

Lightning 1181

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Chapter 1181: Workings

Mortis only looked evenly at Orthar.

"You think I don't have the conviction?" he asked neutrally.

"I don't think, I know," Orthar answered. "Just like every living being in this world, I am your designer, and I can see through all your Laws."

If anyone else had said that, Mortis would only despise their arrogance, but this was Orthar.

Orthar was the literal creator of this entire Cosmos and everything in it.

So, Mortis actually started to doubt his own conviction at this moment.

"However, do not misunderstand," Orthar said with a more relaxed tone. "Your conviction has already become stronger than it has been previously."

Orthar gestured to the hall.

"As you both know, I need more Energy and power to resist your father. If I relax for even a moment, he will drain my Cosmos. Your father doesn't pull the Energy out of the Primordial Chaos like my Cosmos but directly from my Cosmos."

"Theoretically, let's assume I have 100 units of Energy in my Cosmos, and your father has 10. Now, imagine your father absorbing one unit of Energy per one unit of time. If I didn't do anything during that one unit of time, your father would have 11 units of Energy while I only have 99."

"That still doesn't sound that bad, but keep in mind that your father can use Energy in a more destructive way than me. It's not an overstatement to say that if your father had 10 units of Energy and I had 100, we would be of equal power. This means that his 10 units of Energy equal my 100 units of Energy when we compare power."

"Now, if he only absorbed one unit of Energy and reached 11 units of Energy, I would need 110 units of Energy to resist him."

"This means that I have to grow more than ten times as quickly as him."

Orthar narrowed eyes.

"And he's getting faster and faster in absorbing Energy."

"And what does that have to do with my conviction?" Mortis asked.

Many people would have gotten annoyed at such a sudden interruption, but Orthar knew Mortis.

"The point is that I can't waste any Energy," Orthar said. "Because of that, I need to be certain that everyone that reaches the Heaven's Magnate Realm stays in that Realm for as long as they can."

"The bodies of Heaven's Magnates are already at the peak of compression regarding Energy, which means that they can't absorb more Energy. If a Heaven's Magnate that has lived for 100 million years dies, they will give the Cosmos just as much Energy as a Heaven's Magnate that died directly after their breakthrough."

"However, the value in the Heaven's Magnates is that their intense density of Energy pulls in more Energy from the Primordial Chaos. Therefore, even if a Heaven's Magnate that has lived for longer has just as much Energy as a young one, the older Heaven's Magnate has still pulled in several times their own worth in Energy from the Primordial Chaos."

"And that's when you have to confront the actual enemy," Orthar said as he looked at Mortis.

"Yourself."

Mortis looked with furrowed brows at Orthar, but he still felt a bit nervous.

"When you reach that power, no one will threaten your life anymore. There are no enemies since the other Heaven's Magnates don't gain anything by fighting. They would much rather live out their life and eventually fight when their tribulation arrives."

"The Black Magnate also only has killed the Undying Doctor because they were fated to fight anyway in about two million years. They were the closest in power to each other, and they would have ended up as each other's enemies."

"In such a short amount of time, it's impossible to increase one's strength when one has already reached such heights. That's why the outcome of the fight wouldn't have changed, even if the Black Magnate had waited for another two or three million years."

"Yet, is that the only thing that can kill him?" Orthar asked.

Gravis remembered the time Mortis had sacrificed himself in the Gate of Death. Sure, if Gravis had died, Mortis would have also died, but he would have at least tried to find another solution instead of directly giving up.

However, Gravis didn't comment.

"The other enemy is you," Orthar explained. "As I've explained previously, you can reach supreme power without another goal, but you won't be able to survive for long. Even if it didn't appear like it, the Black Magnate also had another reason to become powerful, which was curiosity and trying to understand everything."

"He also wants to know what's beyond this Cosmos and how to reach your father's Realm. Power wasn't his only goal. That's also why he is still alive."

"Now, let's come to you," Orthar said as he looked at Mortis.

"In the past, you have only chased power. Only chasing power wouldn't have been a problem until you reach supreme power, but due to your proximity to Gravis, you have been confronted with the problem prematurely."

"Then, after you met with your partner, your goals have changed. You don't only chase power anymore. Now, you also chase happiness."

"That's a step in the correct direction, but it's not enough since you have been confronted with a new issue."

"Now your priorities clash," Orthar said. "You are like your brother, Orpheus."

"You are dreaming about giving up on Cultivation."

Gravis looked at Mortis with surprise.

Mortis didn't appear that different from how he had been in the past.

Yet, Mortis had already severely changed inside.

However, Gravis had still been surprised that Mortis had changed to such a degree.

As far as Gravis remembered, Mortis had always chased power fervently, but now, his feelings for Azure had reached such a level that it had overtaken his thirst for power by that much?

"I'm not considering it," Mortis said.

"I said you're dreaming about it," Orthar said. "You're not planning on going through with it, but you wish you could. Continuing on the journey of Cultivation feels like something you have to do instead of something you want to do. It feels like a responsibility."

"Right now, it feels unimaginable to you that you would ever stop cultivating, but that will change very quickly. At the latest, when you inevitably comprehend the True Law of Freedom."

Mortis furrowed his brows.

"However, the True Law of Freedom is not perfect," Orthar explained. "One Law on its own can't decide your entire path."

"If you only follow the True Law of Freedom, you will refuse to take responsibility for anything. Your partner and your family will distance themselves more and more from you since you will never do anything you don't want."

"At the same time, only following the True Law of Freedom won't make you powerful. You want to become more powerful, but you have to go through tempering, which is something you don't want. So, logically, you won't go through tempering. After all, why would you? You don't want to."

"You need to follow all the Laws, not just one. Following one might not be the wrong choice, but it might also not be the correct choice."

"And what's your plan?" Mortis asked suddenly, interrupting Orthar again.

Orthar looked at Mortis.

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Chapter 1182: Trial One: Time

"The first level of the Heaven's Trial," Orthar said, "only involves you, Mortis."

"Why only me?" Mortis asked.

"Because you and Gravis are not equal."

Gravis and Mortis furrowed their brows.

This was a sore spot for them, and they would take this as a provocation if any other person had said that.

However, it was hard to argue with the very being that knew absolutely everything.

"Your power is about equal, but everything else isn't," Orthar explained.

"Gravis' conviction is far above yours, and if you also want to become powerful, your conviction has to reach his level."

"Why do you care?" Mortis suddenly asked. "From what I've heard, the entire deal with Gravis being some sort of mediator between you and our father only includes Gravis, not me."

"You said previously that someone that only chases power won't face any issues before they become Heaven's Magnates. Yet, when we reach that Realm, he and I would have already been split into separate beings. After all, we only need the True Law of Sentient Life."

"At that point, he is he, and I am I," Mortis said. "So, why would you care that I survive for a long time?"

Orthar only looked at Mortis.

"You are even more trustworthy than Gravis, in my opinion," Orthar said.

Gravis raised an eyebrow, but eventually, he nodded in understanding.

Mortis was generally more coldhearted, but Mortis also put fairness above nearly everything. Orthar hadn't gone against Mortis in the past, and with Mortis' fairness-oriented mindset, it would be very likely that he wouldn't go against Orthar.

"There's a possibility that Gravis will turn a blind eye to a sudden attack of his father, but I know that you won't."

"I'm using Gravis as insurance against your father, but I want to use you as insurance against Gravis."

"If Gravis ever breaks his word without a good reason, you won't just stand idly by, and Gravis knows that. That's why the chances of him breaking his word will be several times smaller," Orthar explained.

'That really reminds me of the old Orthar,' Gravis thought. 'He has insurances for insurances just to be prepared for every possible eventuality.'

Mortis looked at Gravis for some seconds.

Gravis wasn't sure what to express right now.

"Understandable," Mortis said, looking back at Orthar.

"Dick," Gravis muttered.

Mortis and the current Gravis came from the same Gravis, but they had developed in very different directions. By now, if one ignored their appearance, one wouldn't even think that the two of them were related. They were simply way too different.

So, obviously, the two of them also had disagreements.

If one were to exaggerate the negative images the two had of each other, Gravis would appear like an uncaring, lazy bum in Mortis' mind, while Mortis would appear like a way-too-serious stickler for the rules that can't get that stick out of his ass in Gravis' mind.

Of course, the two of them were very close friends. These thoughts were, at most, some annoyances they had with each other.

