

Lightning 151

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 151: Dire Straits

A horizontal slash flew at Gravis, contrary to his expectations, and Gravis only saw the saber grow closer to his eyes in shock. In a reflex, Gravis activated his Will-Aura to delay the impact of the saber, and Gravis barely managed to change the position of his attack into a quick make-shift block. The shock of the Will-Aura would only work once, so Gravis had kept it for a decisive attack. Yet, he had to use it now to survive. There was no other way!

BOOM!

The slash hit Gravis' weak block, and the backside of the saber heavily hit Gravis' left shoulder, obliterating it and multiple ribs behind it. Gravis got shot into the distance by Red's attack, destroying several trees in that direction. The clearing had a size of around a hundred meters, but Gravis flew way further, several hundreds of meters in fact.

The sound of exploding and falling trees resonated throughout the surroundings, and the breathing of the onlookers stopped. That impact had thundered throughout the whole clearing, and everyone felt the power behind it. Gravis couldn't have survived that, could he?

Red, on the other hand, quickly readied his saber again and charged into the direction of Gravis, fire appearing behind his body to boost his speed. Red was sure that Gravis had survived, and he couldn't allow Gravis to escape! Gravis had shown how smart he was in a fight, and Red didn't want to give him any chance to plan. Who knew what plan he would manage to come up with if Red gave him the chance?

Meanwhile, Gravis hit a giant boulder, and his body burrowed inside for half a meter, completely stopping his flight. Gravis's organs shook, and a small fountain of blood shot out of his mouth due to the impact. He hadn't had the concentration to use his Elemental Synchronicity to soften the stone. His head spun, but he managed to quickly regain his mind's clarity with his will. Gravis gnashed his teeth as he felt the completely obliterated left side of his torso. 'I nearly died!'

Yet, his eyes widened as he saw Red directly charging at him. There had only been two seconds between Gravis hitting the boulder and Red appearing again. There was no time! Red had already readied a big fireball and was intending on throwing it into the hole that Gravis' body had made. If that hit him, he would be reduced to ashes!

BOOM!

Red threw the big fireball into the hole, and the whole boulder exploded into debris that shot into the distance. Gravis was surely dead. Red took a deep breath to calm down. Gravis had been just as powerful as he had expected.

SHING BOOM!

Red felt a deep pain coming from his left knee as it exploded with lightning. Red couldn't comprehend what had happened. Why did his knee suddenly explode? Meanwhile, Gravis jumped out of the earth below Red and puked another mouthful of blood to the side.

Gravis had regained the clarity of his mind before the explosion and, therefore, also regained his Elemental Synchronicity. He used that to move through the stone, into the earth. Yet, the explosion had been too powerful, and it had damaged his already battered body further. His insides were rattled, and he was forced to puke more blood.

Gravis had wanted to keep his Elemental Synchronicity a secret, but his life was more important. If he didn't use it, he couldn't possibly win, or even survive. He could only hope that they were outside the range of the Guild Master's and Vice-Guild Masters' Spirit.

After the explosion, Gravis had moved inside the earth until he was below Red and then used his full power to attack his left leg. The attack was a success, and he had managed to sever the lower portion of Red's left leg. With a destroyed leg, his speed would surely fall.

VROOM!

The sound of fire appeared as fire shot out of what remained of Red's left leg. With the force generated by the fire, Red managed to keep himself upright. Like this, he regained his balance and stood upside, his right leg firmly on the ground and his left leg using the backdraft of fire to keep balance. Red's visage turned into pure rage, and he shot multiple fireballs at Gravis.

WHOOM WHOOM WHOOM!

Red's physical attack was incredibly fast, but his elemental attacks were dodgeable. Even though Gravis' injuries impacted his speed, he still managed to evade the uncoordinated fireballs as he further fell back to gain distance. If this continued, Red would run out of Energy while Gravis had a limitless supply stored in his mind.

Red grew even angrier, and his mindset grew unstable due to all of his emotions going berserk in this stressful situation. Yet, his will was strong enough that he managed to somewhat calm down after some seconds. Red gritted his teeth so hard that blood streamed down the side of his mouth, and he shot forward again.

Red's movement speed had slowed down significantly due to his missing left leg. The fire coming out of it couldn't generate enough force to make him move at his previous speed. Red could only use his right leg for acceleration and his left leg for stability, similar to Gravis' Lightning Movement.

Yet, Red's right arm was uninjured, which meant that his attack speed was nearly the same as before. Gravis still didn't have the option to dodge the attack without preemptively anticipating the attack that Red would use. Like this, Gravis used his Lightning Movement and physical speed to retreat.

Red chased, but his speed was only a slight bit faster than Gravis. Gravis couldn't have unlimited Energy. That was absolutely impossible! He had to run out of Energy at some point, and Red only needed to chase him to win! Victory was in sight!

Yet, in reality, Gravis had plenty of Energy to spare, and he could also go even faster. Gravis was only running a little bit slower than Red so that Red would chase him. Gravis wasn't intending on retreating, but on changing the battlefield!

SPLASH!

Gravis reached the long river and jumped inside. Red smirked in disdain. 'You think water will help you?' he thought, quickly following Gravis into the river. The power of their elements was too strong, and regular water wouldn't be able to hinder their attacks.

One might think that lightning would be stronger underwater, but that was not the case. It still had the same strength. The only difference was that it was easier for lightning to travel inside the water. All in all, it would make no difference to Gravis if there were water or not. He could control his lightning, and the conductivity of the water wouldn't change a thing. That's why Red didn't mind following Gravis into the river.

On water or on land, Gravis would die today!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 152: The Plan

SSSSSHHHH!

Red continued using his fire to chase Gravis, creating an incredible amount of steam in the process. Gravis moved at a depth of around ten meters against the river's flow. Luckily, he didn't need to swim due to his Elemental Synchronicity. He turned towards Red while still moving along the river. Gravis' eyes narrowed as he concentrated his lightning to shoot at the Riverbed surrounding Red.

Red also narrowed his eyes. He didn't know what Gravis was planning, yet he quickly found out as he felt his speed slowing. "Tch," spat Red underwater. Gravis was using the lightning to excite the flow of water so that more water would flow into his flames. Normal water might not impact their attacks much, but it still used up his flames' power. Since he always used the same amount of Energy, the additional water slowed him down.

Yet, Gravis also moved slower due to his constant use of Energy. Red gnashed his teeth in hatred, and his expression formed into a grimace. Gravis would run out of Energy at some point, and even if he didn't, as soon as Red's reserves hit 20%, he would just flee. If he were to use all his Energy, Red might die to Gravis if he still had Energy. With 20%, Red would still be able to put up a fight!

Of course, Gravis was only masking his Elemental Synchronicity with that lightning. This small amount of lightning wouldn't excite the flow of the river that much. Yet, if Gravis just used his Elemental Synchronicity without masking it with his lightning, Red might grow wary. There was also no possibility to use his Elemental Synchronicity underwater to damage Red. His body was too powerful for that.

If Gravis went closer to Red, Gravis would probably die. Red had already shown that he had realized how Gravis had dodged his earlier attacks. By deliberately attacking differently, Red made it impossible for Gravis to anticipate his attacks. Red might seem to be in a disadvantageous position, but that was not true. One physical attack from him would spell Gravis' doom.

They moved for many kilometers under the river, and Red's Energy reserves grew dangerously low. As soon as his reserves closed in on the 20% mark, he decided to abort his chase and jumped out of the river. Gravis saw this, and his eyes narrowed. Gravis immediately stopped and also jumped out of the river.

Gravis saw Red moving along the river's coast, back into the direction of the Fire Guild. He was running through thick steam, which had been produced from his flames when Red had chased Gravis inside the river. Gravis readied himself and exploded forward with the same speed as Red.

Red turned to Gravis, and his eyes also narrowed. 'Sure enough, he was trying to exhaust me. Good that I still kept enough Energy to return to the Fire Guild. As soon as I reach the Fire Guild, he won't be able to kill me anymore. The fight is over,' Red thought with a sigh. Retreat was part of the arsenal of strategies that a cultivator could use.

