most of our Emperors are not within the Icy Pride Empire all the time. We keep a set amount of them on standby, but all the others are free to go to these areas and understand the Laws. The more powerful our beasts, the better."

"Grand Elder, back so soon?" a silver snake said as it flew closer to them. It wasn't big since it hadn't revealed its true size yet, but Gravis wasn't able to feel its power. This meant that this snake was an Emperor.

The Grand Elder looked at the snake, and his demeanor returned to his usual calm. "Yes. I will try to understand more about Punishment Lightning," he said.

"Then, good luck," the snake said as it flew back. It didn't pay any attention to Gravis since he came together with the Grand Elder.

Gravis looked at the retreating snake with a glint in his eyes.

"Well," the Grand Elder said to Gravis, "you can find any free mountain and sit upon it. With me present, no one will be able to sneak up on you, so you can fully focus on what you need to do."

Gravis remained silent for a bit, which elicited a raised eyebrow from the Grand Elder. Gravis' demeanor had changed as soon as they had arrived. However, that was to be expected. After all, Gravis had some serious reason to come here, and now that they have arrived, his mindset was probably fully focused on that.

The Grand Elder turned away from Gravis after some seconds and flew towards the mountain range.

"Grand Elder."

Or, at least he tried to, but Gravis stopped him.

"Yes?" the Grand Elder asked as he turned around.

"I have two things to show you," Gravis said slowly with an even voice.

The Grand Elder felt a bit suspicious because of Gravis' new tone. "Yes? I'm listening," he answered.

"First of all, please look at this," Gravis said as he raised one of his hands.

**BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BZZZZZ!**

Over 20 bolts of Punishment Lightning shot out of the clouds and gathered above Gravis' hand. The air around them started to warp due to all the power present.

The Grand Elder took a deep breath through his teeth due to shock and terror. Such a compressed ball of Punishment Lightning would even be able to injure him severely!

"I have absolutely full control over all kinds of lightning," Gravis explained with the lightning ball still present over his hands. "No matter how powerful the lightning or what kind, it doesn't matter in front of me. I control all lightning."

Gravis' sudden change in demeanor, together with the deadly lightning ball in his hands, made the Grand Elder nervous.

**BZZZZ!**

All the lightning on Gravis' hand scattered and returned to the clouds. "I did this to demonstrate to you the control I have over lightning," Gravis said.

The Grand Elder was unsure what Gravis was trying to say.

"Now, please don't get nervous, but I will demonstrate my control over the lightning in your body for a second. Don't worry, nothing bad will happen," Gravis said.

The Grand Elder was a bit taken aback and felt nervous. Yet, he realized that if Gravis wanted to do something to him, he could have already killed him with his control over the Punishment Lightning in the surroundings.

"Alright, go on," the Grand Elder said with furrowed brows.

Gravis slightly extended his hand towards the Grand Elder. Immediately, the Grand Elder felt the lightning inside his body go wild and circulate around his body without his will. Yet, it stopped very quickly again.

The Grand Elder had heard the Red King talk about the fact that Gravis could control all the lightning inside beasts with lightning affinity, but it was something entirely different when he felt it performed on himself.

"I have just shown you my trust in you, Grand Elder," Gravis said. "Many beasts would immediately attack me if they knew what you know about me. If you decide to kill me due to a spontaneous reaction, I would be dead right now. I hope you understand the display of trust I have just shown you."

The Grand Elder breathed heavily due to shock, but he understood everything Gravis said.

"Now," Gravis continued. "I have a question."

When the Grand Elder heard that, he looked at Gravis intensely. "Yes?" he asked. He was pretty sure that Gravis would now tell him the reason for his demonstration.

"Are only beasts with a lightning affinity allowed in here?" Gravis asked.

"Yes," the elder answered. "Sending beasts with other affinities here would be pointless and a waste of time."

Gravis' eyes narrowed. "Well, then I have another question."

"Go on," the Grand Elder urged.

"Why is that snake here?" Gravis asked.

The Grand Elder was unsure what he should make of Gravis' question. "Because he is an Emperor with a lightning affinity that is affiliated with our Icy Pride Empire."

Gravis nodded. "The reason why I demonstrated my power to you right now is to show you that I have no reason to attack anyone in our Empire right now. Additionally, you would obviously be a more valuable target than any other Emperor, except the Empress."

"Another reason was to show you that there is no doubt in my abilities regarding lightning."