"Alright, so what do you want to do?" Mortis asked Orthar.

"First, the time you have been alive must be extended. Gravis has lived for millions of years more, which has given him ample opportunities to think about himself and his life, which resulted in him affirming his beliefs."

"You didn't have these millions of years."

Gravis raised an eyebrow. He knew that Orthar was referring to Samsara.

Mortis had never used Samsara.

Why?

Because he couldn't.

Samsara had been designed by Gravis for his Void Lightning, while Mortis was entirely made out of Heavenly Lightning. Mortis couldn't use Void Lightning, even if he wanted to.

Because of that, he also couldn't use Samsara.

"And how am I supposed to gather this experience?" Mortis asked.

Orthar pointed at Mortis.

Suddenly, Mortis' eyes widened in shock.

Mortis absentmindedly extended his right arm.

BZZZ!

Black lightning devoid of Laws appeared on his hands. It was Void Lightning!

When Gravis saw the Void Lightning, he was a bit surprised.

He had expected that his Void Lightning was unique to him, but he also quickly realized that it was also logical that Orthar could use it. After all, Gravis had created Void Lightning out of the absence of Laws. Couldn't Orthar just do the same thing?

Mortis took out his saber, and a second later, the area around his saber shook in grey waves, all reflecting different perceived realities.

Since Gravis knew how to use Samsara, Mortis also knew how to use it.

"You want me to use Samsara?" Mortis asked as he looked at Orthar again.

"Correct, but I have to do some other things before that," Orthar explained.

Then, Orthar stretched his right hand towards Mortis and clenched it into a fist.

Mortis' body seized and froze as a shocked expression appeared on his face.

Gravis looked at Mortis with narrowed eyes.

"If he tries anything, I will intervene," the Opposer spoke into Gravis' and Mortis' minds.

Gravis only nodded.

Then, Orthar pulled his right arm to the side.

BANG!

Mortis' body shook, but after a second, he regained control over his body.

Meanwhile, Gravis looked with shock at the place beside Mortis.

Besides Mortis was a multicolored Star now, which shone in endless, colorful images of different realities.

This was Gravis' Star.

Mortis looked at his body, which had stopped shining, in shock.

They both knew what this meant.

Mortis was no longer connected to Gravis.

Mortis was his own being!

"This is only temporary," Orthar said. "I want you to gain freedom with your own power, but for now, I need to split you two."

"Because if you die, your death will impact Gravis' growth, and I can't allow that."

Mortis looked at Orthar with skepticism. "If I die? Do you mean that you don't know?" he asked.

"I can calculate the future, but not to the tiniest of details to the extent of millions of years. There are simply too many calculations I have to do at once," Orthar explained. "I can only make an educated guess, but that guess isn't reliable. My predictions have been proven wrong more than once already."

"So, there's a chance I can die," Mortis said slowly.

"The chances are relatively high," Orthar said. "However, I would rather take these chances right now than take the chance that you won't be around when Gravis finally reaches the power to do his duty in the future."

Then, Orthar snapped his fingers.

SHING!

A person appeared in the hall with vacant eyes. He was a man with grey hair, and he wore the robes of the Darkest Stygian Sect.

On top of that, he was an Ancestral God.

When Gravis saw the Ancestral God, he took a deep breath.

Gravis knew that he could go through a Samsara spanning a couple million years, but Mortis?

Mortis had never gone through Samsara before.

Mortis might even spend over five million years living through a life that wasn't his own.

Now, Gravis knew why Orthar wasn't sure if Mortis could survive.

Mortis looked at the Ancestral God with narrowed eyes.

Mortis wasn't nervous, which was logical. After all, if someone hadn't gone through Samsara themselves, they wouldn't know how terrifying it was.

"You can start at any time," Orthar said.

Gravis only looked at Mortis with uncertainty.

Mortis lifted his saber and struck down without hesitation.

And then, Mortis entered his first Samsara.

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Chapter 1183: No Distractions

Mortis found himself in the body of a mortal bird. The mortal bird was simply sitting on a tree, looking at five different eggs on the ground in the middle of a forest.

For a bit, Mortis had to get used to these new sensations. Not being able to control his own perception felt strange and alien. It was like he was only a spectator to someone else's actions. He had no control over anything.

After a while, Mortis saw a grey snake come out of one of the eggs, and Mortis saw the snake how the bird saw it.

Not food.

Possible danger.

These were the only two things the bird thought of the snake.

After a while, the newborn snake simply moved away and crawled into the thicket of the forest.

That's when Mortis' perspective changed to another animal.

Mortis had already known what would wait for him thanks to Gravis' experiences in Samsara, but it felt different than Mortis had expected.

For some reason, Mortis felt more nervous than he had believed.

Time passed, and the snake eventually grew up and became a Spirit Forming beast.

By now, Mortis had gotten used to his new situation. He focused on keeping his emotions isolated with the Law of Emotions so that he wouldn't get invested. Because of that, he felt quite relaxed in all of this.

However, there was one problem.

There was nothing Mortis could do.

He couldn't fight, comprehend Laws, or talk with anyone.

He couldn't even close his eyes.

In essence, he was forced to simply watch.

Some years passed, and Mortis managed to dissociate from what was happening in front of him. Now, whatever happened to the snake didn't concern Mortis. To him, it made no difference if something was happening around him or not. It had nothing to do with him.

Mortis only focused on himself.

However, Mortis couldn't lose himself like Gravis.

He tried to, but something was stopping him, and he knew exactly why.

Whenever Mortis had lost his sense of time, he had been focused on comprehending something. So, in a sense, 100% of his mind had been immersed in this one thing. These things had been Laws.

But this time, Mortis couldn't immerse himself in anything.

He also couldn't just deactivate his mind.

His mind could be suppressed for a short time, but then, he would involuntarily start thinking about something.

Mortis would start thinking about his past, about his future, about his present, about the things he had done, about the things he wanted to do, about past decisions, about hypothetical decisions in hypothetical scenarios, about everything.

One thought jumped to the forefront in one of these random spurts of thoughts. 'Is this what Orthar meant?' Mortis asked himself in his mind.

'I've always been distracted my entire life. If I hadn't been distracted by Laws, I was distracted by others or by fighting for my life.'

'I've actually never had time to think about myself.'

'I've never been forced to just wait around like this.'

'Yet, this is exactly what Gravis had gone through several times by now. There have been no distractions, and nothing interesting happened. It has only been me and my thoughts.'

Of course, saying that there were no distractions wasn't exactly correct. After all, Mortis was watching the life of someone unfold right before him, and he was also assaulted by all the different emotions of the onlookers.

Just due to the emotions, any other person in Mortis' position would be intrigued by what was happening.

However, for Mortis, this entire thing might as well not exist.

Why?

Because he had control over the Law of Emotions, which allowed him to isolate himself. Additionally, Mortis was more coldhearted than Gravis anyway, which meant that he generally cared less about the lives of beings he perceived as weaker.

Of course, the isolation wasn't perfect. If it were perfect, Mortis wouldn't know the Major Law of Emotions, but the True Law of Emotions.

The isolation would let some emotions pass, and they might accumulate into something dangerous. However, that would take a very, very long time.

Yet, even if the isolation wasn't perfect, it was still good enough to make everything Mortis saw incredibly boring.

Mortis had nothing to focus on, which forced him to focus on himself.

Gravis had always needed to focus on himself during Samsara, and now, Mortis was forced to do the same thing.

Eventually, Mortis ran out of things to think about, and even repeating the thoughts became mundane.

At some point, Mortis only had uncomfortable thoughts left.

Mortis thought about his time with Azure.

It was absolutely wonderful.

He wished he could be with Azure every single day.

And then, Gravis appeared in Mortis' thoughts.

Mortis wanted to journey more with Gravis, and he wanted to become powerful. Even more, Mortis didn't want to feel guilty by letting Gravis do all the work.

However, Mortis also felt like he spent way too little time with Azure because of that.

He wanted to spend more time with Azure, but he couldn't due to his other goal.

On top of that, Mortis also wanted to resolve the issue between his father and Orthar. Both of them had helped him, and Mortis wanted to repay them.

Yet, this part felt more like a responsibility instead of something he actually wanted. It felt like it was something he simply had to do.

What did Mortis actually want to do?

He wanted to spend more time with Azure.

Why couldn't he?

Because he could only do that by betraying his friends and family. Of course, they might not see his actions as a betrayal, but Mortis viewed them as a betrayal.