They ran for a while, and the steam grew denser. Red had already lost vision of Gravis inside the steam, but he could still feel the movement of Energy in the atmosphere. Judging by the Energy's movement, Gravis was slowly gaining ground on Red, yet this damn steam made it hard to see anything.

'Wait, steam? But the steam at this place should have already risen into the sky. How is there still so much steam?' Red thought, and a feeling of fear slowly started appearing. Something was not right!

Red took a turn and ran away from the river. After around a hundred meters, he finally managed to escape from the steam. Red turned around to look back, and his eyes widened as his mouth involuntarily fell open in shock. What did he see?

A humongous, dense black cloud was violently chasing him. The cloud was at around the distance where Gravis should be. What was going on? Where did this cloud come from?

Gravis had planned this since jumping into the river. Red's fire would produce steam, and steam was water. With his Elemental Synchronicity, he could control water, and therefore also steam. Like this, Gravis could collect more and more steam as they continued running along the river and compress it.

When water evaporated, it would become steam, and if a lot of steam gathered together, it would make a cloud. With the right movement and manipulation, the cloud would then produce natural lightning. It was one of the laws of the world, and it dictated how lightning worked.

Gravis noticed that Red had escaped the steam and no longer held his speed back. He and the cloud exploded in speed, and they closed in on Red. Red's eyes widened. The fight was not over!

When there were only two meters between Red and the cloud, he turned around and burst into the cloud. He quickly felt where Gravis was and slashed down. Gravis had expected such an attack and had already prepared himself to dodge.

WHOOM!

Yet, out of nowhere, a powerful pressure hit Gravis. Red had condensed his Will-Aura in the fight! One didn't need to win the tempering to increase their will. They only had to survive. When Red had relaxed while running back to the Fire Guild, his Will-Aura had condensed, and he successfully surprised Gravis. Due to the surprise, Gravis took longer to activate his Will-Aura. The attack had nearly arrived when Gravis finally activated it. The only thing he could do was slightly move out of the way.

SHING!

Gravis' right arm was severed at the shoulder and flew away. Like this, Gravis had lost both his arms since the left half of his torso was still obliterated, including his arm. Red quickly readied his saber to end the fight.

BANG BANG BANG!

Thick strands of lightning hit the space in front of Gravis, forcing Red to fall back and block with his Energy. Natural Lightning had a density similar to the peak of Energy Gathering, which would generally make it still weak enough to resist for someone with such a strong body as Red. Yet, this lightning felt utterly different to Red. For some reason, it was powerful enough to injure him. Red could only defend himself with his Energy.

More lightning gathered around Red, and he had to continue using up his Energy. The lightning continued going after him for several seconds, and his right arm had blackened. Red had run out of Energy shortly before the end and had to block with his remaining arm.

THUNK!

Red didn't have any more Energy to keep his balance with his severed left leg. The flames on his left leg vanished, and he fell over, breathing deeply. He was too exhausted to keep balance with just one leg. He had no more Energy to support himself, and his arms couldn't grip a weapon anymore.

Red gnashed his teeth and crawled towards Gravis. He still felt the Energy vibrations, so he knew where Gravis was located. Gravis body was just as injured as his own! He could still kill Gravis with the stump of his left arm! Gravis had no way to injure him with only his elemental attacks.

The cloud around them cleared, and Red could finally see Gravis again, but his expression quickly changed into shock and terror.

Why had the natural lightning been so much stronger when it hit Red? That was because Gravis manipulated the Life Energy inside the lightning to split off. Red had been hit by pure Destruction Lightning with the Energy density of Natural Lightning. So, where did the Life Energy go?

Gravis stood in pristine condition in front of the lying Red. His whole body had regenerated due to all the Life Energy inside the lightning. On top of that, Gravis had also refilled his Energy storage again. Gravis had a perfectly healthy body and was filled with Energy. Red only smiled bitterly.

SHING BOOM!

Gravis beheaded Red, and his head exploded into the distance.

The fight had ended.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 153: Willpower!

Gravis took a deep breath to relax. The fight was finally over. Gravis' life had constantly been in danger during the last couple of minutes, and even at the end, Red had still nearly managed to kill him. Gravis had fought someone entirely out of his league. Deciding to fight Red was closer to suicide than tempering.

He had used everything in this fight. He had used his body, Energy, Will-Aura, pre-dodging, and also heavily relied on his Elemental Synchronicity. Without the first four, Gravis would have died before he and Red even left the clearing while the last one allowed Gravis to kill Red. Gravis narrowed his eyes and decided to stay a little safer.

BOOM!

Gravis absorbed Red's Energy and broke into the seventh level of Energy Gathering. Earlier, Gravis had decided against absorbing enough Energy for a breakthrough because he thought he would be invincible in the Energy Gathering Realm then. Yet, Gravis had made a grave error. He had underestimated the elders, who had remained on that level for decades.

Red's body had been too powerful, and even with Gravis now being at the seventh level of Energy Gathering, the fight wouldn't have been much easier. The advantage of rising a level in the Energy Gathering Realm was the increased density and reserve of Energy. The increased reserve was literally useless for Gravis since he could just refill his Energy with the one in his mind.

Yet, the density of Energy was also nearly no help in fighting against those people. For example, if Gravis had used 100% of his Energy instead of 50% to attack Red, there would be no difference. The lightning wasn't able to injure someone like Red just by itself. Gravis could only use the explosion's shockwave when his lightning exploded to sever Red's hand. An explosion double as powerful would only have thrown his arm further away. That made no difference.

So, the Energy, when breaking into the seventh level, surprisingly, didn't increase his fighting strength by much while fighting such monsters. The true help was the lower suppression against his Will-Aura. His Will-Aura had only worked once against Red since he had been three levels above him. Now, he could use his Will-Aura multiple times, and it wouldn't lose its effectiveness that quickly.

After absorbing all the Energy, Gravis only needed 60% more for breaking into the eighth level. When he reached the eighth level, he would genuinely be invincible in the Energy Gathering Realm. The higher density of his Energy would also allow Gravis to move faster with his Lightning Movement. With his new speed and Will-Aura, he wouldn't need to fight this passively anymore.

WHOOM!

Suddenly, Gravis felt his Will-Aura going out of control. It started activating by itself, and Gravis couldn't manipulate it anymore. It expanded itself again from its compressed form until it encompassed everything in a 60-meter radius around Gravis. Then, it started expanding widely, and Gravis' mind shook.

Gravis felt his drive to continue in his journey strengthening at a rapid pace. Everything that had impacted his will before, like the situation with Wendy or Gorn's death, started to feel more bearable. Gorn's death was still an issue in Gravis' mind, and he would never forget his death, but his apprehension about gaining strength lessened. Gravis' will was now strong enough that Wendy's situation no longer impacted him in the slightest.

In his mind, her death had already been a certainty, and there was no stopping it. Gravis still wasn't a fan of using her death to further his power, but it felt like his feelings started accepting his logic. Logically, he knew that he should not care about the way how he gained power, but his emotions always

wavered when he had to make difficult decisions. Everything started becoming clearer in his eyes as his emotions started synchronizing with his logic.

As Gravis' will and aura grew clearer, his Will-Aura expanded furiously into the surroundings. It was growing bigger by the second.

120 meters.

150 meters.

180 meters.

It just didn't seem to stop, and Gravis narrowed his eyes as they shone with a brilliant gleam. The trees inside his Will-Aura cracked and then fell apart. The earth got pushed down for half a meter until it stopped. The water in the river was pushed down and out of the river, and no new water could come inside of his Will-Aura. The water outside, hitting his Will-Aura, overflowed like there suddenly was a dam in front of it and swept into the surroundings.

210 meters.

240 meters.

270 meters.

At 300 meters, his Will-Aura stabilized. The surroundings were cleared of everything, and a circular crater was created around him, several meters deep. Gravis regained the control of his Will-Aura and noticed that he couldn't compress it anymore. As strange as it sounded, it felt like his will was not strong enough to compress his Will-Aura anymore.

