

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 7: Fighting the Tortoise

After a while, Gravis decided to check how good the tortoise was at turning. He ran circles around the tortoise while steadily moving closer. The tortoise was very sluggish. It moved slowly, and it turned even slower. It was no problem for him to circle the tortoise even from a five-meter distance. Gravis realized that the only dangerous thing about this tortoise was its deadly bite, and he grew more confident.

Gravis remained behind the tortoise while it was watching him. When he moved away from the tortoise's vision, it turned its head the other way to keep watch on him. Finally, Gravis had a plan. He went to the back-left, and when the tortoise turned its head, he quickly ran to the right and swung his saber on its hindleg.

Sparks and blood flew out, and Gravis managed to create a gash a couple of centimeters deep, hitting its bone. The tortoise shouted in pain and quickly pulled all its legs into its shell. The shell fell heavily to the floor. Just by the sound of the thump, one could hear the density and weight of the shell. If Gravis could not even cut through the bone of its leg, he could only dream about cutting through its shell. The head was still out and continued to watch Gravis. Its expression changed to rage.

'Now what?' Gravis thought. He could no longer attack its legs. Should he attack its head? Gravis looked at the tortoise's head and decided against that. Just one snap would end his life.

On top of that, the scales on its head looked way tougher than the ones on its legs. Gravis jumped to the other side again, so the tortoise lost its vision of him. He kneeled and stabbed into the leg-hole on the other side.

He felt the saber connect, but also felt that he didn't get a deep cut. He could not use all his strength in this position, and sabers were not made for stabbing. Nevertheless, the tortoise roared again, and two legs on the opposite side of Gravis shot out. Its legs kicked the ground, and its shell rotated by 45°. At the same time, its head snapped towards Gravis, who jumped back. It nearly got him. Its jaws echoed throughout the cave again.

Gravis took a deep breath. That was dangerous. So, the tortoise could pull a maneuver like that. The tortoise, angry that it missed, roared more and continued to snap at Gravis, even though he was well out of its range. Apparently, the tortoise was furious now. It turned to him and sprinted in his direction, faster than normal.

Though, a sprint from a tortoise was still slow in a human's eyes. Gravis still had no problem running circles around the tortoise. On top of that, the tortoise's 'mad dash' aggravated the injury on its leg. More blood was seeping out, and Gravis continued to take his time. He just had to walk a little faster to outspeed the tortoise. His stamina consumption was negligible. The tortoise, on the other hand, was bleeding and 'running like crazy'. Gravis just had to wait.

A couple of minutes later, the tortoise slowed down, and heavy breaths came from its maw. A trail of blood coated the floor of the cave. Gravis jumped behind the tortoise and attacked the already injured leg again. The tortoise immediately pulled its leg back into its shell. It had stopped underestimating him. It would not make the same mistake twice.

Gravis tried to hit its leg a couple more times, but he never connected. This fight was really frustrating for him. That thing was turtling up. Gravis furiously rubbed his head, trying to think of something, while the tortoise continued to leer at him with a look that could kill. Gravis had no more options. He had to go for the head!

'Here goes nothing!' Gravis took a deep breath, ran to the back of the tortoise, and jumped on its shell. The tortoise furiously moved left, right, up, and down. Its jaws were constantly snapping around him, and a couple of times, it nearly got his fingers. He continued to modify his hold on the shell until the head could not reach him anywhere.

Noticing that it could not get Gravis off like that, it changed to swinging left and right, forward and backward. Gravis was holding on for dear life. After a while, he noticed that the tortoise was better at alternating between back to front than from side to side. It seemed to almost lose its footing a couple of times. Gravis' eyes shined. This was the way! That tortoise was going down!

When the tortoise forcefully whipped to the left, Gravis jumped off, gripped the heightened part of the shell, and began to pull. With just his physical strength alone, he would never be able to lift the tortoise, but when its center of gravity was already out of balance, he had enough power to flip it. He caught the tortoise by surprise, and before it could stabilize itself with its other legs, he flipped it over.