Mortis felt like he was trapped in a cage, and to escape, he had to travel through a mountain of time and danger.

Yet, what if Azure died before he could finish the mountain?

It would take an incredibly long time for Mortis to become a Heaven's Magnate. During that time, Azure would have definitely already reached the Divine God Realm.

Could Azure survive for so long?

Sure, she was powerful, and she always received a ton of Laws from Mortis.

However, how good was her growth ability in danger?

What if one of her opponents managed to comprehend a Law in their fight, and she couldn't?

Then, wouldn't Mortis feel like he would have worked on the mountain for nothing?

His goal was happiness, and his happiness depended on Azure, and Azure probably couldn't live forever.

This meant that there might be a time constraint for reaching his goal.

If Azure died, wouldn't Mortis hate himself for not spending more time with her while she was alive?

Mortis had thought about these things for a long time, and these thoughts were the main reason for his inner conflict.

'If Stella died, Gravis would be devastated. However, he would be able to recover eventually, and he would continue living. At some point, he would find someone that could reawaken his feelings, and he would be able to chase happiness again.'

'To him, happiness is an eternal goal. Awakenings his happiness depends on the people around him, but the seed of happiness will remain indestructible and will remain inside him. It only has to wait for more people to appear.'

'What if Azure died?'

Mortis felt like his mind was thinking about something, but he couldn't put it into words.

He felt like he was analyzing something he didn't know.

He was analyzing his own feelings.

As more time passed, Mortis became more and more uncertain.

He wasn't sure about the right answer.

At the same time, in front of him, the snake had become a Peak Immortal Emperor.

Not even 10% of Samsara had passed.

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Chapter 1184: First Trial Complete

Over the next million years, Mortis continually wrung with his thoughts and doubts.

He was forced to confront them since there was nothing else to distract him.

This had been one of Mortis' most difficult periods of time, but he had managed to get through it eventually.

In the end, Mortis managed to somewhat strengthen his resolve.

'I can't know the future. I can't already start regretting my actions for a future that might not even arrive. It is not sure that Azure will die. As long as I become a Heaven's Magnate, I can ask her to stop cultivating if she wants. Additionally, I can ask Orthar for eternal life for Azure when that happens. Keeping her alive wouldn't damage his world.'

'When we can exit the Cosmos, we can even take all our friends with us. At that time, the rules of longevity and tribulations don't exist anymore. Even an Immortal can theoretically live for eternity as long as they don't meet danger.'

'I can only work on becoming powerful as fast as possible.'

'I've doubted my past actions, but now I realize that my past actions have been correct. I only spent a short time with Azure between Laws, and I will continue to do so. I have to keep our love alive, but I also have to work as hard as possible on becoming powerful. That's the best way I can see to achieve power.'

'I want to live with Azure for eternity, and that's how I will achieve it.'

This was Mortis' strengthened resolve.

Sadly, the beast in front of Mortis had only just become a level five Star God.

There was still a long way to go.

However, with Mortis' newfound resolve, he found it easier to lose himself.

The reason why Mortis hadn't been able to lose himself wasn't that he had no distractions but because his worries forbade him from thinking nothing. The worries had just entered his mind without any invitation, and there had been nothing Mortis could do except to confront them.

Because of that, Mortis managed to lose himself, and time seemingly passed faster before his eyes.

Five million years later, the beast had become an Ancestral God.

However, Mortis' ability to lose himself had become weaker.

The tiny smidges of emotions that had passed his isolating barrier had accumulated.

Now, Mortis felt a bit invested in the life of the person in front of him, and he started to subconsciously root for them.

If someone was isolated for long enough, even an unimportant hole in the walls surrounding them might become emotionally connected to the person.

After all, the hole was marginally more interesting than the wall.

Mortis had realized what was happening, and he continually told himself to stay himself.

He couldn't let the life of this Ancestral God change him.

Sadly, as more time passed, Mortis felt like what the Ancestral God was doing was the right decision, even if Mortis wouldn't have thought that previously.

Mortis even started to feel a slight feeling of love towards the Ancestral God's partner, which made him grit his teeth violently.

Mortis felt himself change, and he feared that he might lose himself.

Mortis had finally managed to affirm his conviction and goals, and he was happy about how he currently was. He didn't want to change into someone that didn't have these strong convictions.

That would throw away all the hard work he had done!

In the worst-case scenario, Mortis might actually become the Ancestral God.

Another five million years passed.

Mortis had been in Samsara for ten million years, far longer than he had ever believed.

By now, Mortis felt like his actual life had been nothing but a dream.

Maybe this was reality?

Mortis had spent ten times the amount of time in here than actually living his life.

Have his past thoughts all been illusions?

Yet, whenever Mortis saw the person in the vision fight someone else, Mortis knew how some Laws of the opponent worked while the person himself had no idea how they worked.

This was the only thing that allowed Mortis to keep him disconnected from the person in Samsara.

And then, one day, the Ancestral God destroyed a Sect.

Mortis immediately knew what this meant, and his mind awakened ancient images.

Mortis remembered that someone named Gravis had suffered under the Sin Monsters and that Mortis had helped him.

This made Mortis consider his past life more seriously, and he tried to remember it.

However, that wasn't necessary.

As soon as all of this happened, Mortis felt his perception change again.

He entered the perception of someone that could see the entire world, and he also saw how this being perceived the Ancestral God.

Useful whetstone.

"You've managed to survive," Orthar said into Mortis' mind.

Mortis had entered Orthar's perception since Orthar had allowed it.

Back then, Orthar hadn't yet known about his own plan, but as soon as he felt the perception of Mortis entering his mind, he knew what he had to do.

"It's over," Orthar said.

And then, Mortis woke up from Samsara.

In the real world, only an instant had passed.

Mortis fell to the ground in confusion.

"You ok?" Gravis asked with worry as he put a hand on Mortis' shoulder.

Mortis looked with shocked and confused eyes at Gravis.

Many old memories entered Mortis, and he remembered everything that had happened before entering Samsara.

"Samsara," Mortis said slowly.

Mortis looked at the dead person in front of him for a long time.

He had seen his entire life, and he had even cheered for him near the end. Mortis knew everything about him, and he knew what was important to him.

Yet, the person Mortis had watched for their entire life from all different angles had ended up becoming a whetstone for Mortis' conviction.

Mortis felt a disconnect.

It was like Mortis had gotten to know and to care for someone just for them to end up dying so that he could become stronger.

Mortis hadn't cared about the people he had killed in the past, but this time, he cared.

"I know it's hard," Gravis said carefully, "but you have control over yourself now. You can speak, and you can act. This is completely different from when you have been under Samsara."

"You have control over reality by doing actions, which makes reality feel far more real than perceived reality. In just a couple of years, nearly all the memories you have witnessed will go to the back of your mind. You won't forget them, but they feel like something unimportant."

"Yet, they have slightly altered you, and that can't be helped. I also always change very slightly after I go through Samsara. However, that change doesn't come from something foreign entering my Spirit, but just from me becoming older and witnessing more things."

"Don't think too much about what you have witnessed. Think about what you want to accomplish and what you want to become. Use your actions to achieve your goals."

"You are you, and that won't change," Gravis said.

"No matter how much I change," Mortis automatically completed.

"Take some time," Gravis said with a smile. "You'll be your new old self very soon."

Then, Gravis stood up and looked at Orthar with interest.

"Has Mortis entered your perception?" Gravis asked.

"Yes," Orthar answered.

"Then, why did you act like he could die?" Gravis asked. "You should have known that he would survive Samsara."

Orthar looked at Gravis.

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Chapter 1185: Recovering

"Reality is a strange concept, Gravis," Orthar answered. "The fact that you're asking me about this means that you don't quite grasp its intricacies."

"Okay? Then explain it," Gravis said with interest.

"Reality manifests and changes as it expands," Orthar explained. "At the moment, I have the memories of Mortis entering my perception, but these memories are not as old as they seem to be."

Gravis only raised an eyebrow.

"Objective reality is objective reality, and time isn't a factor for objective reality. There is only one objective reality, and that objective reality only exists at one point in time," Orthar explained.

"We are in objective reality right now. The entire Cosmos is."

"Back when I said that I wasn't sure if Mortis would survive, his Samsara hadn't happened there. Things that haven't happened yet can't happen prematurely."

"What? So you haven't felt Mortis in your perception back then?" Gravis asked.