"I have shown my trust in you by demonstrating my power in front of you without keeping the deadly lightning ball in my hand. So, please reciprocate that trust when I tell you that..."

"This snake has absolutely no lightning inside of it."

The Grand Elder's eyes widened.

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

#### **Chapter 487: Traitors Among Beasts**

The Grand Elder was a bit taken aback for some time while his face went through a lot of different emotions. It went from shock to disbelief, to deep thinking, and then to uncertainty.

"How sure are you about this?" the Grand Elder asked.

"The whole point of my demonstration was to show you how sure I was and that I have no reason to target any Emperor from our Empire," Gravis said evenly.

The Grand Elder looked at the Law Comprehension Area in deep thought. "I have known him for a long time," the Grand Elder transmitted to Gravis while looking into the distance. "I have seen him use lightning and the Laws associated with it also a couple of times."

"And that makes it impossible that he managed to fool all of you?" Gravis asked back.

The Grand Elder sighed. "No, there are ways to fake an element. If someone understands a Law related to imitation, they can fake something like that. To everyone present, it would look like he had a different affinity. Of course, the attacks wouldn't have the imitated powers. They simply look very convincing."

"It doesn't matter that you have seen it. You're only considering the fact that you've known each other for a long time. To me, this sounds more like an emotional reason than a logical one," Gravis answered.

The Grand Elder remained silent for a couple more seconds. "Are emotional reasons so bad?" he asked. "He has risked his life many times for the Empire. If I would doubt him just like that, all his loyalty and hard work will be ignored."

"So, you're saying that if he is a traitor, he has earned his place as a traitor or spy by working so hard," Gravis said back.

When the Grand Elder heard that, he sighed again. "Of course not," he commented, "but I feel like I would be violating my trust in him and devaluing what he has done for us by even considering that."

Gravis shook his head slightly. Beasts were really different from humans. If a human heard that a long-standing member of their group had been working for the enemy the entire time, they would be even angrier than if it were someone new. The reason for such a reaction was that the long-standing member had much more time and opportunities to endanger their goals.

Gravis still believed that most beasts could be called naïve. They were simply too honest, too straightforward, too direct, too forthcoming, and too trusting. They would kill their enemies without hesitation, but if someone managed to become their companion, they would trust them with all their heart.

The reason for that was the relatively small number of traitors in the beast ranks. Yes, Gravis had met some of them before, but those had only been some single individuals among thousands.

Ironically enough, the fewer traitors there were among a group of trusting individuals, the worse it was for the collective whole. This might sound contradictory, but it made sense if one went through some examples.

If there were a group of 100 naïve individuals with one psychopath among the group, the psychopath would quickly be able to become the most powerful individual of the group by manipulating everyone.

Yet, if there were ten psychopaths among the group, not everyone would be swayed to one side. Naïve individuals might not spot the psychopath, but psychopaths can spot each other very well. So, in order to reach their goals, they needed to stop the others that proved to be a danger to them. Such a clash might go on for a very long time with no conclusion.

Additionally, with more of these individuals present, the naïve portion of the group might be able to notice the actual situation. They would have more dealings with these individuals and gain experience with them.

Due to this reason, traitors among beasts proved to be more devastating than traitors among humans. Humans were used to traitors, and it was not a unique occurrence to find one. Additionally, humans often had so much experience with these people that they might even use the traitor to achieve their own goals. Feeding false information to the traitor was one of the things the group could do.

The Grand Elder was much older than Gravis and had much more experience. His power and knowledge about Laws had helped Gravis immensely. Yet, not everyone lived the same life and received the same experiences.

In terms of Laws, power, wisdom, and many other things, the Grand Elder was superior to Gravis, but in terms of knowledge about psychology, Gravis was superior.

All of these thoughts went through Gravis' head in about a second. "By not acting upon this information because of such an emotional reason, you're endangering the very members of the Empire," Gravis said.

The Grand Elder sighed. "I know that," he said back. "I'm not some young and foolish beast that hasn't seen the world. Of course I will act upon this information appropriately. It just hurts me to see someone betray us."

Gravis nodded. "Then, that's good."

"I believe you to 99%, but I still need to see it for myself," the Grand Elder said.

Gravis lifted an eyebrow. "How?"

"By confronting him," the Grand Elder answered as his eyes narrowed. Yet, he turned to Gravis again. "Are there any other beasts without the Lightning Affinity present?"

"One other one," Gravis answered. "It's some kind of mole that stays at the foot of one of the mountains."