The top of the shell crashed on the floor with a mighty 'THUNK'. The tortoise went crazy and tried everything to flip itself over again. Fortunately, it seemed like it would not succeed anytime soon. Gravis jumped on top of its belly. Neither its legs nor its head could reach him there. He lifted his saber and slashed down. Blood gushed out, and the saber went in, while the tortoise let out another roar of pain. Gravis slashed, again and again, getting deeper with every swing.

After about 20 Swings, Gravis was out of breath, and the tortoise's underside was mutilated. It was slowly losing its strength. Even if it managed to turn around again, its own weight would probably push out its organs through its underside. Gravis won! He sat down at a safe distance and continued to look at the tortoise.

After about five minutes, its breathing began to grow weaker, and its movements slowed. Even though the tortoise tried to kill him, looking at a slowly dying beast was still uncomfortable for Gravis. He was not used to death. Looking at the tortoise, Gravis felt like he was losing something, or that he did something wrong. He knew that only one of them could survive. There was no alternative. Yet, Gravis still felt a lump in his throat.

The tortoise finally drew its last breath. When it completely stilled, Gravis sighed and stood up. His next enemy would appear soon, probably. He continued to wait, but nothing happened.

After ten minutes, the purple light appeared again, but this time, it went through the whole cave like a wave. Gravis looked around, not sure what was happening. Suddenly, water poured out of the cracks in the cave furiously. One would think that the cave was beneath a lake and was about to collapse, but the stones didn't move. The about 50 meters high cave quickly filled with water. It filled up all the way to the 40-meter mark until it stopped. Gravis was swimming at the surface.

Gravis narrowed his eyes. This was probably one of those instances where the environment was the enemy. The wind picked up, and big waves kept appearing all over the water. In the beginning, Gravis could still swim, but as the waves grew stronger, things started to get problematic. It proved difficult to stay above the surface with increasing frequency. He had to do something, or else he would drown.

When he had the chance, he took a deep breath and went underwater, where there were no waves. He calmed down and looked up at the surface. The surface was going wild with waves, but under the surface, everything was calm. Maybe this was the way to survive this ordeal with as little stamina usage as possible. He could probably also survive at the surface, but he would also use up all his energy.

Gravis tested how long he could hold his breath and quickly figured out that five minutes shouldn't be an issue. He had strengthened organs, after all. After realizing that, Gravis calmed himself and closed his eyes. He tried to be as relaxed as possible, only occasionally using his arms to keep himself underwater.

While he calmed down and floated inside the calm water, he felt a feeling of serenity. His fight with the tortoise still plagued his mind, but it wasn't as prominent as before. His body relaxed, and he thought about his battle with the tortoise. He had to be more

careful in future fights. Not every enemy would be this slow and cumbersome. Maybe next time, he would not have the time to strategize and plan.

He thought back to his father, Heaven... and Stella. He missed her dearly, and it still hurt. But when he thought of Heaven, his inner rage grew. Gravis was not even considered a chess piece in Heaven's eyes. He was nothing to it! As long as Heaven survived, he would always be under its mercy. Heaven's fight might have weakened it, but the same could also be said for his father. His father and Heaven were on the same level. If it really wanted to, it could pull a similar scheme again.

Gravis continued to think about his life and cultivation. He looked around the underwater cave. Everything below the surface was still. Nothing moved, and Gravis felt like all of this was just a dream. He started to forget that he was underwater, and it felt more like he was flying in the air. He closed in on the floor, not feeling any pressure at all.

He looked at the dead tortoise and felt alienated like it had nothing to do with him. This was life in the cultivation world. A life and death situation will come. What you want doesn't matter. Gravis sighed. Strangely, no bubbles appeared from his mouth. By now, Gravis completely forgot he was underwater and took a breath.

Water filled his lungs, but he didn't notice. Even stranger, the water seemed to alleviate his need for air. Gravis didn't notice any of that. He also didn't notice that he didn't need to push himself downward anymore with his arms. It was like he was not underwater at all. He walked to the tortoise and lifted it. Underwater, everything was lighter. He carried it to the wall of the cave and placed it down.

He walked back to the center and sat down, his eyes closed. The corpse was behind him, and now it was time to look forward.

He sat there and waited... in silence.