Orthar nodded. "Correct. Before Mortis entered Samsara, I hadn't felt Mortis in my perception. That is why I said that I wasn't sure if he could survive. After all, I hadn't known yet that he would survive."

Gravis scratched the back of his head as he tried to wrap his head around what Orthar was saying. "But you have Mortis' Samsara now in your memories, right?"

"Yes, I have these memories now."

"But these memories are new?" Gravis asked.

"Correct. These memories have only been added when Mortis went into Samsara," Orthar explained.

"Reality has to remain stable, and Samsara has an effect on causality. So, when something gets changed in the past, physical reality changes alongside it."

"Some legends and stories speak of time loops, and in nearly all of them, it is unknown what happened in the first iteration of time and reality. We are currently in the first iteration. Mortis' Samsara hadn't happened yet, but as soon as it did, physical reality adapted."

"I was the only one that could feel Mortis' perception in Samsara, which means that I was the only one that had his memories changed. At the moment, I remember that I have never been worried about Mortis since I knew he would survive."

"However, I also know that these are memories of events that have never happened. In a sense, these things have happened, but they have not happened in physical reality. We only think that they have happened in physical reality," Orthar explained.

Gravis tried to understand what Orthar was telling him. "So, time loops can't exist?" Gravis asked.

"In physical reality, no, in perceived reality, yes," Orthar answered. "Time doesn't revert in physical reality. If you use the True Law of Time to glimpse into the past, you will only see a perceived reality, not physical reality. The best you can do is freeze time for a moment."

"So," Gravis said after some seconds. "You remember that you have felt Mortis' perception enter your perception, but you know that it has actually never happened."

"That's right," Orthar said.

Orthar looked at Mortis for a bit with an evaluating gaze.

"The first trial has been complete," he said. "Recover for the next 10,000 years. After that, you can enter the second trial."

"And what's, oh," Gravis said as he noticed that Orthar wasn't there anymore.

Now, there was only Gravis and Mortis left.

Gravis looked at the two closed gates. 'Guess they won't open for a while. So, it's just like back then. After every trial, we get a break.'

Gravis glanced at Mortis, who was still confused about the fact that he was back in his body.

"The first Samsara is always difficult," Gravis said.

Mortis glanced over at Gravis.

"Do you remember my first Samsara? It was against some guy from one of the Peak Sects in Arc's world. It had only taken around 10,000 years, but I also keeled over," Gravis said with a smile.

"Remember when we fought Nira?" Gravis asked. "Back then, I also used Samsara, and after I recovered, I was completely beside myself. I couldn't even use my Form Law, and using my normal Laws also wasn't easy. After all, I hadn't used them for a very long time."

"How long has your Samsara been?" Gravis asked as he looked at Mortis.

"I don't know," Mortis answered absentmindedly.

"How old was the guy before he died?" Gravis asked.

Mortis glanced at the corpse in front of him with a complex expression. "Around two million years old."

Gravis nodded. "That's quite a long time. I guess you probably went through something like ten million years of Samsara. That's a lot for your first time. How was it?"

Mortis wasn't sure what he should think right now.

"I'm not sure," he answered.

"Ah, I get it," Gravis said. "It's like a bad experience, but the bad experience managed to solve a problem of yours. It was still horrible to go through it, but in the end, you also feel like you're glad you went through it. After all, if you didn't, you wouldn't be as strong as you currently are."

"Yet, if you could repeat the experience for the same gains, you would probably decline, right?" Gravis asked with a smirk.

Mortis looked at Gravis for a bit.

"Yeah, that sounds about right."

Gravis only grinned as he walked over to Mortis. Then, Gravis sat down in front of Mortis and took out some coffee, which he had gotten from his father a while back. He wanted to save this coffee for a special occasion.

When Mortis saw the coffee, old memories reappeared inside his mind.

Mortis' connection to this coffee was just as strong as Gravis' connection.

Mortis took some of the coffee for himself and drank it.

For the next couple of minutes, Gravis and Mortis just silently drank. Gravis seemed relaxed, while Mortis appeared absentminded.

"Tell me about the life of the Ancestral God," Gravis suddenly said.

"His life?" Mortis asked.

"Mhm," Gravis nodded. "Who was he? What did he do? What connections did he have? What Laws did he know? What happened to him? Simply tell me everything about it from the beginning."

After some seconds of hesitation, Mortis began to narrate the life of the Ancestral God.

For the beginning, Gravis didn't say much, but as soon as the Ancestral God of the past had become sentient, Gravis started throwing in some questions.

"Was that the right decision?"

"Why did he do that?"

"Do you think that was the right decision?"

"What would you have done?"

"If you did that, how would the world have changed?"

"Is that truly what you want?"

"Do you really think that would be for the best?"

"Why would you do that?"

Gravis was throwing in one question after the other while Mortis was retelling the story of the Ancestral God.

Near the beginning, Mortis found it hard to answer these questions. The Ancestral God had done what he had done, and the things had already happened. Additionally, Mortis had felt that the Ancestral God's actions had been only natural and logical.

Yet, Gravis' questions asked about the fundamental reasons of why.

At some point, Mortis couldn't even give a clear answer as to why the Ancestral God had done something.

Then, Gravis started asking Mortis about what he would have done.

In the beginning, Mortis' answers had been nearly identical to what the Ancestral God would have done, but eventually, Gravis' continuous digging made Mortis reevaluate his answers.

Without noticing it, Mortis was slowly distancing himself from the past of the Ancestral God.

As more time passed, Mortis narrated the actions of the Ancestral God with a more distant and emotionless voice. It was like he was no longer invested.

Why?

Because the Ancestral God had done several things that didn't agree with Mortis' belief.

In the beginning, Mortis had instinctively acted very similarly to the Ancestral God, but that connection had been severed.

Eventually, Mortis was done with the narration. Due to Gravis' constant questions, it had literally taken years.

"Nice story," Gravis said.

"I don't know," Mortis answered with furrowed brows. "He feels more like an idiot to me."

"Maybe," Gravis answered. "So, how do you feel?"

Mortis looked at Gravis. "Not different to usual."

Gravis only smiled brightly.

"That's good to hear."

Mortis nodded. He had already realized what Gravis had done. Gravis had continually questioned the actions of the Ancestral God, forcing Mortis to reevaluate them. Due to that, only the actions Mortis truly agreed with would stay in his mind.

Gravis had reawakened Mortis' personality.

He wasn't the same Mortis as before Samsara, but people Mortis knew would definitely feel that he was acting like Mortis.

He had only changed a bit.

And that was normal.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 1186: Second Trial: Alternate Path

Gravis and Mortis spent the remaining 10,000 years just talking about random things. It was mostly Gravis talking, while Mortis only said some things from time to time.

By now, Mortis was truly himself again.

Mortis had also gotten a newfound appreciation for when Gravis had used Samsara in the past.

Hearing about Samsara and experiencing it were vastly different experiences.

Now, Mortis truly knew how difficult it was to remain oneself in Samsara, and after having gone through it, Mortis also now knew how Gravis could be so sure of himself.

He's had a lot of time to think about himself.

And now, Mortis also had had the opportunity to experience these things.

In a sense, Mortis felt like he had matured.

His Battle-Strength didn't increase, but his personality had become stronger and stabler. Things that might have thrown him off-track in the past wouldn't have as significant of an impact anymore.

Mortis knew what he wanted, and he would work towards his goal.

When the 10,000 years were up, one of the gates opened on its own, and the two of them looked over.

"Wanna go?" Gravis asked with a smirk.

Mortis nodded with a serious expression.

He didn't know what would await him in the second trial, but he knew that it would probably also be difficult.

Orthar was shaping Gravis and Mortis into beings that could survive an eternity as Heaven Breakers.

If they could survive themselves, they could survive 90% of the danger they would face.

In Mortis' mind, he felt extremely grateful to Orthar and Gravis. Orthar had helped Mortis in realizing what he wanted and who he was, while Gravis was always supporting him from the side.

Gravis and Mortis exited through the gate and quickly made their way through the long hallway.

In just a couple of seconds, they arrived in front of another gate.

This time, Mortis opened the gate.

When the gate opened, the two of them saw another empty, small room.

Apparently, this trial also wouldn't have them fighting.

Mortis wasn't sure if he preferred that or not.

"The first trial was about time and the associated growth that comes along with it," Orthar said from the middle of the room.