'So, my will is not strong enough to compress my will? That seems weird,' Gravis thought, but he couldn't find any other reason. As he thought back, he also realized that it had been harder to compress his Will-Aura at the start. Compressing his Will-Aura into a half-circle had taken several months, and its strength only doubled. Yet, in about the same amount of time, he had managed to compress it onto a single individual, increasing its power by several dozen folds.

Gravis realized that, as his will had grown stronger, it had also grown easier to compress his Will-Aura. 'This is probably a sign of growth. My Will-Aura has probably broken through some kind of bottleneck, but I'm not sure,' Gravis thought to himself.

Gravis was also surprised about the sheer power of his Will-Aura. Even though it was uncompressed, its strength transcended his earlier, fully-compressed Will-Aura by a large margin. Gravis was incredibly happy about his new, powerful Will-Aura, but he also grew a little bitter.

'The sudden breakthrough of my Will-Aura was not planned. I guess that someone at Red's level would no longer pose a challenge against me with this new Will-Aura. I guess I can't temper myself anymore in the Energy Gathering Realm,' he thought with a sigh.

Gravis looked over at Red's corpse, which was not damaged by his Will-Aura, and went through his belongings. He found many body tempering pills, and he also looked at the saber. When Gravis looked at it, his eyes shone. "A weapon for Spirit Forming experts," he said involuntarily.

The saber was utterly red, with some black streaks going through it. With this, Gravis wouldn't need to worry about a weapon anymore as soon as he broke into the Spirit Forming Realm. Yet, just like Energy weapons couldn't be fully used by Body Tempering people, a Spirit Forming weapon couldn't be fully used by someone at the Energy Gathering Realm. An Energy weapon and a Spirit Forming weapon had the same strength to someone in the Energy Gathering Realm.

Gravis put the saber on his back and now carried three sabers and one long sword. Thinking about the long sword, Gravis took it into his hands and looked at it with a bitter smile. "I originally intended to use you to explode fireballs from a safe distance, but it seemed like I never got the chance," he said.

Gravis always had many different plans for different situations. By using the long sword, Gravis would have been able to explode fireballs early from a distance of over two meters. Like that, the explosions would have been significantly weakened when they hit his body. Yet, there never appeared a situation in the fight where he had needed to use the sword.

Just like not every plan of Heaven came into being, not every plan of Gravis found use.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 154: No More Tempering

"CAW!"

Gravis heard the voice of Skye from a distance and turned to it. Skye was hovering at a distance of around 300 meters from Gravis, cawing at him. It had wanted to go to Gravis and congratulate him on his victory, but then this strange dome appeared, and it seriously didn't like that dome one bit.

Skye had been closer when Gravis' Will-Aura had expanded, and it nearly fell from the sky when the Will-Aura had hit it. It felt like all the air in its surroundings was transformed into liquid metal, making it really difficult to move. So, it had retreated into a distance.

Gravis noticed that his Will-Aura was still active and deactivated it. He might not be able to compress it, but after he had regained control of it, he got back the ability to deactivate it. The Will-Aura disappeared, and the blocked river violently flowed down along the channels again. The water also accumulated in the crater that Gravis had involuntarily created. In the future, this crater would become a lovely little lake.

Gravis jumped out of the crater and watched it from outside. A particular feeling started appearing in his mind. 'I can maybe create such powerful destruction if I unleashed a lot of my Energy, yet just my Will-Aura alone has destroyed so much. A crater with a radius of 300 meters, several meters deep.' Gravis looked to the sky. 'This just proves again that my brother and father were right in saying that the will was most important.'

BANG!

Skye landed beside Gravis and rubbed its head on his torso. Gravis smiled happily and ruffled its feathers, eliciting a cry of bliss. "Haha, Skye! I am stronger than you again!" Gravis laughed with happiness.

Skye took its head back and looked at him. First, it wanted to defend its strength, but when it remembered that mighty dome and saw the destruction around it, it accepted it. It released a human-like snort, communicating that Gravis won't remain more powerful for long.

When Gravis saw Skye's reaction, he only laughed louder. They both wanted to be stronger than the other one, but they were also friends and companions. The stronger they got, the better. In reality, none of the two minded it when the other one was stronger. After all, they were comrades. They only showed their superior power to increase the drive for strength for the other one.

BRRRR!

Gravis heard the distant sound of fire and looked over. The audience was beginning to arrive. No one in the audience had a really powerful body, so they all could only use their fire for speed, which was not that fast. Gravis and Red had chased each other for a great distance, and only now did someone appear.

The new arrival was at the ninth level of Energy Gathering but didn't have a powerful body. Yet, he was still the fastest among all others. The new arrival looked at Gravis, who scratched Skye, and then searched for Red, but couldn't find him. "Where's Red?" asked the disciple.

"Dead," answered Gravis nonchalantly. The disciple was taken aback, but he grew suspicious. Even if Red had died, Gravis should have been majorly injured, yet he looked completely fine. What was going on?

Slowly, more people arrived, and they all gathered around Gravis and Skye. Skye grew a bit apprehensive by all the people around it. If they all attacked suddenly, it might die. There was one at the ninth level and many at the eighth level of Energy Gathering. They were a genuine danger to its life.

"Calm down, Skye," said Gravis with a smile, and Skye looked at him. Remembering that powerful dome, it calmed down. It had already felt the power of Gravis' Will-Aura, and it knew that those humans wouldn't be a danger with him around.

While being at the seventh level, Gravis could make everyone at the seventh level lose their consciousness, and everyone at the eighth level lose all ability to fight. That was if he still had his old Will-Aura. His new one would probably just knock everyone unconscious, except that one disciple at the ninth level. There was no danger.

"Where is Red?" asked another new arrival.

Gravis looked around and saw that no new people arrived anymore. Everyone had probably already gathered. He turned back to Skye. "Go eat your food," he said.

Skye's head perked up as it remembered its food. It had seen Red's body when it had been outside of Gravis' Will-Aura. The others didn't see Red's body because it was currently underwater. Skye took to the sky and flew over the newly created lake.

SPLASH!

It picked something up with its humongous head and pulled it out. Red's body could be seen briefly before Skye swallowed it like a fish. Yet, that brief period was enough for everyone to see the body. Their mouths fell open in shock, and their brains stopped working for some time. Red was actually dead!

Their eyes went back to Gravis, and they couldn't stop looking at him. 'Monster!' they all thought in their heads.

Gravis didn't care about their gazes and dusted off his robe. Then, he turned to them, casually. "Someone else wanna try their luck?" he asked them, not hoping for a positive answer.

Some of the disciples were taken aback. Who else would want to fight Gravis? Red had been the elder closest to condensing his Will-Aura, so he was also the strongest one. Red had literally been the strongest person in the Energy Gathering Realm in the Fire Guild. No one else from the Fire Guild would dare to fight Gravis anymore, except for the Spirit Forming Realm leaders.

WHOOSH PACK!

...or not? Gravis caught another bottle of pills, which had been thrown by the sole disciple at the ninth level of Energy Gathering. Gravis showed a surprised look. Why?

"I'm sure you are incredibly exhausted and only try to show an uninjured front to us," the disciple said with narrowed eyes. "You are probably close to falling over, but still want to appear strong. I won't believe that you are uninjured!" he shouted as he took out his halberd.

The others initially felt surprised, but then they understood what the disciple meant. Yeah, it was impossible that Gravis was uninjured. This was actually their best chance of getting a fortune! Gravis had so many body tempering pills.

Gravis accepted the pill and shrugged. He slowly walked over to the nervous disciple. "You think yourself so clever," Gravis said, shaking his head with a sigh. "You think you saw through my guise when in actuality, there wasn't one."

"Wha-"WHOOOSH!

The disciple couldn't finish his words as an apocalyptic pressure completely immobilized him.

THUNK THUNK THUNK THUNK!

Hundreds of bodies hit the floor. Every single member of the audience had been in the range of Gravis' Will-Aura. Just like Gravis had expected, every single one lost consciousness. The only one still conscious was the sole disciple at the ninth level of Energy Gathering.