The Grand Elder nodded. "That's fine. She's a special case since she has the earth element and quite some lightning resistance. She's here to understand the destruction and defense of earth. Anyone else?"

"No," Gravis answered curtly.

"Alright, then let me just deal with that snake for now," the Grand Elder said. "Try to remain at a distance for the eventuality that he wants to attack you for some reason."

"As long as I'm more than 40 kilometers away from him, I'm in no danger. This entire area is under my control, and if I will it so, the sky will collapse upon them," Gravis commented dryly.

The Grand Elder nodded one last time at Gravis. He had seen the powerful lightning ball that Gravis had summoned. If he could gather 20 of these lightning bolts without showing any exertion, he could surely gather more. With that number of lightning bolts, no level two Emperor or weaker would be able to stand against him.

"Then just wait here. I will be back soon," the Grand Elder said.

Gravis nodded.

Then, the Grand Elder flew further into the mountain range. After some seconds, he arrived in front of the snake.

"Hello, Grand Elder. Do you need something?" he asked with surprise. Obviously, he hadn't heard anything of what Gravis and the Grand Elder had talked about. At most, he maybe saw Gravis' demonstration of his control over lightning.

The Grand Elder looked with narrowed eyes at the snake, who quickly felt like something terrible was going to happen.

"Attack me with your lightning," the Grand Elder commanded.

The snake was taken aback. "Excuse me, what? You want me to attack you with my lightning?" he asked.

"You are under suspicion of being a traitor that knows a Law related to imitation. Prove that you're not a traitor by attacking me with your lightning. If you can't, I will kill you right here and now," the Grand Elder said coldly.

The snake and the other elders were shocked to the core. This time, the Grand Elder didn't transmit his thoughts but publicly spoke them. All the elders naturally had their senses spread out, which made them involuntarily hear the Grand Elder's words. There was a traitor among them?

"Is this a joke, Grand Elder?" the snake asked with an offended expression. "What have I done to warrant such a baseless suspicion?"

"What you have or haven't done isn't important. Some evidence has come to light that you do not have a lightning affinity. If you had told us that earlier, there wouldn't be an issue right now. Yet, you have kept it secret and lied to us regarding that, which demonstrates malicious intent," the Grand Elder explained.

"Oh?" the snake asked with a sneer. "What evidence?" he asked.

"That's unimportant right now," the Grand Elder answered. "The only important thing is that you need to prove your innocence right now. You can't talk your way out of this."

The snake's face transformed into a grimace. "This is a blatant humiliation! I have fought for our Empire for many years, and that's how you thank me!?" the snake shouted with fury.

"As I've said before, what you have or haven't done isn't important. Prove your innocence right now or die. This is the last time I'm going to say this. You have ten seconds," the Grand Elder said coldly as he looked into the snake's eyes.

The body of the snake shook as his rage intensified. Some seconds passed, but just before the ten seconds were up, the snake's body relaxed, and he sighed.

"Alright, I give up," he said. "Yes, I don't have the lightning element. I have the darkness element and understand the Law of Imitation."

The Grand Elder narrowed his eyes more at the snake.

Yet, the snake seemed to be relaxed just now. "I didn't want to tell you because I was afraid that you would doubt my allegiance. Everyone knows that beasts like me are the perfect spies. As soon as you know my power, you might start suspecting everything I do and might interpret malicious intentions in actions that were not there in the first place."

The snake looked into the eyes of the Grand Elder. "Please understand my position. I'm not some spy of the sea beasts. I was simply afraid for my own life."

The watching beasts were unsure what they should think right now. The reasoning of the snake made sense, but he had still lied to all of them. This was not an easy situation.

The Grand Elder looked at the snake and sighed.

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Before anyone could react, the Grand Elder had killed the snake. He simply shot forward with unreal speed, put his hand on the snake's body, and then the snake just exploded.

The watching beasts were shocked and terrified as they saw this happen. Gravis simply nodded from a distance.

"If you had good intentions," the Grand Elder said to no one in particular, "you wouldn't have become so angry and enraged by my confrontation. I saw no guilt in your eyes for being exposed. This shows that you had no feeling of belonging to the Icy Pride Empire."

The Grand Elder's eyes narrowed again.

"I'm not so naïve that I would believe such a blatant lie."

## **Chapter 488: Confrontation**

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The watching elders weren't sure what they should feel right now. On one hand, they felt betrayed by such a close companion being a traitor the entire time, but on the other hand, the Grand Elder had just killed the elder ruthlessly. Yes, logically, it was the correct decision, but the simple way that the snake died just left a bitter aftertaste in their mouths.