"The first trial has made you realize your goals, Mortis," Orthar said. "However, there are still some doubts left in you. This is what the second trial will rectify."

"What? So, it's about Mortis again?" Gravis asked with a frown.

Orthar looked at Gravis. "You can partake in the second trial if you want, but it won't have a significant effect on you."

"Sure, count me in," said Gravis with a smirk. "I'm getting bored."

"What is the second trial?" Mortis asked.

"The second trial won't be a danger to your life. In fact, it's the only trial without any associated danger. However, you might feel pain during and after it," Orthar explained.

Mortis and Gravis didn't answer.

"The second trial is about getting what the previous Mortis wanted," Orthar said. "I will send you into a perceived reality, but you will think of it as objective reality. You will think that everything is real, and your memories will be slightly altered during it."

"You will go through an alternate path of your life, a path the two of you might have considered to take in the past."

"However, you two have only considered taking that path because you haven't been on it before."

"Today, you will tread that path to its end."

Mortis furrowed his brows while Gravis raised an eyebrow.

"Wait, so I get to spend something like a million years with Stella in happiness without any distractions?" Gravis asked.

Orthar nodded.

"What about the emotional impact after we get back our old memories?" Gravis asked. "I could imagine that I would want to regain part of the life I've never had."

"It will feel more like a dream. You will remember everything, but it won't feel real. Even if you believe that perceived reality to be real, the effect won't be even nearly as pronounced as actually being in objective reality," Orthar explained.

"Well, okay," Gravis answered.

Then, Gravis looked at Mortis.

"You ready?" Gravis asked.

Mortis looked at Gravis and then at Orthar.

Mortis had believed that he knew what he wanted, but as soon as he was confronted with actually getting what he wanted, he realized that there was still some hesitation and nervousness remaining.

"We'll begin with you, Gravis," Orthar said.

"Sure," Gravis answered. "Hit me!"

Mortis looked at Gravis while Orthar slowly extended one of his fingers towards Gravis.

WHOOM!

Suddenly, Gravis felt like he had been hit by something, and he jumped up in his bed.

"What? What just happened?" he asked.

"Could you be quiet? I'm reading something."

Gravis looked over, and he saw Stella reading something in a jade token.

"Oh, what are you reading?" Gravis asked.

"Nothing special. It's just some stuff about Formation Arrays. Even though we retreated from the Sect life, I still want to learn more about Formation Arrays," Stella said with a distracted voice.

When Stella said that, memories returned to Gravis' mind.

Orthar had allowed the Opposer to exit the Cosmos. The Opposer had given his promise that he wouldn't attack Orthar. Then, when the Opposer exited the Cosmos, he had kept to his words.

From now on, the Opposer could enter and leave the Cosmos whenever he wanted.

Mortis had become his own being, and he was currently becoming more powerful with Azure.

Meanwhile, Gravis had been freed of all responsibilities.

His friends were close to becoming Ancestral Gods, and they were all already more powerful than him. At the same time, his father and Orthar were no longer enemies.

After the Opposer left Orthar's Cosmos, he quickly entered it again, surprisingly.

The reason was that he wanted to spend more time with Gravis.

The Opposer could now experience the outside world whenever he wanted, but he might not be able to talk with Gravis whenever he wanted. Because of that, the Opposer decided to remain in the Cosmos until Gravis' life ended.

Finally freed of all the pressure and responsibilities, Gravis had felt as relaxed as never before.

He no longer had to put himself in danger.

He no longer had to fear for Stella.

Now, there was only Stella, Gravis, and their family.

Gravis felt at peace, and he happily embraced Stella from behind.

"Hey, I'm reading something!" Stella nearly shouted as she was pulled back.

"You can read whenever you want, honey," Gravis said with a playful voice.

Stella sighed and put the jade token away.

After that, she smiled at Gravis and embraced him back.

And thus, Gravis' life of peace began.

Time passed.

Eventually, Stella and Gravis decided to have children.

In just a couple of years, a couple of small Gravises and Stellas had arrived in the world.

Gravis and Stella watched them and cared for them.

Some of them decided to remain mortals, while others decided to cultivate.

After many years, Gravis' friends had become Ancestral Gods.

Yet, Gravis and Stella were still Star Gods.

Their friends constantly visited, and the two of them experienced one positive thing after the other.

Then, just before it was time for Gravis and Stella to undergo their tribulation, the two of them absorbed enough God Stones to become Ancestral Gods.

Their longevity had increased.

However, their Battle-Strength and Will-Auras had remained stagnant.

Stella and Gravis spent their life in bliss.

Then, when it was time for the next tribulation, the two of them had gotten enough God Stones to become Divine Gods from their friends.

Sadly, this also meant that their Will-Auras and Laws didn't increase.

At the moment, Gravis knew that he couldn't even fight someone on his level. The other person would simply suppress Gravis completely with their Will-Aura.

Eventually, the two of them decided to comprehend some Laws again, for the old time's sake.

However, they wouldn't temper themselves. They didn't want to lose what they had achieved.

And eventually, the fateful day arrived.

It was impossible for Gravis and Stella to become Heaven's Magnates, and it was also impossible for them to survive their tribulation.

The two of them stood in front of all their powerful friends, and they vanished into nothingness together.

Their life was over.

"Huh?" Gravis suddenly said as he opened his eyes.

Then, he looked around the room in confusion.

All his old memories returned, and he realized what had happened.

Gravis thought about his unborn children and how much he loved them, but for some reason, he felt like they weren't connected with him.

His children had never been real.

It was like they had all been the figments of his imagination.

Gravis felt a slight bit uncomfortable, but he felt that it was only natural not to get too emotionally attached to something that wasn't real.

"Huh," Gravis said after a while.

"I should've cultivated."

"That was way too short."

"But it was fun."

Obviously, Gravis hadn't really changed.

He had only dreamed for a bit.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 1187: Second Trial Complete

Gravis wasn't sure how he should feel. He had just realized that the children he had fathered and loved for millions of years had actually never existed.

Yet, on the other hand, it only felt natural not to have strong emotional attachments to things that weren't real.

It was just like a long dream.

"How was it?" Mortis asked from the side.

Gravis looked at Mortis with a bitter smile. "Just like you would think. However, I really don't feel much attachment to the things I have experienced and the people I have met. It really feels like a dream."

Mortis took a deep breath.

He knew that Gravis' personality was very stable, and he knew that Gravis wouldn't feel any issues.

However, what about Mortis?

Would he react this calmly?

"Now, it's your turn," Orthar said to Mortis. "Are you ready?"

Mortis took another deep breath and nodded.

Orthar nodded and extended his hand towards Mortis.

And then, Mortis' eyes became vacant.

Gravis looked at Mortis with interest.

"I thought this was instantaneous," Gravis said.

"I can only make time move so fast," Orthar explained. "Samsara doesn't need to invent things. All the perceived realities are already there, and it only has to replay them. That's why Samsara is instantaneous."

"In comparison, I have to continually manage the perceived reality Mortis is currently experiencing. I can only make it move so fast without endangering the management of the actual Cosmos," Orthar explained.

"Huh, so even you can't do anything," Gravis added with a smirk.

"Of course not," Orthar said. "I'm not some omnipotent being. I'm a Cultivator, just like you and everyone else. The only difference is that you can create life via procreation, while I can create a Cosmos. It's not very different. It's only on a grander scale."

"Okay, so how long will Mortis take?" Gravis asked.

"About five years. That's how long it took you."

"Five years? That's pretty fast," Gravis answered.

Orthar didn't answer for several seconds.

"What did you feel during the end of your perceived reality?" Orthar suddenly asked.

"Tons of regret," Gravis answered immediately. "However, that's only natural. I want to cultivate anyway, and I knew from the beginning that I wouldn't truly be happy if things turned out this way."

"Sure, living a fulfilling life with all my friends and family is great, but it's simply too short. I want to cultivate, but when I have been in the perceived reality, it was like I've simply accepted that I wouldn't cultivate anymore."

"Now that I'm awake, it feels so stupid. Why wouldn't I just continue cultivating? That would've solved all my regrets," Gravis said. "In a sense, I feel like I've never had the chance to do what I wanted, which makes the entire dream feel surreal. It's like someone else has lived my life."

Orthar nodded. "That's a good response. Someone with strong convictions won't feel attached to the dream since it forces you into doing something you don't truly want to do. That's also why the dream has basically no effect on you."