Gravis walked over to the disciple and put his hand on his neck. The emotions were going crazy inside the disciple's head, and he couldn't formulate a single rational thought.

RIP!

The disciple didn't have a strong body, so Gravis just tore his head off with a yank. Gravis threw the head to the side and looked through the disciple's belongings. There was no reason in fighting the disciple. With a single activation of his Will-Aura, he could kill anyone in the Energy Gathering Realm. Gravis couldn't temper himself with those people anymore.

Gravis looked through the belongings of the corpse and pocketed some more pills. Then, he deactivated his Will-Aura and looked at the sea of unconscious bodies. Gravis smiled with embarrassment. "It wasn't on purpose. Sorry!" he spoke into the quiet surroundings. No body reacted.

Gravis threw the corpse to Skye, who quickly caught it in its mouth. After that, Gravis turned around and walked away.

"Stop at once!" shouted an aggressive and imposing voice from behind Gravis.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 155: Exchange

Gravis narrowed his eyes and turned around, looking at the person who had just shouted at him. Judging by the strength and imposingness of the voice, the person was definitely a Spirit Forming expert. The voice had awakened a sense of danger inside Gravis. Thus he was sure of the person's strength. Gravis readied himself for a fight.

A middle-aged man with flowing, fiery red hair came running. "Why do you stop me?" asked Gravis with a severe tone.

The person seemed to get even angrier as urgency radiated from his eyes. "Not you!" he shouted. "Your bird!"

Gravis eyebrows rose in surprise, and he looked to Skye. Skye was currently carrying an unconscious disciple in its beak, readying itself to swallow him. Gravis' eyes widened when he saw that. "Skye, Stop!" he shouted.

GULP!

Skye swallowed the disciple and then looked at Gravis with a questioning look. Wasn't it allowed to eat Gravis' enemies? What's his deal?

Gravis ran to Skye. "Spit him out, now!" he shouted at Skye, and it looked back at him with bitterness and unwillingness. "They were not my enemies, and they are still alive. Spit him out!"

Skye looked at Gravis and then at the new arrival, who was really close by now and conceded.

LURCH Clank!

The disciple's unconscious body fell out of Skye's lowered opened beak and hit the ground. The clothes had already been fully corroded, and even his skin looked a little burned. The Guild Master of the Fire Guild went to the disciple and checked his life signs. Only when he felt that the Energy and body were still vigorous did he sigh in relief.

Gravis scratched the back of his neck in embarrassment. "Sorry, Skye didn't do it on purpose," Gravis explained.

The Guild Master glared at Skye but then sighed. "Nothing major happened, so it's okay," he waved the matter off nonchalantly. He then turned to Gravis to look at him more closely. "You have impressive battle-strength. You even managed to defeat Red, the strongest person in Magic Gathering in our guild."

Gravis nodded to show his respect to the Guild Master's strength. While he didn't care about the status of the Guild Master, he cared about his strength. Just when Gravis wanted to turn around and continue on his way, he suddenly got an idea. He rubbed his chin in thought as he watched the Guild Master.

The Guild Master felt weird when Gravis looked at him without saying anything. What did he want?

"Actually," started Gravis. "Are you interested in a trade?" he asked the Guild Master.

The eyes of the Guild Master narrowed. "You can't win against me, yet," said the Guild Master directly.

But Gravis simply shook his head. "That's not what I mean," he explained. "I have earned many weapons in my fights, and I wonder if you are interested in repurchasing them."

The Guild Master was a little surprised by the idea. First, Gravis killed his disciples and stole their wealth and then offered to sell their own weapons back to them? However, as the Guild Master continued thinking about this situation, he started to realize that that was actually not such a bad idea, though a little in bad taste. All of those weapons were tailor-made for the Fire Guild, and some of them were really good.

"You know what?" asked the Guild Master rhetorically after a while. "Why not?"

Gravis smirked a little. "Alright, but I am only interested in body tempering pills. Is that okay with you?" Gravis asked in confirmation.

The Guild Master nodded. "That's alright. Is it okay with you if we determine the price of the weapons based on the Contribution Point System that we use in the guild?" The Guild Master asked.

Gravis looked unsurely at the Guild Master. "Could you elaborate?"

"Simple! Body tempering pills and weapons can both be exchanged for Contribution Points. You'll sell us the weapons, and we give you Contribution Points equal to the weapons' buying price. Then, you can use up those points, like a normal disciple," he explained, and then his eyes narrowed in thought. "I think I'll also give you the same discount as someone with your strength would have in our guild, which is someone with an elder's strength."

Gravis eyes widened in surprise. "I killed about ten of your strongest disciples, and you are even willing to give me a discount? Why?" asked Gravis, confused.

Surprisingly, the Guild Master only laughed. "By offering a fair fight, you have given our disciples a chance to temper themselves," he explained. "The fights had been fair, and you never acted weak to lure in more, weaker people to make more money. From the beginning, you have stated your strength."

The Guild Master sighed. "The first couple of disciples didn't realize their strength difference to you, even though you loudly stated that only people at the ninth level of Magic Gathering had a realistic chance in defeating you."

The Guild Master majestically swished his long sleeve to the side. "If they can't feel danger, then it's their fault they died! As for the later disciples, you have never asked for backup and always fought by yourself. They knew what they were getting into, and you fought fairly. You have granted them this opportunity! That they couldn't grasp it is on them!"

Gravis also sighed. When Gravis had talked with Flern for a while, back when he was still staying on that tree, Flern had said that the death of their disciples only showed their weakness. He had also said that most of the Fire Guild thought like that. Initially, Gravis had been a little skeptical, but seeing how the Guild Master argued the same way as Flern, Gravis realized that Flern had told the truth.

The Fire Guild believed that if you died in a fight, you were too weak and were never destined to rise to power. Gravis thought that this philosophy was similar to the Heaven Sect. The Heaven Sect believed that if someone died, Heaven wanted them to die, and if someone lived, Heaven wanted them to live. Yet, the Fire Guild attributed this "catch-all" philosophy to strength and not to some garbage Heaven. The Fire Guild was probably closer to the truth than the Heaven Sect, but it was also not entirely right.

Supremely talented and strong geniuses could die to bad luck. If they hadn't had this bad luck, they would have probably risen, at least, into the Spirit Forming Realm. So, surviving is not completely reliant on strength. But in the end, Gravis thought that the Fire Guild had a better philosophy than the Heaven Sect.

"Alright," commented Gravis dryly, extinguishing any eventual, continued conversation about this topic. "So, I have this really long sword," Gravis said as he tossed the long sword to the ground in front of him. "Some peak Magic Weapons," he tossed multiple sabers out, including his old one, "those few weapons that I left behind in the initial fighting area, and that really heavy halberd."

The Guild Master looked at the pile of weapons and sighed again. Every weapon signified a dead disciple. Even though the Fire Guild had the philosophy of absolute power, those weapons still represented people that he had known or watched for years.

The weapons started floating one by one as the Guild Master inspected them for damage. The heavy halberd and the other weapons also floated in from the old fighting area. They were not that far from the old fighting area. After the Guild Master looked through the weapons, he nodded. "Alright, that's about 19,400 Contribution Points."

WHOOSH PACK!

The elder threw over a book, and Gravis opened it. It was an exchange catalog, similar to the one from the Heaven Sect. Of course, even though the Fire Guild was multiple times bigger than the Heaven Sect, their wealth and variety of items didn't even come close to the Heaven Sect's.

"You get 30% off because of the elder discount," said the Guild Master.

Gravis nodded and ignored everything else. He directly skipped to the pill section. To his surprise, he saw no mention of the Body Ascension Pill that he had taken back in the Heaven Sect. Of course, even if it were there, Gravis wouldn't buy it. It might be the best method to temper his body, but Gravis had no way to continually damage his own body right now. Yet, Gravis was still interested in why he couldn't find it.

"You don't have a Body Ascension Pill?" Gravis asked, not looking up from the exchange book. If he had looked up, he would have seen the Guild Master's eyes widen in disbelief.