The Grand Elder remained silent after saying his piece and sighed again. He hated that he had to act like this for the interest of the Empire. If it were up to him, he wouldn't care about the snake being a traitor. They had been comrades for many years, and the affiliation of a comrade wasn't very important to the Grand Elder. He valued the beast, not their belonging.

Yet, since the Grand Elder was the Grand Elder, he had a responsibility he had to uphold. He had the responsibility to protect the Empire, and that forced him to kill the snake. He was the Grand Elder, and he needed to fulfill his duty.

Gravis watched the Grand Elder and could empathize with his emotions. Holding a position of power also came with responsibilities. These responsibilities could also be seen as suppressions or shackles that someone had to deal with.

Gravis had also been confronted with these things when he had been the Leader of the River Tribe. A good example had been Liza joining the Tribe. Back then, she had asked if she was allowed to kill Orthar. Gravis, obviously, didn't like that one bit, but he had established the rules, and he had been forced to uphold them. Because of that, he had given Liza permission to kill his best friend in this world.

As Gravis fell back into memories, he thought about his surviving friends in this world: Orthar, Silva, maybe also Liza, but he wasn't that close to her.

Was Orthar still alive? If so, how powerful had he become already? Was Silva able to live peacefully, or had he been forced onto the path of power again due to how the world worked? Gravis had no idea what had happened to them. It had already been over five years by now.

Yet, Gravis quickly shook his head to regain his bearings. Right now, he needed to focus on himself. The rule was still weighing heavily on his mind, and he was about to find his answer soon.

A small part of Gravis didn't want to know the answer due to the possibility of it being a no, but he wouldn't hesitate because of something like that. A mortal might be afraid to take such a step, but Gravis had gone through worse. Yet, if the answer was truly a no, Gravis wasn't sure what he should do.

'The pain I have felt in the past has made me grow and become more powerful than everyone else in my Stage. This pain I'm feeling right now is only temporary, and when everything is over, this will increase my power too,' Gravis thought with determined eyes.

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'I need clarity!'

Gravis flew towards one of the mountain peaks and sat down. "I will be sitting here for the foreseeable future," Gravis transmitted to the Grand Elder.

Gravis' voice transmission brought the Grand Elder out of his thoughts, and he nodded. "Alright. If you need to leave, tell me. I will send an elder from here back to the Empress to inform her of what has transpired."

"Alright," Gravis answered. Then, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

BZZZ!

A very thin strand of lightning left the dark clouds and hit Gravis. It quickly got absorbed without any issue, and Gravis felt his Realm become more powerful instantly. This small strand of lightning was already more than enough for him to become a King.

His lightning strengthened but quickly weakened again as the power from his lightning was siphoned into his body and Spirit. In less than a second, Gravis' lightning had gone past the threshold for becoming a King.

Gravis remained sitting there for a couple of minutes, just feeling his body, but nothing happened. Gravis grew more nervous as the mutation for becoming a King didn't appear.

BZZZZ!

Another strand entered Gravis, and his lightning increased even more. Even though this strand was just as powerful as the last one, this one increased the power of his lightning three times as much as the one before.

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Gravis quickly realized the reason, and his heart started beating faster. His body and Spirit had reached the threshold, which left all the Energy to his lightning since his other centers of power couldn't absorb anything anymore. He had never been in this kind of situation before.

'Let's try some more. I shouldn't jump to conclusions immediately,' Gravis thought as he tried to remain calm.

BZZZZ!

Another strand entered his body, and his lightning started growing again. By now, it was at 480% in relation to its initial power when he had become a level five Lord.

BZZZ!

Another strand came, and Gravis' lightning jumped to 510%.

BZZZ!

Another one, but this time, it was different. It entered his body, but as soon as his lightning reached around 525%, Gravis felt some kind of resistance. Gravis felt a strange feeling. It felt like he carried too much in his hands and couldn't hold all of these things.

Yet, the difference between this analogy and Gravis' situation was that in the analogy, he might simply drop the things, while in reality, Gravis' self might dissipate into nature. If that happened, Gravis' will would vanish, and his self would just become normal will-less lightning.

Gravis' insides shook as he realized all these things. He opened his eyes and looked at his own body with a frown. "Is this your decision, Heaven?" Gravis spoke silently to the surroundings.