"What about Mortis?" Gravis asked.

Orthar only looked at Mortis.

"Huh?" Mortis said in confusion as he opened his eyes.

Mortis was currently sitting on a beautiful cliff.

"Hey, are you paying attention?" Azure asked with a frown. "You said you wanted to see the sunset."

"Oh, yeah, right, sorry," Mortis quickly said as his memories returned.

He was now his own being.

Gravis' survival no longer hinged on Mortis.

Additionally, the Opposer and Orthar had gotten over their differences.

Gravis had decided to continue cultivating with Stella, while Mortis had decided to stop cultivating.

Mortis had planned to watch the sunset together with Azure to commemorate their future.

They finally never had to be apart again.

When the memories had returned to Mortis, he felt a deep calm.

The dream he had dreamed of in the past had finally become a reality.

He no longer needed to fear his future since he and Azure would spend their time together from now on.

The two of them spent many days on the cliff, just staying by each other's side. None of the two of them spoke during all of this. In comparison to Stella and Gravis, Mortis and Azure were on the quiet side.

Well, as long as Azure didn't have something to complain about. As soon as she could complain about something, she went off.

Mortis and Azure simply enjoyed being in each other's vicinity.

Eventually, the two of them moved to Opposer City. They didn't want to stay in Eternal Fire Sect since they wouldn't cultivate anymore. Staying in the Cultivation world would only invite danger, and the two of them only wanted peace.

Mortis and Azure traveled throughout the entire world, and they looked at all the different things in nature.

In the past, Mortis hadn't been interested in weaker beings, but as soon as he had decided to stop cultivating, he had become interested in them.

It was so interesting how the instincts of young and weak animals and beasts worked. It almost intrigued Mortis.

On top of that, Mortis started to think of them as cute and adorable.

"Let's have some children," Azure said at one point.

That's when Mortis had realized that all these thoughts about simple and weak beings had been a manifestation of his desire to have kids.

"Yes, let's," Mortis answered.

Azure had had plenty of children, but these new children would be completely different from the old ones.

Azure had had no emotional attachments to her children back then, but things were different now.

Azure and Mortis soon saw their first batch of children, and they watched them from a distance. Since Azure was a beast and Mortis counted as half a beast, the children were born with beast bodies, just like Gravis' previous three kids.

But this time, Azure and Mortis looked at their children together.

Eventually, they met them, and just like the last time, the kids didn't feel any kind of familial love towards them.

However, Azure and Mortis were used to that.

They only had to be there for them.

Love was a selfless feeling, and they didn't mind that their children basically ignored them.

Azure had also been like that in the past, and she had eventually changed.

And sure enough, while some of them had died, others managed to become Star Gods.

The ones that managed to become Star Gods apologized to Azure and Mortis for their previous conduct, and Azure and Mortis accepted their apology.

Then, one day, it was time for the two of them to become Ancestral Gods.

When it happened, Mortis felt a bit nervous.

'I only have 13 million years in total left, three million as an Ancestral God, and ten million as a Divine God,' Mortis thought.

'I still have a long life ahead of me.'

'However, at one point, it will end.'

Azure and Mortis spent their time together with their family, and eventually, it was time to become Divine Gods.

'About five million years of my total life have passed, and ten million are left.'

'I'm still young.'

However, as more time passed, Mortis felt more nervous.

Then, as the years passed and death came closer, Mortis felt more and more regret.

'I only have so much time left. I've already lived for so long, and only this little bit of time is left.'

Death was coming closer.

The last couple of years, Mortis and Azure only embraced each other.

They didn't want to let go.

They wanted to stay together forever.

However, they couldn't.

Whenever someone was experiencing a limited time of happiness, they would always look towards the end. School holidays and vacations were such things.

When it just started, people already looked towards the end, knowing that it would come.

Then, as time dragged on, they would keep in mind how long they had left.

As the end drew closer, the person would feel worse.

Mortis wasn't ready yet.

He still wanted to spend so much more time with Azure and his family.

However, there was no more time left.

'Was it worth it?' Mortis asked himself as he looked at his family and Azure.

'I could have had all these things with more time.'

'If I could become a Heaven Breaker, our time wouldn't need to end.'

'We could be together, forever.'

'Why is life so short?'

Eventually, Mortis and Azure died, and Mortis cried.

'Why did I throw my chance at eternal happiness away for easy, temporary happiness?' he asked himself in regret.

'I don't want to die!'

"Huh?" Mortis suddenly uttered as light returned to his eyes.

His dream shot through his mind, and Mortis felt a dark hole opening in his chest.

To him, the dream had been far more real than for Gravis.

Why?

Because Gravis had been forced into this decision, which made him feel a disconnect. It was like it hadn't been him that had lived this life.

In comparison, Mortis had genuinely considered to stop cultivating. The disconnect that Gravis felt didn't exist for Mortis.

Mortis remembered all the happiness he had felt with Azure and his family.

It had been so short.

Additionally, Mortis had realized that his family had never been real.

A dark feeling of loss appeared inside Mortis, but it wasn't overwhelming.

It still felt like a dream, just a more realistic one.

"You've dreamt to the end of your alternate path," Orthar said, pulling Mortis' gaze towards him.

"You've thought about walking it, and now you have. I didn't alter your perceived reality in any way."

"Tell me, what do you feel?" Orthar asked.

Mortis stayed quiet for a long time.

"Regret," Mortis said. "I wish I could have the things in my dream but forever."

"You have the chance now," Orthar said. "In a way, you have a second chance at life. You now know what you will regret. Work towards a future where you don't have these regrets."

Mortis took a deep breath.

He was still a bit beside himself because of the dream, but he also felt excited that he could rectify his regrets.

He didn't want to feel this feeling of approaching dread anymore.

He wanted to live forever and be happy forever.

"Thank you, Orthar," Mortis said.

Orthar nodded.

"The second trial has been complete. Take 10,000 years to recover. Then, you can enter the third trial."

And Orthar vanished.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 1188: Third Trial: Proof

Gravis and Mortis spent the 10,000 years just talking to each other about the life they had lived in the dream.

However, there wasn't much to talk about. It felt like a dream, and just after a couple of hours, they got bored of the topic.

After they were done talking, Gravis simply focused on waiting.

At the same time, Mortis thought about the opportunity he now had.

He knew that he had only lived a dream, but he also knew that these regrets would become a reality if he went through with it.

Now, Mortis had truly realized how wrong this path was.

'It's never enough,' Mortis thought. 'It can only be enough when it stops being interesting. Sadly, a couple million years aren't nearly enough to make my life boring.'

'I need more time, and for that, I need power.'

By now, Mortis had fully thrown away his past hesitations.

Mortis didn't even consider stopping on his path anymore.

He had to become powerful!

For his future!

For Azure!

For his family!

For his happiness!

Gravis knew Mortis very well, and when he felt the changes inside Mortis, he only smiled warmly.

'He's secure in himself now,' Gravis thought. 'He isn't hesitating anymore.'

'Mortis has now fully grown up, and his ideology and his mind have become stable.'

'He won't change significantly in the future anymore.'

'He's now who he will be.'

Gravis had always felt that he had to look over Mortis like an older brother. Mortis' goals and personality had often conflicted with each other, making him prone to spurts of instabilities.

But now, all of this would change.

Gravis' worries that Mortis would one day kill himself again had also vanished.

Mortis knew what he wanted, and even if something significant happened, he wouldn't throw his life away again.

The 10,000 years passed rather quickly for both Mortis and Gravis.

Mortis no longer had any issues with staying alone without any distractions.

His inner voices of worry had disappeared, and Mortis was finally one with himself.

The two first trials had transformed Mortis.

His conviction was now on par with Gravis' conviction.

After 10,000 years, the gate opened.

Gravis and Mortis stood up without hesitation and charged towards the next trial.

In only just a couple of seconds, they arrived at the next trial, and they charged through the gates.

There was no hesitation inside them.

They knew what they wanted!

However, their eyes widened in surprise when they saw the place for the third trial.

It was a small hall again.

Another trial without a fight? What had Orthar planned this time?

Gravis and Mortis looked at Orthar.

Orthar looked at Gravis for a second and then focused on Mortis.

"Mortis again?" Gravis asked.

"Yes, there is one last thing," Orthar said.

"Can I take part in the trial again?" Gravis asked.

"Not this time," Orthar said as he turned to Gravis. "If you also take part in it, it will make it easier for Mortis. Additionally, you've gone through this trial already."