"Body Ascension Pill? How could we have such a treasure? Those pills are even rare in the Core-Continent," he explained.

Now, Gravis looked up. "They're that rare?" he asked in an unbelieving look.

The Guild Master only nodded while Gravis just shrugged and continued checking the pills. He looked through the exchange book for several minutes, and slowly, some of the unconscious disciples started

waking up. Usually, they would stay unconscious for over half an hour, but something made them wake up early.

They were underwater and couldn't breathe. When Gravis had used his Will-Aura again, he had still been in the surroundings of the new lake and the river. His Will-Aura created another crater, and after he deactivated it again, the water flooded into the even newer lake. As soon as they regained consciousness, they quickly jumped out of the water, coughed, and took deep breaths.

They all walked around, grumbling, but they shut their mouths when they saw their Guild Master. If someone said something wrong, their life would be ruined.

After around ten minutes, Gravis had finished choosing the pills. All those pills only strengthened a specific part of the body, and he had to make it balanced. When Gravis was finished, he only had 600 Contribution Points remaining, but he didn't care about those. The Guild Master had given him a discount, so he wouldn't try to use every last bit of those points to gain as much as possible.

Gravis told the Guild Master what he wanted, and the Guild Master nodded. The exchange book floated back to the Guild Master and vanished. Then, they both just continued standing there. Gravis was confused and waited for the Guild Master to do something, but he didn't move.

They continued waiting like this for several minutes, and Gravis narrowed his eyes.

'This feels kind of awkward.'

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 156: New Plans

After some more minutes, Gravis finally spoke up. "So, what are we waiting for?"

The Guild Master didn't change his expression. "For your pills."

Gravis squinted his eyes and spoke carefully. "But, don't you have to inform someone or get them then?"

The Guild Master looked like he understood why Gravis asked such an obvious question. After he understood, he only laughed a little. "I have already informed the elder responsible for the treasure storage," he explained. "You might not know, but starting the Spirit Forming Realm, we can send thoughts with our Spirit. I have long informed him."

"Oh," said Gravis as he finally understood. He didn't know that that was possible starting at the Spirit Forming Realm, but it seemed to make sense. The Spirit was an extension of the user's mind and soul, so it could logically also touch and convey the user's thoughts. "I didn't know."

The Guild Master only smiled slightly. "Well, there's no reason in telling you. As soon as you reach the Spirit Forming Realm, you would know it automatically," he explained with patience. "I know branch manager Aion, and I can guess why he hasn't told you about that before."

Gravis could also guess why. Aion was basically a physical manifestation of laziness. Even talking with Gravis was already too much work for him. Why would he go out of his way to teach Gravis about Spirit Forming?

After some more seconds, an elder came running and handed a sack of pills to the Guild Master. After that, the weapons appeared again, and the elder collected them. The elder had an incredibly powerful body, just like Red had, so carrying all the weapons and the massive halberd wasn't an issue for him. He quickly left with the weapons.

"By the way, if you don't know about Thought Transmission, you might also not know about our Spirit Space," explained the Guild Master. "We can store and retrieve items in our Spirit Space. That's why those weapons kept appearing and disappearing."

Gravis nodded and thanked the Guild Master. Gravis already knew about this application of the Spirit. He had learned that thing back in his homeworld. For some reason, they had not told him about Thought Transmission.

The sack of pills floated over to Gravis, who looked inside. He saw many body tempering pills, and he smiled involuntarily. 'Those should be enough to boost my body to the ninth level. Only about just as many pills remain for me to achieve my goal.'

Most people in this lower world believed that the ninth level was the highest level of Energy Gathering, yet there was the tenth level above that. That also held true for the body. Just like the Energy could reach the tenth level, the body could also reach that tenth level.

Yet, why did no one in the Middle-Continent know? Some elders were sure to consume many more pills to test it. In truth, they actually did know about the tenth level of the body. However, there was an issue with having a body stronger than one's Energy.

If someone had a body one realm higher than their Energy, their own element would be weakened by the body. It was rather logical. The element had to pass through the body, and if the body were too strong, too much of the element would be wasted while escaping it.

Those people who achieved the tenth level of the body had found issues in releasing their elements. The strength of their element fell from the ninth level of Energy Gathering to the eighth. Of course, thanks to Gravis' Elemental Synchronicity, that was no issue for him. He could just will his lightning to ignore his body.

This world was an elemental world, which meant that people felt that the elements were the best way to advance. No one would trade their elemental power for physical power. In a different kind of world, the decision might be reversed, but not in this one.

"Alright, everything's in order," said Gravis as he closed the sack and looked back at the Guild Master of the Fire Guild. "I'll be leaving. Bye!"

The Guild Master nodded and waved Gravis off. Gravis nodded back and jumped on the back of Skye, who quickly flew off. Down below, the Guild Master combed his beard with his fingers in thought. 'His valiant search for power, his readiness to slay his enemies, and his genuine search for tempering would make him an outstanding disciple of our Fire Sect,' he thought and sighed. 'Sadly, he already uses the lightning element.' With that, he shook his head and went back to the guild.

Gravis was quite happy with the result of his tempering with the Fire Guild. There hadn't been an angry mob that shouted at him for killing their brothers. There hadn't been some malicious scheme in the

background. Even after all his opponents had died, the Guild Master had still been a nice fellow. It was all just simple and pure life and death tempering. Gravis liked this simplicity and honesty. They might have an ideology that he didn't wholly agree with, but their philosophy was to his liking.

Right now, Skye was flying around aimlessly. Gravis had not said where their next destination was. In actuality, Gravis had to replan. Initially, he had intended to go to the Earth Guild next to do the same thing. Maybe not as many people as the Fire Guild would be interested in this, but everyone needed a powerful will to grow stronger. There were sure to be some interested people.

Sadly, due to the unannounced breakthrough of his Will-Aura, that plan fell flat. Tempering became impossible for him in the Energy Gathering Realm. 'Might as well just increase my realm and bodily strength,' Gravis decided. Yet, there were two issues with that.

The first issue was that he needed to kill people to increase his Energy. Yes, he would find many people ready to fight with him to the death on the other guilds, but that couldn't be considered honest tempering for them. If they knew how strong Gravis actually was, no one would fight him in the Energy Gathering Realm. Yet, if he kept his strength a secret, it would basically be dishonest scamming from Gravis' side. He was not a fan of that.

Though, due to his strengthened will for power, he would still do it, even if he didn't like it. One had to trample upon others to rise, and Gravis had realized this truth after his Will-Aura broke through. It might go against his morals, but his goal was more important to him than his morals. Gravis sighed when he made his decision to play the pig to catch a tiger.

This would also solve the other issue with his body. Where could he get the body tempering pills? With this, he could solve both problems at once. This seemed to be the best way to solve both issues.

'But if I have to scam people, then I might as well scam those that I feel deserve it the most. Well, it seems like it's time to visit some guilds to check how their general temperament is.'

Gravis decided to first check a couple of guilds before he decided on his target. He had learned the basic layout of the Middle-Continent in the Heaven Sect. An executioner had to know where they had to go, after all. Gravis checked through the map in his mind and saw that the closest guild was the Earth Guild. 'Let's first check the Earth Guild.'

"Skye, fly there!" Gravis shouted as he shot a small lightning bolt into the direction of the Earth Guild. Skye cawed and changed its course.

"I wonder how the Earth Guild is."

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 157: Energy Beast?

Skye flew for a full day. In that day, Gravis ate a lot of body tempering pills. He didn't need to destroy and reforge his body for it to become stronger. The only reason why he had done that with the Body Ascension Pill was that this was the only way how the pill would work. The other pills simply strengthened the body without destroying it.

In that day, Gravis ate about a third of the pills and reached the peak of the seventh level of the body. He still had some time and could increase his bodily power into the eighth level, but he stopped. If his

body were at the eighth level of Energy Gathering, not many people would dare fight him. Like this, he would maybe not get enough pills to reach the tenth level.

