

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 26: Mission Completion

The door of the Hunting Guild was kicked open, and Gravis walked in while pulling the Forest Fiend's corpse by its leg. Not a lot of blood flowed out since he had dragged it all the way here like that. The people at the tables looked at Gravis with some astonishment and also a little disgust.

The lady behind the counter looked at Gravis with a shocked look in her eyes. She hadn't thought that Gravis would actually successfully finish this hunt. On top of that, it looked like Gravis wasn't even injured. Hell, he didn't even seem exhausted!

Gravis dragged the corpse to the counter, but the lady immediately shouted. "What are you doing? Don't you see that people are eating here?" She gestured to the tables where multiple people had stopped eating with looks of disgust. "Get outside and go to the bounty entrance beside the main entrance!" she commanded.

Gravis furrowed his brows. "Why didn't you tell me?" he asked simply.

The lady went red in the face. She hadn't even entertained the thought that Gravis might be successful in his hunt, so she didn't bother telling him. "That doesn't matter! Go to the side entrance!" she commanded again.

Gravis frowned, but pulled the corpse outside and went to the bounty entrance. The bounty entrance was multiple times bigger than the main entrance. Probably, so even big bodies could fit. He pulled it into the bounty entrance, where he could see some men sitting at a table, playing a card game.

The men heard the scraping of the corpse on the ground and looked at Gravis. Seeing the body, they stood up. "Place it on the table," one of the guys said, as he started putting on an apron and gloves.

Gravis saw a big, metallic table in the middle of the room. Some blood remained on the table, but Gravis didn't care. He hoisted the corpse with one hand and let it slam onto the table. The eyes of the men widened. This guy had some good strength!

They quickly inspected the corpse. Its cause of death couldn't be inferred by just taking one look. It took some time until they noticed a deep groove on the top of its head. One

of them opened it a little wider and saw that half the brain was cut. So, this was the cause of death.

One of the guys whistled in astonishment. "Wow, that's good work, newbie. The corpse is basically without any injury. Let me just check the price of the corpse, and I'll give you your spoils. Oh right! Do you want the reward as materials or currency?" The man asked.

"Money," Gravis stated.

"Well, okay. Gimme a sec," the man said and walked over to one of the tables. He took out a thick catalog and looked through it. After about a minute, he closed it again and walked over to Gravis. He took off the thickest sack of money from his belt and searched through it. After a while, he had taken out some silver coins and recounted them again.

"Alright, that's 45 silver coins for you," the man said as he handed Gravis the coins. Gravis took them but soon found a problem.

"Hey, can you sell me one of those purses for a silver coin?" Gravis asked, pointing at the sacks of money on the guy's belt.

The guy looked surprised but quickly nodded. "Sure! Here, take this one," he said as he emptied a half-filled sack into another one. He gave the empty sack to Gravis and took his silver coin, obviously happy with this trade.

Gravis emptied his silver coins into his new purse, nodded to the man, and walked out. When he walked back into the Hunting Guild, through the main entrance this time, he saw someone cleaning the floor of the little blood the corpse spilled. He ignored the man and walked to the counter lady again.

"So, where's my payment?" he asked directly.

The lady harrumphed. "Can't you youngsters learn some patience? We have to wait for the report from the bounty hall." She gestured to the wall of the bar. Behind that wall, was the room where Gravis just left the corpse. "It should take about five minutes."

Gravis frowned but nodded. Some things couldn't be rushed, so he simply leaned against a wall and waited, his eyes closed. The hunters looked at him weirdly. They saw that Gravis didn't engage in any brotherly conversation with them at the table. He was a young guy, so that was unusual. Young men would quickly start to brag about their kill or simply just unwind by releasing their happiness with some alcohol.

Instead, they felt like Gravis was releasing an aura of coldness and rejection. It seemed like, he didn't want to be disturbed. Some of them stood up and tried to make conversation, but Gravis always answered plainly, with as few words as possible. After a while, the hunters stopped trying. He was obviously an anti-social person.

About four minutes after he talked with the lady, one of the men from the bounty entrance came in and gave the lady a piece of paper. "Hey, newbie! Come over here," she commanded.

Gravis walked over and looked at her. The lady didn't know why, but for some reason, she really didn't like Gravis. "Show me your weapon!"

Gravis frowned but complied. Being direct was one thing, but she obviously acted hostile towards him. He showed her his saber. There was some blood on the saber, but not much. The lady looked at the saber, then at the paper, then again at the saber, and the paper again.