"Huh?" Gravis uttered in confusion.

Orthar slowly extended his right arm.

SHING!

Something appeared on top of his right arm, and as soon as Gravis saw it, his entire body shook.

Memories entered Gravis' mind, and he immediately stepped to the side of the hall, showing that he wouldn't take part in this trial.

Mortis took a deep breath as he looked at the black mosquito hovering over Orthar's hand.

It was a Sin Monster.

"Proof," Orthar said. "You've managed to solidify your conviction. Now, prove the power of your conviction to yourself and to me."

"If you manage to get through this without ending your own life, nothing will ever make you throw your life away in the future."

Gravis looked at Mortis with gritted teeth.

This trial was no joke!

Sure, they already knew the True Law of Suffering, but that wouldn't make things easier. Suffering was suffering. It didn't matter if one understood it or not.

Mortis took a deep, shaky breath.

He hadn't experienced the pain the Sin Monster could inflict, but he had seen what kind of effect it had on someone like Gravis.

Gravis had nearly committed suicide several times due to the Sin Monster.

"10,000 years with 10,000 Sin Monsters," Orthar said. "They will not multiply, but you have to survive for 10,000 years."

"If your conviction isn't strong enough, you will not survive."

"You will also not get back the things you have lost."

"Losing your power is part of the suffering."

Orthar's words genuinely made Mortis nervous and even a bit afraid.

"I only have to survive for 10,000 years, right?" Mortis asked again.

"Correct," Orthar answered.

Mortis took a deep breath.

Then, he released it slowly.

Mortis' eyes shot open with conviction.

So what if it hurt!?

He no longer was the old Mortis!

He would get through this!

Mortis walked to the middle of the room and sat down.

Then, Mortis took another deep breath.

"You can start," he said.

"Keep thinking of your past and your future," Gravis said. "Think of Azure and think about the opportunity you now have. You've felt how it feels to feel regret. You have a chance to fix that regret now, but if you give up now, you will never feel happy again."

"Don't let Azure hear that your last moments were spent in pure suffering and pain."

Mortis nodded.

Then, Orthar let the Sin Monster go.

BOOM!

The Sin Monster split into 10,000 smaller Sin Monsters, which quickly landed all over Mortis' body.

Mortis was blanketed by Sin Monsters.

And then, the first bite came.

Hell.

Agony.

Terror.

Disease.

Wasting.

Vanishing.

Pain.

Suffering.

Mortis felt that a bite had been taken out of his being, and his entire mind and body seized.

Mortis tried to scream in agony, but the second bite had arrived before he could scream.

It was just as bad as the first bite.

Mortis received about ten bites per second, and they all locked him into a state of frozen terror.

Eventually, Mortis' body began spasming as he couldn't control it anymore.

Mortis just silently writhed on the ground with widely opened eyes and mouth.

His eyes were full of regret, pain, and horror.

It had been far worse than he had thought.

For a long time, Mortis couldn't form a rational thought.

He didn't even know how much time had passed.

Usually, it wouldn't be difficult for him to tell how much time had passed, but with his current situation, even that became a possibility.

Mortis had no idea if only an hour or a thousand years had passed.

'Survive!'

This was the only thought Mortis could form through all the pain and chaos.

More time passed.

'Survive!'

More time passed.

'Survive!'

More time passed.

'How much longer?'

Even more time passed.

'How much time has passed?'

More time passed.

'My Realm decreased.'

More time passed.

'My Will-Aura became weaker.'

More time passed.

'Survive.'

More time passed.

'Make it end.'

More time passed.

'Please, make it end.'

More time passed.

'Make it end!'

More time passed.

'I can't anymore.'

More time passed.

'I don't want to anymore!'

More time passed.

'Let me die!'

More time passed.

'Please, I only want to die!'

More time passed.

'I... I don't-... should I?'

More time passed.

'I don't know if I can survive this.'

More time passed.

'Azure.'

More time passed.

'I'm so sorry, Azure.'

More time passed.

'Azure...'

More time passed.

'Please, Azure.'

More time passed.

'Please forgive me, Azure.'

More time passed.

'I can't see you again.'

More time passed.

'I'm sorry.'

More time passed.

'I'm so sorry!'

More time passed.

'Please forgive me!'

Chapter 1189: Trial Three: Complete

'I'm so sorry, Azure!'

'I'm so sorry I can't be with you anymore.'

'Please, forgive me!'

These were all the things Mortis was thinking.

He was planning to end his life to end the suffering.

He didn't know how long he had already survived, but it didn't matter anymore.

He only wanted to end it.

'I can't live like this.'

'I'm sorry!'

Mortis continued thinking these thoughts.

He continued repeating them.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Yet, for some reason, he never actually went through with it.

Something inside of him was telling him to hang on just a bit longer.

He only had to hang on a bit longer.

Just a little bit.

Azure's face shot through Mortis' mind.

He imagined her crying after realizing that she wouldn't see him again.

He imagined her choosing death over a lonely life.

He imagined the kids he could have in the future.

And whenever these images shot through his head, Mortis hung on just a bit more.

All of these instances only bought him seconds, but they kept on coming without end.

Just one more second.

Just a bit more.

Mortis had said his goodbyes a million times by now, but he actually never did it.

Mortis didn't realize it, but he was essentially venting his fear.

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He knew that he could end his suffering, and that gave him hope.

Mortis knew that he wasn't forced to go through all this suffering.

He could always just end it.

Then, it would end.

This thought gave him solace.

There was a way out.

Mortis was like a mortal on the bottom of their life. Every single day was agony, and that person had a noose hanging in their attic, which they would watch in the evenings after the day was over.

Sometimes, that mortal would stand in front of the noose.

Sometimes, they would just look at it.

Sometimes, they would put their head through it and play around with the chair under their feet.

So close.

Salvation was so close.

Only one last step.

They would spend a couple of minutes in hollow suffering, just feeling the closeness of release.

Just a bit more.

If they slipped right now, everything would be over.

Yet, after just some minutes, the mortal would step away from the rope and go to sleep in their bed.

If things didn't improve, they could always come back to it.

If things worsened even more, they had a final solution.

But for now, it didn't feel like it was time.

Mortis was like this mortal.

He was so close to ending it all. It only needed a thought, and Mortis' life would end.

Yet, every second, minute, or hour, Mortis would say his goodbyes to everyone he loved, fully intent on ending it.

And then, he would just wait.

Time would drag on, and the process would repeat.

There had to be an end to this agony at some point.

Mortis knew that it had to end after 10,000 years.

There was an end in sight.

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He only had to wait.

After uncountable times of trying to end it, Mortis eventually gritted his teeth and gave up giving up.

One last push of motivation hit Mortis, and his eyes reddened with battle intent.

For years, he fought against the agony.

'I will not die!'

'I will not die!'

'I will not die!'

Yet, the agony continued without pause.

It continued and continued.

It never ended.

Slowly, Mortis lost his motivation again.

'Why fight?'

'Why do this?'

'This is all just so exhausting.'

'I only want to rest.'

'I only want to- '

And that's when the agony ended.

The next bite didn't arrive.

Silence.

Absolute silence.

Mortis only lay on the ground, looking at the sky.

He didn't feel pain.

He didn't feel dread.

He only felt nothing.

Mortis' eyes widened in shock and confusion.

'The agony... it ended?' Mortis thought in surprise.

Mortis didn't dare to believe that it was over.

However, it truly was over.

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10,000 years had passed.

Suddenly, Mortis' body jerked to the side as he felt something touch him.

Mortis looked with fear over, and he saw Gravis look at him with care.

"You did it," Gravis said slowly. "You survived."

Mortis only looked with shock at Gravis.

"I survived?" he repeated with a hoarse voice.

His body was absolutely wrecked, and huge parts of it had been eaten by the Sin Monster.

Mortis had been planning to let the Sin Monster just consume him without healing himself.

Like this, he would be gone in a couple of years.

However, the agony had ended before the Sin Monster could fully consume him.

Mortis still had plenty of Life Energy remaining.

However, Mortis' Realm had already severely fallen.

Right now, Mortis was in the second level of the Star God Realm, and his Will-Aura had fallen to the level of a level seven Star God.

The Sin Monster had already been destroyed by Orthar, and he only looked at Mortis with an appreciating expression.

Mortis had finally proven that he was as powerful as Gravis, both in the form of combat and his personality.