'Most people can't feel my physical strength, but some of them can. If anyone powerful notices my body's power, they might dissuade others from fighting with me, and I can't just go on a killing rampage. The Spirit Forming experts would get involved. I can't fight those, yet,' thought Gravis with narrowed eyes. 'Guess this is where I'll stop for now.'

The disciples Gravis had killed also carried a lot of Energy Stones. He had several hundreds of those, and if he took them all, he would reach the middle of the eighth level of Energy Gathering. He also didn't absorb those for the same reason. He had to accumulate more pills and stones to rise in one shot. No one would accept fighting a Heavenborn at the ninth level of Energy Gathering with an equally powerful body.

Like this, Skye and Gravis continued flying towards the Earth Guild until...

BOOM!

A loud sound of something hitting the ground reverberated through the surrounding kilometers. Whatever hit the ground had to weigh multiple tons. Gravis' eyes shone with interest, and without him saying anything, Skye charged into the direction where the sound originated.

After some seconds, Gravis and Skye arrived at the location where the sound came from, and they saw a powerful wolf-like creature. It had a height of around twenty meters, but its front legs were more prominent and more powerful than its hindlegs, creating a bizarre but powerful-looking asymmetry. It was eating an equally giant, dead salamander.

When Gravis saw that beast, his eyes widened in surprise. "High-grade Energy Beast," he said involuntarily. The only high-grade Energy Beast that Gravis had ever seen had been Skye's parent. Heaven had made sure that he never saw another one. Yet, they just so happened to stumble upon one.

Gravis continued growing more apprehensive as he thought about this situation. He looked up into the sky. "I wonder why you allow a high-grade Energy Beast to cross my path," Gravis spoke. "Is it because they can't temper me anymore, or is that one of your schemes again?"

Of course, Heaven didn't answer. Gravis looked back down at the creature and rubbed his chin in thought. 'I doubt this is a scheme. Beasts can't resist my Will-Aura, and the only thing powerful enough to threaten me is a Spirit Forming expert. If this beast has a Spirit Beast parent, its parent wouldn't be in this Middle-Continent. This beast also can't be a pet of anyone of some guild. It's too far away from any guild for that.'

After thinking about this, he came to a conclusion. 'It probably takes too much Energy to control such a powerful beast. Heaven had been willing to pay that price if those beasts could still function as tempering for me, but with my new Will-Aura, they became too weak for that. Heaven probably doesn't care anymore about me finding high-grade Energy Beasts. Might as well accept this "gift". Let's see how this goes.'

Gravis jumped off of Skye. His body was powerful enough to withstand a fall with terminal velocity, so that wasn't an issue. Skye looked at Gravis but didn't decide to get involved. It had fought many powerful high-grade Energy Beasts before, so it might as well leave this one to Gravis.

The wolf-like creature noticed the falling Gravis and released a loud howl as intimidation. It ran to the place where Gravis would land and readied itself, opening its mouth to release powerful lightning. The elemental power of Energy Beasts might be weaker than those of humans, but such a hit would still injure Gravis a little bit.

WHOOOSH!

An unbearable pressure pressed into the creature, and its eyes widened. It was supremely difficult to move, and it couldn't muster the concentration to finish its lightning attack. As Gravis closed in on the ground, more and more trees in the surroundings were crushed into splinters. The intensity of the Will-Aura grew with proximity to Gravis, so a giant crater also started forming. It looked like a humongous, invisible bowl pressed into the earth.

It grew increasingly harder for the beast to move, and soon, it became impossible. It could only look with scared eyes at its approaching doom. Gravis readied his saber for a mighty swing and infused it with 80% of his Energy.

BOOOOOOOM!

Gravis slammed his saber into the head of the beast, and the surroundings erupted in an explosion of dirt and lightning. Gravis had been falling with terminal velocity with his very heavy body, which generated a ridiculous amount of force. Like a meteor, he created an even larger crater with his impact. The shockwave uprooted many trees, and the earth blasted away in a wave.

Gravis climbed out of his hole and looked at the creature, and he saw its headless body lying before the hole. The missing head was blasted onto the surroundings. Seeing that the creature was dead, Gravis absorbed its Energy with the Heaven's Balance Cultivation Technique.

"What?" he exclaimed in shock. What did he feel? This high-grade Energy Beast only gave him like 5% of Energy. That was basically negligible. After Gravis accepted that fact, he could only sigh. "No wonder you don't bother to hide those beasts anymore. They give nearly no Energy and no tempering," Gravis spoke.

'Well, at least now I know that killing beasts is nearly useless to me right now. So, that contingency plan fell through,' Gravis thought with another sigh. The whole scamming idea seemed to be the only practical way forward. 'Well, at least I can get something from killing those.'

Gravis searched around in the surroundings and quickly found a fist-sized Beast Core. He walked over and pocketed it. 'I can probably sell that.' Then he turned to Skye. "You can have the beast."

Skye had been quite impressed by Gravis' attack. It still had some trouble fighting other high-grade Energy Beasts, but Gravis had instantly killed it in one attack. Now, it truly felt the distance between Gravis and it. Instead of getting demotivated, its hunger for power only increased. Without waiting, it flew down and started devouring the beast. The corpse was rather big, so that would take a while.

After Skye had its fill, around another half remained of the corpse. Skye gestured to Gravis to jump onto its back, and he complied. Then, it grabbed the remaining half and continued flying to the Earth Guild. It could always eat the other half later.

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 158: Introspection

Some hours later, Skye and Gravis reached their destination. Gravis was confused because he saw nothing but a gigantic mountain. Even at their height of several kilometers, he could still not see the top of the mountain. There were no buildings or anything on that mountain, but the map clearly stated that this was where the Earth Guild should be.

Gravis looked up, trying to see the top, but he doubted that the Earth Guild would be built that high up. He could understand building a guild at the height of nearly ten kilometers if it was for the Wind Guild, but for the Earth Guild? Gravis doubted that. "Skye, fly lower," he said, and they started descending. The Earth Guild had to be here somewhere.

They flew along the base of the mountain, not seeing anything unusual for a long while. After they had circled around a quarter of the mountain, which had been a distance of many kilometers, Gravis finally found something. He saw a big cave entrance, over a hundred meters tall. Gravis would've ignored such an entrance if it weren't for the multiple guards in front of it. "So, they're inside a cave."

The guards were around two meters tall and wore earthen-yellow robes. They carried long lances and heavy tower-shields. The shields were about as big as the guards themselves. Gravis imagined fighting someone from the Earth Guild with comparable strength to himself and concluded that it would be frustrating to fight someone like that.

They were probably able to wield those shields skillfully. Even if Gravis' physical power were stronger than theirs, they would still be able to stop him from overwhelming them with attacks. On top of that, their earth element was incredibly good in increasing their physical power.

The enemy would only need to commit a single mistake, and the disciples of the Earth Guild would unleash a devastating counter. Gravis did not doubt the ability of those disciples to stall a fight long enough for their opponent to grow impatient. 'It's an unusual way to fight, but I can see its effectiveness.'

Gravis already noted several key-points of the Earth Guild. The disciples were patient and steadfast. If something encroached on their territory, they would block it with all their might. Gravis guessed that they were probably not very aggressive. Their disposition seemed similar to lightning, actually.

Lightning also didn't do anything until something encroached upon its territory. In that sense, earth and lightning were similar. The difference, though, was that as soon something came too close to lightning, it would attack with all its might to destroy the offender, while earth would stay immovable.

As Gravis saw other elements, he also learned more about lightning. Gravis guessed that the disposition of lightning could be summarized by taking half of the disposition of earth and half of fire. Lightning would act like earth, but when something came too close, it would act like fire. "Huh, this actually sounds like me," Gravis muttered to himself.

Gravis fell into deeper thought. 'Was I always like this?' he asked himself. 'I don't think so. A year ago, when I just came to this world, I let all those bandits escape that tried to stop me. I mean, later, I learned that those bandits aren't actually such bad people, but I didn't know that at the time.'

Gravis continued thinking. 'On top of that, I also gave second chances to that one youngster from the waterfall and the Lightning Guild disciples. That doesn't seem to fit lightning.'