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"You do realize that the rules have only been created to create as many powerful humans as possible, right? I'm not some beast, Heaven. You might think that forcing me to adhere to the rule is fair because everyone else also follows them, but my situation is entirely different."

"You might think it's fair to put me through this, but I don't believe so," Gravis said with a cold voice. "I have had no problems with you up to now. Everything was going fine. Yet, you decide to go against me now?"

"I know that the highest Heaven is watching and judging by what I have experienced up to now, the highest Heaven probably left the choice to you. Both outcomes are acceptable to the highest Heaven. One outcome would be following the rules, while the other one would be an acceptable exception. I know that this decision lies on your shoulders," Gravis said.

Of course, no answer came.

Gravis was honestly a bit confused. It was honestly a better decision for this Heaven to allow Gravis to simply become a King. Such a situation was posing a real danger to his path to power. Additionally, Gravis had already stated very clearly that this would make him this Heaven's enemy.

Gravis was sure that this middle Heaven knew about what Gravis had done. Because of that, Gravis was also sure that this middle Heaven knew precisely what kind of danger Gravis could pose to it. Did it really not fear for its own life? Gravis couldn't believe that.

'The rules are there to create as many powerful humans as possible,' Gravis thought as he trailed off.

'Wait!' Gravis suddenly realized something. 'I think I know what's going on,' Gravis thought as his eyes became colder.

"I see," Gravis said to his surroundings. "I think I understand you better now."

The elders in the surroundings didn't pay attention to Gravis and simply focused on their own comprehension. None of them knew that Gravis was about to unveil the true personality of this middle Heaven right in front of them.

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"The rules are there to make as many powerful humans as possible," Gravis repeated again, "and I have also said that this pain will increase my power in the future. Therefore, by forcing me to follow this rule, the rule has fulfilled its purpose."

Gravis laughed bitterly for a bit. "You're quite selfless, right?" Gravis asked.

No answer came.

"You see an opportunity to increase the power of a human by following the rules. The cost isn't important to you. The fact that you know my potential makes it even better since I have a very high chance of becoming truly powerful in the future. I would become a supreme Energy magnet then."

Gravis looked with unamused eyes at the sky. "In your mind, you're sacrificing yourself for the greater good. You think your own life as unimportant in front of the goal of the highest Heaven. In order to make me become even more powerful, you are willing to throw your life away."

"Do you think yourself to be noble? Do you think this makes you a martyr? Do you think yourself better as all the other, selfish Heavens?" Gravis asked rhetorically.

"While sacrificing oneself for a greater cause is seen as noble, it breaks down when the greater cause is not actually a greater cause. A fanatic cultivator of an evil Sect sacrificing their life for the benefit of the evil Sect is not something that people or beasts would consider noble."

Gravis' eyes became colder as he looked at the sky.

"The highest Heaven's goal is about as selfless and noble as a marauding rapist," Gravis said coldly.

And for the first time, the middle Heaven answered.

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

#### **Chapter 489: The Middle Heaven's Wrath**

The world started trembling.

Everything from the oceans to the core of the continent started trembling wildly. Mortal animals and beasts grew fearful as they felt something happening. The Lords asked the Kings what was happening, and the Kings asked the Emperors what was happening. Sadly, not even the Emperors knew what was happening. This had never happened before!

A violent wind picked up that threw everything in disarray. Everything up to the Emperor Realm lost its control as it was picked up by the violent storms and was thrown into the air. Yet, surprisingly enough,

not a single life ended due to this. It was like the world wanted to show its rage but didn't want to kill anyone.

The air above the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning vibrated as the stormy clouds parted for the first time in eons. A shining light peered through the parted, stormy clouds as it concentrated onto Gravis' surroundings. Only Gravis and his immediate surroundings were illuminated by this blinding light.

The Emperors in the area had no idea what was happening, but they noticed that this mysterious and powerful light was entirely focused on Gravis. None of them had listened to what Gravis had said, so they didn't know why this was happening. Had this mere Lord done something that had shocked the entire world? This couldn't be possible!

Gravis looked at the sky with a sneer. "Stop your empty threats," Gravis commented with disgust. "The lower Heaven has done this time and time again. You can't intimidate me with this. Even though I despise you for your ignorance and mindset, you're not as bad as the lower Heaven I have met. So, don't lower yourself to its level."

**BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Powerful Punishment Lightning chaotically stormed through the sky. Something had completely riled it up. Yet, surprisingly, the lightning didn't strike the earth, the mountains, or Gravis, but the source of the light. It was like the Punishment Lightning was angry at the source of the light, not Gravis.