The only thing keeping both Mortis and Gravis from the Heaven Breaker Realm was time.

They were now truly on the same level.

After some seconds, Orthar extended his hand towards Gravis' Star.

Gravis felt a force touching his Star, and he looked over.

Then, Gravis' Star slowly floated over to Mortis and entered him.

Mortis' body began shining again, and Gravis felt something pull on his being.

Gravis felt like something was siphoning the Energy out of his being.

However, Gravis didn't panic.

Mortis was now connected to him again, and he had fallen by two levels.

Gravis' higher Realm was equalizing itself with Mortis' Realm.

Eventually, Gravis fell to the third level of the Star God Realm, and Mortis rose to the third level of the Star God Realm.

At the same time, Gravis' Will-Aura entered Mortis and replaced it.

Energy was finite, but the force of a will was endless.

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Mortis' Will-Aura was increased to the ninth level of the Star God Realm without draining Gravis' Will-Aura.

Mortis' eyes widened as he felt power return to him.

'Power,' Mortis thought as he felt himself become more powerful.

Then, he felt his mind become more resilient and more powerful.

The agony of slowly and painfully wasting away left Mortis.

Mortis gritted his fists as a fire seemingly shone in his eyes.

'I survived!'

'I went through the worst agony imaginable, and I survived.'

'If something like this can't stop me, nothing ever will!'

'I'm done being indecisive and weak!'

'I know what I want, and I will get it!'

'No matter what I need to do!'

BANG!

Gravis felt his Will-Aura increase, and a smile graced his face as he looked at Mortis.

It had always been Gravis that increased their Will-Aura, but now, Mortis was increasing their Will-Aura.

BANG!

Their Will-Aura shot through two levels, and it eventually stopped at the second level of the Ancestral God Realm.

Finally, their Will-Aura was no longer beneath their friends' Will-Auras.

"The third trial has been completed," Orthar said.

Mortis slowly sat up as he looked at Orthar with fiery eyes.

"You have proven yourself, Mortis. You are no longer weaker than Gravis."

"You are now true equals."

"I don't need to test your character anymore."

"The last two tests are for your Battle-Strength."

"You can take the next 10,000-"

"Forget it," Mortis interrupted Orthar. "I don't need a break."

Orthar looked at Mortis.

Mortis slowly stood up, a fire burning inside his eyes.

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Gravis only smiled as he saw Mortis like this.

"Let's start right now."

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 1190: Opponent

"You need to become a level four Star God again first," Orthar answered directly. "I've already prepared your opponent, and you can't win as long as you are not a level four Star God."

"Additionally, don't jump into a fight while feeling this confident. Confidence is good, but you can't commit any mistakes against your next opponent. If you do, you will die, and your suffering will have been for naught."

Mortis only looked at Orthar with fiery eyes, but Orthar's gaze didn't waver.

"He's right, Mortis," Gravis said from the side. "Calm down first. Orthar knows our power perfectly, and he will give us an opponent that will push us to our absolute limits. One wrong move, and we will die."

"After all, if we can't even prepare ourselves adequately for a fight, how will we ever reach the power of father?"

Mortis' gaze went from Orthar to Gravis.

"I won't make a mistake," Mortis said.

Gravis frowned.

"However, I trust in your judgment," Mortis said after he relaxed. "You might see things in me that I can't see."

Gravis' smile returned. "Thanks," he said.

The two of them looked at Orthar again and nodded.

Orthar nodded back.

Then, Orthar vanished.

After that, Mortis and Gravis sat down.

Gravis asked his father for another delivery of coffee, and his father delivered.

"I'm proud of you, Mortis," the Opposer said to Mortis.

When Mortis heard these words, something inside him shook.

"Thanks," was all Mortis said.

His thanks only sounded polite, but all of Mortis' feelings had been summarized in it.

Mortis had felt the deep feeling of pride his father held for him, and his father heard the appreciation in Mortis' voice.

Gravis gave Mortis some of the coffee, and the two of them started talking again.

They mostly talked about the Sin Monster, and the incredible amount of suffering it brought with it.

Gravis said that he was impressed by Mortis. Back then, Gravis had only had so many Sin Monsters on his body near the end, but Mortis managed to survive against so many of them for such a long time.

However, Mortis said the opposite.

Mortis said that Gravis had it harder than him. Back then, Gravis had been subject to an ever-increasing load of suffering. This meant that Gravis had also known that it would become harder and harder the longer it dragged on, which added a feeling of approaching dread. Additionally, Gravis hadn't been entirely sure for how long it would continue.

"Yes, but I had you to vent to," Gravis answered. "I could always shout at you, and you always supported me during these trying times. Meanwhile, you have been alone the entire time. I couldn't help you. The only thing I could do was watch."

Eventually, both of them relented.

It was impossible to quantify Suffering to such a minute degree.

They agreed that they had gone through similar levels of it, and they were fine with that.

Eventually, Gravis and Mortis had talked enough.

By now, Mortis had fully calmed down again, and he seemingly hadn't changed from his previous self before the trials.

Yet, there was also something different about him.

There was a certain maturity and confidence inside Mortis, which hadn't been there before.

It was like Mortis truly was Mortis at this moment. It was difficult to put this feeling into words, but that was the most accurate description.

Gravis and Mortis slowly absorbed God Stones until they both reached the fourth level of the Star God Realm again.

Then, the two of them stood up and looked at each other.

Both of them nodded at each other.

From now on, the trials would be for both of them, and they had to work together.

After preparing themselves mentally, Gravis and Mortis left the hall through the opened gate.

They slowly walked to the next trial along the narrow and long hallway.

Their momentum slowly increased as their minds entered a battle-ready state.

Eventually, they arrived at the next gate.

Gravis and Mortis each put their hands on one half of the gate and pushed.

As the gate opened and the two of them walked into their new trial, their eyes fixated on one being in front of them.

Gravis and Mortis had entered into endless space. There were no walls, ceiling, or floor in this vast nothingness. The gate they walked through just hovered in the emptiness, and the two of them could see another gate several kilometers away.

The two gates were simply standing in the void.

The nothingness around them peacefully shone with dark colors of purple, blue, and black. It was like they were in space, among the stars. However, there were no stars in this space.

It was just endless nothingness.

As soon as the two of them entered, they saw two figures.

One of them was Orthar, and the other one could only be their opponent.

However, when they saw their opponent, their bodies shook.

This was not what they had expected.

Their battle-ready states immediately dissolved as shock replaced them.

"The fourth trial will push you to your limits," Orthar said from in front of them.

"If you can't comprehend several Laws during the fight, you will die."

"I specifically created this trial to push you towards true power, and this trial will give you valuable experiences for when you reach the Heaven's Magnate Realm."

"The Heaven's Magnate Realm isn't the end, and you will still need to fight some of them to comprehend the Law of Energy and the Law of the Cosmos."

"This is why you will fight him today."

Gravis and Mortis only barely registered Orthar's words as their minds tried to process that they had to fight against him.

"Is this the real one?" Gravis asked.

"No, he's only a copy," Orthar answered. "I know every being in my Cosmos, and I can recreate and change them all, except for your father. Your opponent is not an exception."

"The personality of this copy has been erased, which takes away from his creativity and adaptability. However, this current strength remains unchanged," Orthar explained.

Gravis and Mortis looked silently at their opponent.

"Has Orthar spoken the truth?" Gravis asked his father through his mind.

"He was honest," the Opposer answered. "This is only a copy without the personality."

Gravis and Mortis took deep breaths.

They hadn't expected to fight him.

Who stood in front of them?

In front of the two of them, beside Orthar, stood a level three Star God.

Gravis and Mortis were level four Star Gods, and level three Star Gods were two battle-levels below level four Star Gods. After all, a level three Star God was a Low-Level Star God, while a level four Star God was a Mid-Level Star God.

This opponent was below Gravis and Mortis in Realm.

Yet, Gravis and Mortis didn't underestimate him.

In fact, they believed that a level nine Star God would have been easier to kill.

Who was it?

Who was this person that could jump two levels against Gravis and Mortis?

There was only one possible person.

There was only one Star God that had a stronger Battle-Strength than Gravis.

Besides Orthar stood a blonde man with five eyes and a long sword.

Arc's five, emotionless eyes focused on Gravis and Mortis.

Orthar said one last thing before he went to the side.

"His Laws have not been suppressed."

"He has access to everything."