Suddenly, Gravis' eyes widened. 'Wait a minute! I remember that when I fought those disciples from the Lightning Guild that my lightning didn't work properly. My Destruction Lightning of the third level should have been able to kill a lightning disciple of the fourth level. I think I hit two of their disciples with my lightning, but surprisingly, they survived without getting injured majorly.'

Gravis felt like he was onto something. 'At that time, I wondered why my lightning didn't work that well, but I quickly forgot because I had bigger things to worry about. Maybe my disposition was the reason why my lightning didn't work as expected.'

Gravis remembered the Lightning Codex. 'The Lightning Codex said that a disposition similar to the chosen element was one of the most important things. If the disposition didn't fit, the element would be weaker and harder to control. When those disciples fought me, I didn't genuinely want to kill them, even though they tried to kill me. That was not how lightning works. So that's the reason why my lightning didn't work back then.'

Gravis rubbed his chin in deep thought. Skye had been hovering above the cave's entrance for several minutes now, unsure of what it should do. It had noticed that Gravis fell into deep thought, so it kept quiet. It trusted in Gravis' decision.

The Earth Guild's disciples had also noticed Skye for quite a while. In the beginning, they had been impressed by such a gigantic bird. Skye had a wingspan of about 100 meters, casting a dominating shadow across the ground. The guards had seen several beasts roaming around the nearby surroundings, but this one was the most imposing of all.

When they saw that the bird only hovered a couple of hundred meters above their cave entrance for a long while, they grew nervous. They were both at the eighth level of Energy Gathering, and they could feel the danger emanating from Skye. If it decided to attack, they would have to retreat into the guild and get help. After Skye had remained for a full 30 seconds, one guard immediately fled into the guild to get backup. The risk was too high. The other guard retreated a little so that he stood inside the cave.

After some more seconds, Gravis shook his head. 'It actually doesn't matter what happened back then. I have reaffirmed my path, and I accept what I would become. Sometimes, I have to do the wrong thing to increase my power. I knew it back then, but my emotions didn't accept it. With my new Will-Aura, I am also able to accept that path emotionally.' Gravis' eyes narrowed, and they emanated a cold light. 'I will achieve my goal, even if I have to create a mountain of corpses.'

"Skye, let's go down," said Gravis.

Skye cawed in affirmation and landed near the cave. The guard grew nervous, but he remained stalwart. If the bird decided to attack, he would risk his life to gain time for his guild to answer accordingly.

Such was the way of the Earth Guild.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 159: Earth's Disposition

The remaining guard grew more nervous as Skye landed, but he would stand his ground. The guild had to be defended! He readied his lance and shield, preparing himself for his death.

Plonk!

Instead, a person jumped down from the bird's back and landed. When the guard saw this, he took a deep breath of relief. This bird was only the mount of someone. That meant that it wouldn't attack. Yet, he was still impressed by it. How powerful would someone have to be to have a high-grade Energy Beast mount? Only someone in the Spirit Forming Realm or someone with a relative in that Realm would have such a powerful mount. The guard wondered who came.

Gravis walked forward, dusting off some dirt from his white-gold robes. By now, he had gotten used to wearing those, even though he still wanted to change to his old style. Yet, he had to wait for a couple more days. In the public's eyes, he was still part of the Heaven Sect, and he should look that way.

The guard noticed Gravis get-up and realized who had arrived. He was quite surprised because he didn't know why someone from the Heaven Sect would come here. The disciples of the Earth Guild were always respectful and never aggressive. It was supremely rare that anyone from the Heaven Sect would come. It was not in the earth disciples' nature to commit atrocities.

When Gravis walked closer, the guard hit the floor with his lance. "Welcome, Heavenborn!" he shouted with respect.

Gravis looked at him and nodded nonchalantly. "Hello. I came to visit the Earth Guild," he explained.

The guard nodded. "Good. Please follow me," said the guard as he started walking into the cave. Gravis followed.

They walked for a couple of minutes until they saw several people at the ninth level of Energy Gathering charging towards them. Gravis was not sure what this was about, but the guard knew. One of the new arrivals, who was still at the eighth level, looked at the guard in surprise. "Why are you here?" he asked loudly.

The guard hit the ground with his lance again, making them stop. "The bird outside is the Heavenborn's mount. There is no danger," he reported with a powerful voice.

The eyes of the guard at the eighth level revealed some recognition and relief, while the others looked a bit annoyed. They had been called for nothing. Yet, surprisingly, they didn't give voice to their discontent, even though the two guards were weaker than them. One of the guards stepped forward. "That's good! Even though it was a false alarm, you still did well in acting cautiously. Don't let this false alarm give you a false sense of security!" he also shouted imposingly.

Gravis found it rather funny. Everyone from the Earth Guild talked slowly with a lot of impact behind their voices. He wondered if everyone was like that. Another thing that surprised him was the reaction of the new arrivals. This was not the reaction that Gravis had expected from them.

If this happened in the Wind Guild, the disciples would probably groan in annoyance and whine about the situation. If this happened in the Fire Guild, they would probably aggressively insult those guards or even beat them up. The Lightning Guild would probably chew them out for judging the situation incorrectly. Yet, the disciples from the Earth Guild even praised the guards for the false alarm. That was new to Gravis.

By now, Gravis had seen the disposition of four different guilds, and they all acted very differently. The Lightning Guild was disciplined, correct, and defensive. The Wind Guild was unfettered, free, and casual. The Fire Guild was aggressive, uncensored, and hot-blooded. The Earth Guild was respectful, stalwart, and taciturn. Gravis wondered how the other guilds were. He still hadn't met the Light Guild, Darkness Guild, and Water Guild.

The leader of the stronger guards looked at Gravis. "Heavenborn, welcome to our Earth Guild," he, basically, declared imposingly. "What has brought you here?"

Gravis only smiled a little. It was kind of weird talking to someone this serious while not readying up for a battle. "I am not here on official business," he waved his hand dismissively. "I am only here to look around."

The guards were somewhat surprised but also relieved. No one of their brothers would die today. Yet, it was also weird that Gravis just came for a visit. The Earth Guild might not be far away from the Heaven Sect, but that was only according to the map of the whole Middle-Continent. It would still take over a week for someone to travel here. He had traveled for a cumulative of two weeks just to visit? That was weird.

The guard hit the ground again with his lance. "Then, we are happy to welcome you, Heavenborn," he shouted again. Gravis reflexively bored one of his fingers into his right ear due to the loudness of his voice. "I shall lead you around our home. You all," he turned to the others, "return to your posts!"

Multiple lances hit the floor, creating a loud and imposing sound, and they all walked off to their previous positions. 'Fuck, why are they so loud?' Gravis thought in annoyance. His decision to not scam the Earth Guild was basically already set in stone. They seemed respectful, direct, and honest, even though they were on the loud side. There surely were other guilds, with a less pleasing disposition. Yet, since he was already here, he might as well look around.

The leader of the guards walked off, and Gravis followed. "We pride ourselves in our physical strength and our willpower!" the leader started explaining loudly. "Our Earth Guild believes that only a strong will can bring them to power. A strong will includes the persistence in following your path, even if everyone else thinks it's wrong!"

Gravis was interested in the topic. "Yet, do you not learn from your path forward? Wouldn't that change your beliefs?" Gravis asked.

The expression of the leader of the guards didn't change. "If your beliefs change, then your will was not powerful enough. In that case, you must start from the beginning again. Your will must be forged so that no one can sway your path!" the disciple explained.

Gravis was a little unsure. "What do you mean with starting again from the beginning?" he asked.

The expression of the leader still didn't change. It seemed like nothing could change his serious look. "You must recultivate from the beginning of the major realm you are currently in."

Gravis' eyes widened. "Wait a minute," he stopped walking. "If someone's will and beliefs are swayed, you will cripple his cultivation? Did I get that right?" he asked for confirmation. This was madness!