"Alright. Your mission's done." She then took out an emblem made of metal and a sack filled with coins. "This is your senior hunter emblem. You need to present it if you want to accept missions," she explained and gestured toward the big notice board at the end of the hall. "That's the mission board. Every mission regarding ferocious beasts is listed there."

Then, she gestured at a long list on one side of the hall. "That's the bounty list. It shows you, on average, how much a corpse is worth. You can bring any slain ferocious beast into the bounty hall. They will evaluate the grade of your corpse and compare it to the current price. So, prices may vary since the bounty list only shows the general average."

"Missions have an additional monetary reward compared to bounties, but your slain beasts are still your property." She then pointed at the sack of coins. "On average, a mission for killing a ferocious beast gives a hunter around 50 silver coins, yet it may vary according to the strength of the monster. Trial missions are only worth around a third of the price of an actual mission since we can't guarantee the kill on the first attempt. You get 20 silver coins for this mission."

"When someone commissions a mission, we first send scouts to classify, which monster is stalking the place. We can't trust amateurs to correctly identify a monster, so we always verify with our own eyes, what kind of monster the target of a mission is. So, the information is pretty accurate. When you want to take on a specific mission, pull down the notice, and bring it to me together with your emblem. Though, you have to pay a contract fee when accepting a mission. The fee counts as insurance if you fail the mission. The contract fee is about 25% of the reward. If you complete the mission, you get the fee back."

She explained everything in a very natural and practiced manner. Gravis took the coins and added them to his purse. After that, Gravis did some calculations. With luck, he could hunt two ferocious beasts per day, but he would need about an average of eight to buy a Skin-Pill, including the bounty. Gravis knew that this was the lower world and that the pills here wouldn't be like the pills in his world. He would probably need more than one.

The entrance exams for the Elemental Guilds would be in around 90 days. He wasn't sure if just hunting ferocious beasts was enough. He needed more money.

"Are there missions for hunting low-grade demonic beasts?" He asked, and the hall went silent.

Chapter 27: Intimidation

When everyone heard that Gravis wanted to fight a low-grade demonic beast, they fell silent. Some looked shocked, some amused, and others looked on in disdain. The new guy had just killed a ferocious beast, and now thought he could pierce the heavens. The new guy didn't talk to others because he was antisocial, but because he obviously had an inflated ego.

The lady behind the counter snorted. "You fought a ferocious beast and already think you can fight a demonic one? Don't make me laugh! First, you should kill some more ferocious beasts. Then, you have to find a hunting team that is capable and willing to hunt a demonic beast. You're a newbie, so you have to prove yourself first before others will accept you. Also, can you even afford the contracting fee?" the lady explained in arrogance.

Gravis' eyes narrowed. The first couple of points were no problem, but the contracting fee was an issue. "How much is the contracting fee?" He asked.

"Between two to three gold on average," the lady continued.

Two to three gold. So, the reward would be around ten gold. On top of that, there was an additional bounty reward. Gravis could probably buy two Skin-Pills with that money. The issue was the contracting fee. Gravis wished that he had taken the money from the bandits he had killed in the village. Yet, he forgot looting them because of his embarrassment.

"Alright, I'll get the money, and I'll come again," Gravis said as he walked towards the mission board. The hunters shook their heads in helplessness. This guy couldn't be helped.

Gravis looked at the mission board and took some of them down. "Hey! You can only take one notice at a time!" Gravis heard the lady shout from behind. He frowned again and put the notices back until he only had one. He took the closest one to the Hunter's guild and walked back to the counter. He gently put the notice down and then slammed his emblem into the table.

The table broke in the middle, while his emblem was dented. Everyone in the hall shut up and looked over in shock. It was not easy breaking this table! The table was very thick and very hard.

Gravis had enough! He was pissed from continually being underestimated, so he made a show of force to shut the people up. Gravis hadn't let go of his emblem yet, as he looked at the lady at the counter.

She looked at Gravis with a white face and an open mouth. Then, she clenched her teeth. "Hey, you gotta-"but she immediately stopped as she looked into Gravis' eyes. He had released his Will-Aura, and she felt like death was about to come. She whitened further and took some steps back, deep fear showing in her eyes.

The others watched and gulped in nervousness. Some seconds went by until Gravis finally spoke. "What are you waiting for? Register the mission," he said while looking at the lady with a death-stare. He let go of the emblem, and the lady could see that its form had changed from a plate to a metal stick. She took a deep breath. The emblem was made of solid metal!

Slowly, she walked forward and carefully took the notice, as well as the metal stick emblem. She had never gone through a registration that quickly in her life. After she finished, she placed the 'emblem' and the notice back in front of Gravis.