Gravis was lightning, and the light showed malicious intent towards Gravis. This was akin to showing malicious intent towards the lightning.

Yet, not even two seconds later, the Punishment Lightning calmed down again. Heaven had interfered and calmed the lightning down. As long as Gravis didn't try to control it, it wouldn't do anything anymore.

"You are ready to lay your life down for the highest Heaven's goal. Yet, you are ready to break the rules it has established now? Look at how hypocritical and childish you're acting right now," Gravis said with a sneer.

Surprisingly, none of the present Emperors could hear anything that Gravis had said. It was like he was isolated by something, and no sound could escape his surroundings. They could only see his mouth moving.

Gravis waited for some seconds. "Do you dare strike me?" Gravis asked with icy eyes. "Do you dare to break the highest Heaven's rules?"

The sky rumbled.

Gravis sneered in disgust at the Heavens. "You think so grandly of yourself and your devotion to the highest Heaven's goal. Yet, you're ready to break the very rules of the foundation of your belief due to my words."

"The highest Heaven is watching. I know that for a fact," Gravis said, "and you know that too. The highest Heaven has not done anything during this time, but you have stepped forward. Does that not mean that you are ignoring the orders of the very being you believe in so much?"

The sky rumbled more, but in a matter of seconds, everything suddenly stopped. The earth stopped rumbling across the world as the skies and winds calmed down. The light also vanished from above Gravis as the clouds became one again.

Was it due to Gravis' words?

No.

The highest Heaven had gotten involved. It had seen that the middle Heaven was about to attack Gravis and told the middle Heaven to stop. Initially, the middle Heaven couldn't understand how the highest Heaven could accept such disrespect. It wanted to strike Gravis down and lay down its life to protect the highest Heaven's pride.

Yet, some simple words from the highest Heaven had shocked the middle Heaven.

So what? Gravis hadn't insulted the highest Heaven. The highest Heaven knew fully well that its own goal was selfish. Gravis was only speaking the truth. The highest Heaven wasn't some weak-willed or ignorant mortal that felt themselves to be holy.

This entire cosmos only existed for the highest Heaven's benefit. So what if its goal was selfish? This didn't change the reality. It didn't matter what Gravis or anyone believed. The reality was the reality, and dignity was a shackle and something only weaklings needed.

Dignity and respect were only necessary for beings that needed their egos stroked. Just let Gravis say whatever he wants. It won't change anything. His words were as unimportant as the grumbling of an ant.

Every single beast in the world could hate and despise Heaven, and nothing about the world would change. They would still need to continue cultivating. They would still need to have offspring to become Kings. They would still need to kill each other.

Absolutely nothing would change.

The middle Heaven quickly calmed down as it listened to the highest Heaven. It also realized that it had committed a mistake and thanked the highest Heaven for its guidance. It had seen its mistake and would do better from now on.

Due to that, the world calmed down again. When Gravis saw that, he shook his head. "You see? This whole display was for nothing but your own fragile ego. I'm certain that the highest Heaven didn't even give the smallest of shits about my words, but you did."

Even though the middle Heaven had calmed down, Gravis' words riled it up again. It had never cared what Gravis or anyone else in the world had ever said, but as soon as Gravis managed to reach it once, it was like its emotional barrier of isolation was broken. Now, even such a relatively weak comment managed to anger it again.

Yet, it had not forgotten the words of the highest Heaven. It wouldn't get involved anymore and would let Gravis say whatever he wanted. Even if it grew ten times as mad as now, it wouldn't dare to do something like that again. The teachings of the highest Heaven were the highest of truths, and this middle Heaven fully believed in them.

Meanwhile, in the highest world, the Opposer simply smirked.

Gravis sat back down and took a deep breath. "I tried my best to reason with you and explain why all of this was such a bad idea, but you wouldn't listen. You have made your choice. Instead of allowing us both to benefit, you chose the path that will bring pain to both of us," Gravis silently said.

"So be it," Gravis said with icy eyes. "I can't abandon my children and can't properly cultivate without knowing their whereabouts. Not everyone is like me, and not everyone would have these issues, but I know myself. I know that this is how I will feel when all of this comes."

"So, the only option I have left is to look over and watch my offspring until they are either living happily, have taken a stable foot in cultivation, or are dead. I don't know how many years this will take, but it's only time. It might seem like an eternity to me now, but I still have over 900 years of longevity. That's plenty."