The leader also stopped and turned to Gravis. "That is correct! Your will defines your way, and if you can't keep hold of your will, you will not rise!" he explained in the same tone as previously. "Progressing with a broken will will not allow you to reach the peak! Our every step must be secure, with an unshaken foundation! Only then can we progress securely!"

'Interesting,' thought Gravis. 'In other guilds, changing one's beliefs is a sign of growth. It is being seen as someone looking from a higher place than previously and understanding the world in a more harmonious way. It symbolizes flexibility and adaptability. Yet, in the Earth Guild, it is being seen as a weakness. Though, I can understand why. Flexibility and adaptability are not attributes that earth and stone have, normally. I can see how that would impact the control of their element.'

"What do you think about the disposition of other guilds?" asked Gravis. He wondered if the Earth Guild was looking down on changing dispositions because of their ideology.

"The others have their way, and we have our way!" shouted the earth disciple. "We have many different beliefs in our own guild, and even though we disagree with them, they are valid ways! It is unimportant if your belief is wrong or right! It is only important that you remain stalwart! With a powerful enough will, you can transform a false way into a correct way! Everyone has their path forward, and that is how it should be!"

Gravis squinted his eyes in interest. 'Interesting. Even though they don't change themselves, they still accept other ideologies. I guess I found another aspect of the earth disciples' disposition. Just like earth, they are all-encompassing and accepting of all life with their different paths.'

Gravis nodded a little to show his respect. "Thank you for explaining," he said and continued walking. The disciple also nodded and continued to lead the way. After several minutes, they reached a part of the cave where it suddenly widened into a large space.

Now, Gravis could see the whole Earth Guild.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 160: What?

Gravis was quite surprised by what he saw because the whole Earth Guild was built inside the mountain. The sheer size of the gigantic cave made it seem like the whole mountain was carved out until only the outer shell remained. Of course, that wasn't true. Gravis had seen how big the mountain was, and there was still a lot of solid stone left. Yet, didn't they worry that the mountain could collapse on top of their heads?

He could see a lot of buildings carved out of the stone and a myriad of caves at the walls. Judging by the number of caves, Gravis guessed that those were the personal caves of the disciples. There were literally thousands. But one thing hit Gravis even harder than the size of the Earth Guild.

A cacophony of noise assaulted Gravis. He heard the loud clanking of weapons on stone and a lot of imposing voices. The voices all turned into an unintelligible mess of shouts, annoying Gravis. Though he couldn't understand what the voices were saying, he felt no aggression coming from them. They were just really loud.

Gravis looked over to the disciple, who had continued walking by now. Gravis quickly caught up and followed him. The closer they got, the louder everything got. Gravis slowly grew annoyed by all the noise, but there was no way around that. The Earth Guild was respectful, and Gravis just had to deal with all the noise.

As they got closer, Gravis could discern the voices of nearby speakers. He was quite surprised by the content of their dialogue. Most of them were discussing their ways and philosophy. They were discussing the attributes of earth and their beliefs associated with it.

Though they all discussed loudly with each other, they all remained unaggressive and respectful. They were only arguing about why they believe their way to be true, and not why the belief of others was false.

"Hey, you two," shouted the leading guard at the two discussing people. "Move to the discussion hall!" he ordered them. The two disciples looked at the new arrival, but when they saw him, they only nodded and left, moving to a big building.

Gravis watched them leave and then turned to the guard that accompanied him. "What's that all about?" he asked.

The expression of the guard, obviously, didn't change. "Discussing your beliefs outside of the discussion hall is forbidden!" he stated loudly. "If we allowed everyone to discuss their beliefs openly, the guild would become noisy!"

Gravis looked in disbelief at the disciple. 'So, right now, it's not noisy?' he thought. Gravis was constantly under the assault of clanking weapons and shouting people. How was this not noisy? Gravis only remained silent.

Instead of walking more, the guard turned to Gravis. "Do you have any special destination in mind?" he asked Gravis.

Originally, Gravis intended to look around some more, but this noise was grating on his nerves. He could barely hear his own thoughts. If this noise were only temporary, he wouldn't mind, but it was constant without pause.

Due to the Energy in his mind, he already had a constant headache to deal with, so he didn't need another one on top of it. He could tune out the noise with his will, but that would be exhausting if he did that over a longer period.

Right now, Gravis wanted to leave. Yes, the Earth Guild was interesting, but he had already learned enough from the accompanying guard. He wouldn't scam those people. There were other, more fitting targets for that.

"I have a Beast Core of a high-grade Energy Beast with me. Where can I exchange that?" he asked.

"What?" asked the guard.

"I said that I have a Beast Core that I'd like to exchange!" Gravis shouted louder, thinking he hadn't heard him due to the noise.

The guard looked at Gravis with annoyance. "I heard you! You don't need to shout!" he, ironically, shouted. "I was just surprised that it came from a high-grade Energy Beast! You must be strong!"

Gravis rubbed the bridge of his nose to relieve some stress. 'I don't need to shout? Do you not hear your surroundings!?' he thought in annoyance. Gravis took a deep breath to calm down. "Yes, I killed it on the way. Where can I exchange it?" he asked.

The guard looked at him more closely. "What did you say?" he asked.

"I said, I killed it on the way to here!" Gravis shouted.

The guard looked at Gravis unpleasantly. "I heard what you said! You shouldn't shout this loudly while in public! It's bad manners!" he, of course, shouted.

One of Gravis' eyelids twitched in suppressed rage. 'This fucking guy...'

Gravis narrowed his eyes. "Then why did you ask!?" Gravis asked with clear annoyance in his voice. This guy was getting on his nerves more than anyone he had ever met.

"I was only surprised because you made it sound like you killed it alone!" he shouted back, which made Gravis even angrier. This guy said that Gravis shouldn't shout, yet he was shouting louder than him.

"Yes, I killed it by myself. Where can I exchange the Beast Core?" he asked again.

The guard narrowed his eyes and looked at Gravis very closely. After some seconds of intense staring, he finally spoke. "What?"

"Alright, fuck that! I'm leaving!" Gravis shouted and turned around. He used his physical strength to run back to the entrance.

"No need to curse!" came the shout of the guard from behind Gravis.

Gravis only gritted his teeth. 'Calm down! They are nice guys. Don't do something you'll regret, Gravis,' he thought to himself. 'Be the bigger man and just leave. No need to make a scene.'

"Goodbye, Heavenborn!" he heard an imposing shout from his previous location.

Gravis wasn't sure, but he thought that he heard a slight amount of happiness in that voice. 'Did that bastard do this on purpose?' he thought but decided to ignore it. "Bye," he shouted back.

"What?" he heard again and immediately stopped.

This time he had definitely heard the glee in the voice. That bastard was doing this on purpose! Of course, the Earth Guild wouldn't be happy about someone of the Heaven Sect being in their guild. They had to remain respectful, but no one liked the Heaven Sect. It was the hegemon of this world, and it oppressed everyone under its rule. They might not have the ability to go against the Heaven Sect, but they could annoy them.

Gravis turned back to the Earth Guild and looked a little closer. Now, he saw several weird things. Most of the disciples had gathered at a spot closer to where Gravis previously was. The other regions weren't as populated, and therefore, probably also quieter. There, he also noticed some people speaking with a more hushed body language. 'Did they orchestrate this whole thing?' Gravis thought.

Gravis grew a little angry when he realized that this whole thing was orchestrated just to make him feel annoyed. He narrowed his eyes but still left. If he made a scene inside the Earth Guild, the upper echelon may come and detain him until Aion arrived. In their mind, that would be a humiliation for the Heaven Sect. Of course, Aion wouldn't come to get Gravis, but to kill him. So, for that reason, Gravis retreated for now.

Even though they annoyed the shit out of him, there may still be worse guilds out there. 'You just went up a place on my list. I'll take a look at the Darkness Guild, and if they are not worse than you, I'll return here!'

Gravis quickly left the cave and jumped on the back of Skye. Skye was surprised that Gravis was already back but didn't mind. Without saying goodbye to the guard, they both shot off into the distance.

The Darkness Guild was next, and Gravis had a belly-full of annoyance inside him.

They better not be worse than the Earth Guild!