Gravis looked at the now-cloudy sky again with narrowed eyes. "I will simply split myself in two. One of me will watch over my children while the other one will comprehend Laws during that time. This is the best compromise I can find."

Suddenly, Gravis smiled in disdain. "Yet, you have overlooked a certain detail in all of this. I will now tell you this detail, Heaven. Maybe, you will decide to change your decision when you hear that."

Gravis chuckled coldly. "Have you ever heard that advantages have disadvantages and disadvantages have advantages?" Gravis said. "I use that phrase quite a lot since it has been proven true time and time again."

"Did you know that your suppression of my mutation has shown me something incredible?"

Gravis shook his head with a smirk.

"I have noticed that trying to absorb more lightning into my body tears at my will. The more lightning I have inside myself, the more I need to will myself to keep existing. You know what that means, don't you?" Gravis asked.

The many eyes of Heaven in an unknown place widened in shock.

"That's right," Gravis said.

"I can temper my Will-Aura while just sitting here. I wonder, have you thought about that?"

"I wonder how powerful my Will-Aura will become."

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

**Chapter 490: Pool**

The middle Heaven truly hadn't considered or noticed that. Gravis' cultivation was very special and often deviated from the intended path. It was not an overstatement to call Gravis' cultivation unique. He was the only one in all the worlds who had a Spirit attuned to something other than Energy.

Theoretically, the middle Heaven could have extrapolated this fact by all the knowledge it had received from the highest Heaven about Gravis. Yet, it had taken him too lightly.

However, the middle Heaven had made its decision. Wasn't the fact that Gravis was growing even more powerful even better? Yet, the middle Heaven just couldn't like this fact for some reason. It didn't know why, but it got a bit nervous when it heard that Gravis' Will-Aura would become even more powerful.

Maybe, deep in the middle Heaven's mind, it still thought that it could just throw Gravis out of its world if he became too powerful. Yet, if his Will-Aura became too powerful, this would become impossible. It had decided to give its life for the highest Heaven's goal, but when confronted with the actual reality, it didn't feel as calm and acceptant as it had expected.

Gravis waited for some seconds, but nothing happened. "That's also a no then," Gravis muttered to himself.

"Grand Elder," Gravis transmitted to the Grand Elder.

The Grand Elder was still shocked by everything that had happened. However, he didn't dare to interfere with what Gravis was doing. This display of the middle Heaven had scared him, and he wanted to keep himself out of this.

"Yes?" he asked nervously after Gravis had contacted him.

"You don't need to be afraid. Nothing will happen to anyone in the Empire," Gravis said. "I will remain here for a couple of years due to a special reason. Don't worry. I won't damage the Law Comprehension Area in any way."

"And," Gravis said after some hesitation. "As soon as we return to the Empress, I will tell you two everything about myself. Then, you will understand why all of this has happened."

The Grand Elder still wasn't sure about anything regarding this situation, but he decided to go along with what Gravis had said. "Alright," he transmitted after a sigh. "I will wait here for the time when you're ready to return."

"Thank you, Grand Elder," Gravis said. Then, he closed his eyes.

Gravis still felt like his being was spread over too vast of an area. This was the feeling of having too much lightning inside of him. Normally, if he had so much lightning inside of him, his body and Spirit would simply absorb its power until he reached the next Realm. Yet, with the middle Heaven's suppression, this became impossible.

Gravis chuckled a bit. "You wanted this. You wanted me to become as powerful as possible, middle Heaven. I hope you don't regret your decision in the future."

No answer came.

Gravis concentrated on his being and shut himself off from his surroundings. The Grand Elder was present, which allowed him to do that. Anything weaker than the Grand Elder wouldn't be able to kill him during this, and if something stronger than the Grand Elder appeared, Gravis would be helpless either way.

Time lost its meaning as Gravis lost himself in his own being. To Gravis' Spirit, his being looked like a pool. His Will-Aura was the size of the pool, while the lightning was the water inside it. Right now, it looked like the lightning was incredibly close to flowing over.

A faint feeling of fear and anxiety appeared inside Gravis as he looked at the filled pool. This was only a metaphorical picture for his current situation, but as soon as the pool flowed over, Gravis knew that he would cease to exist.

Gravis knew that even though he was not in a dangerous fight right now, managing this situation badly would also result in his death. The tempering of the will was always a dangerous affair.

Time passed in which Gravis tried his best to stop the lightning from overflowing. It wasn't easy, but as more and more time passed, it became easier. Gravis didn't know how much time passed, but as soon as it became manageable, Gravis summoned a bit more lightning.

BZZ!

Inside Gravis' mind, he saw more water appear inside the pool. The water in the pool started vibrating as waves appeared. Gravis felt a deep feeling of emptiness, like he was about to lose consciousness. Thinking became harder, and his focus started waning.

He changed the shape of the pool to counteract the waves of the pool. Waves made the water rise and fall, which meant that its volume moved around. If one of the waves hit the edges of the pool, the water would leave it, and Gravis would cease to exist.

By changing the pool's shape, Gravis adjusted his Will-Aura to the concentrated points of the lightning inside him. It was like the lightning wanted to break out of its prison as it tried to strike everything around it. This action of wanting to escape was reflected in the waves of the pool.

Lightning became weaker at some spots and stronger at others. Gravis' Will-Aura was currently just as strong as the will of the lightning to escape. The lightning's will to escape would never leave it. This situation would just go on forever until it either managed to escape, or Gravis managed to adapt.

A very long time passed. Gravis had no idea how long it was, but he knew that it was long. Yet, by now, the pool had calmed down. No more waves appeared in the pool.

Why was that?

The lightning still wanted to escape, but the size of Gravis' pool had increased over time. Gravis had managed to adapt.

Splash!

More water appeared in the pool as Gravis absorbed some more lightning. A pause was unnecessary when training one's will. Gravis' body and Spirit were in a state of relaxation while his will fully focused on this.



The water became restless again as Gravis needed to adapt to its changes again. The waves became more violent and higher in number. Yet, this time, Gravis was not feeling any anxiety or fear. It wasn't because of his confidence but that he couldn't afford to feel fear or anxiety right now. His entire being was focused on only the pool.

A lot of time passed, and Gravis added more water.

The cycle repeated itself again and again.

An unknown amount of time later, Gravis had forgotten who or what he was. He even forgot why he was doing all of this. Right now, only keeping and growing the pool was inside his mind. It was like he was made for this purpose. It was like he was a Formation Array that had been designed for only a single purpose.

No thoughts unrelated to the pool appeared in his mind. His self didn't even recognize itself anymore as it only felt like it was the pool right now. The pool needed to become bigger, and that was everything that mattered. Nothing else existed outside this pool.

Gravis forgot that the pool only represented his Will-Aura and that the water represented his lightning. He only knew that he could pull water from somewhere outside this space. He didn't know what this space was, but he knew that he needed to grow the pool.

The pool grew and grew.

Suddenly, a feeling of incomprehensible fear assaulted his being as he was about to add more water. He felt like the next drop of water would be his end. Gravis hesitated.

WHOOOOOM!

When Gravis hesitated, he started remembering everything. He remembered who he was and what he was doing here. After a minute, Gravis sighed. "Now, I know what is happening," Gravis said to himself.

"I have reached the peak of a Unity Will, or Nascent Nourishing Will as it's called in my homeworld. Such a soft method of training my Will-Aura won't allow me to break through the shackles. If I add more water, I will undoubtedly die."

Gravis took a deep breath as he threw the drop of water in his hand to the side. The drop of water vanished as some lightning left his physical body.

"It's time. This is as far as it goes," Gravis said.

Then, he opened his physical eyes as he returned to the real world.

PSSSHHH!

A mountain of dust and sand fell off his body as he stood up. He had remained still for a long time.

BZZZZ!

Gravis transformed into lightning and immediately transformed back to get rid of the soreness in his body. This was way easier than stretching himself. Then, he looked at the lightning inside his body.

"799%," Gravis said to himself. "So, this is as far as it goes, huh?"

Gravis concentrated his Will-Aura and looked at its fully compressed form. "Sure enough, I managed to compress it to the same size as my Spirit. This is truly the peak. One more step, and my Will-Aura will reach the Law Comprehension Realm."

Gravis smirked. "With such a powerful Will-Aura, I might even be able to win against a level four King as soon as I become a King myself. However, such a fight will still be incredibly difficult. The last time, I only managed to defeat a level one King because of the ongoing war beside me."

"How much time has passed, Grand Elder?" Gravis asked as he found the Grand Elder with his Spirit.

The Grand Elder opened his eyes in surprise. "Oh, you're awake?" he asked.

"Yes, how much time has passed?" Gravis asked.

"You've been on top of this mountain for quite a while. Ever since you have stopped moving, over 20 years have passed."

Gravis blinked a couple of times. "Okay, that's longer than I had thought."