Gravis took the emblem and the notice and walked out of the Hunting Guild without another word. After he left, everyone could finally breathe again. They unanimously decided not to come into contact with that madman. The cold aura they felt couldn't possibly come from a nice guy. The hunters tried to get back to talking with their friends and colleagues, but the carefree atmosphere was destroyed.

On the next day, at around evening, Gravis came back to the Hunting Guild. He carried a corpse to the bounty room and received his bounty, as well as the mission reward. When he had walked into the main hall, the atmosphere changed, and no one looked at him. Everyone was trying to be as silent as possible. Yet, the lady was forced to interact with Gravis. She finished everything professionally and quickly.

When he got his reward, Gravis walked to the notice board again, looked for a specific notice, tore it down, and registered it. Then he walked out and returned, not even a minute later, with the corpse of the mission's target. He had remembered the notices and hunted the beasts anyway. He had hidden the bodies in the nearby forest.

The freshly rejuvenated atmosphere broke again when Gravis came back. He quickly took his reward and did the same thing another time. After just another minute, he had collected his third reward for the day. But, this time, after getting his reward, he didn't leave again.

"I should have enough gold for a low-grade demonic beast now," he stated flatly.

The lady didn't comment and took some papers out from below the counter. She slowly moved them towards Gravis and pulled her hands back. Gravis looked at them and quickly chose his target. He put the notice, his metal stick emblem, as well as two gold and 50 silver before the lady. Every time she saw the emblem, a cold shiver ran down her spine. She pulled the other papers back and finished the registration, being especially careful with the money.

After that, he left the hall without a comment. As he left, the hunters began to discuss. They talked about Gravis' chances of returning alive. Most thought he would die. Some thought he would fail but return alive. Only a few thought that he would succeed.

Gravis had the choice between three targets. A snake, a boar, and a tiger. He had chosen the tiger. The main reason was that a tiger would always be considered a king among beasts. For someone inexperienced, this sounded like the hardest one. Yet, in Gravis' eyes, this was probably the easiest one. A tiger was king and would not have many enemies. While the tiger might be physically stronger than the other two, it would probably have a weaker will due to its lack of rivals.

The tiger had inhabited a hill near a village. The farmers initially used the hill as grassing ground, but stopped, for obvious reasons. The tiger was big and had a big appetite. The farmers created a union where they rotated, whose cow would be sacrificed. This situation had been going on for months. The whole village had to pitch in to get enough money for the Hunting Guild.

There were not many hunting parties willing to take on demonic beasts. While the reward was high, the risk was also high. They never left with less than ten people, and they would always return with fewer people than before. The reward would have to be split, too.

Gravis arrived at the village in a couple of hours and immediately saw the hill, as well as the tiger resting on it. The tiger didn't care about its surroundings since nothing was willing to provoke it. Gravis saw a small hill of bones lying behind the tiger.

The tiger itself was two meters tall, around as big as the lion he fought in the third practical test. Its claws were nearly as long as an arm, and its mouth looked imposing and dangerous. Its muscles bulged from its body at the shoulders, while its deep breath could be heard from several meters distance.

Yet, instead of being intimidated, Gravis was happy about the tiger's imposingness. The more imposing it looked the fewer enemies would be willing to attack it. When he heard that the tiger was lying on a hill at some village for a couple of months, he knew that the tiger had no ambition to become stronger.

This was precisely the opponent he needed.

Chapter 28: Tiger

Gravis slowly walked closer, but the tiger didn't react. The tiger seemed to feel completely safe in its surroundings, like a king on his throne. Gravis slowly climbed up the hill, getting closer to the tiger. The tiger still didn't react. When Gravis was only ten meters away, it slowly opened its eyes, looked at Gravis, and just grumbled a little.

The whole nearby village could see the hill. Some kids had noticed that Gravis was walking to the tiger and called their parents. The parents called other adults, and soon, the whole village was watching Gravis getting closer to the tiger. The parents quickly protected the eyes of their children. They didn't want the kids to see a suicidal fool getting mauled.

The tiger had just eaten, so it was too lazy to stand up right now. A low grumble would surely scare that puny human away. The tiger closed its eyes again to sleep. Suddenly, the tiger heard that the footsteps became faster and heavier, and it quickly opened its eyes again. Sadly, it was too late. A saber stabbed into the tiger's left eye, completely destroying it.

The tiger roared, jumped up, and tried to hit Gravis with a swipe of one of its claws, but suddenly, the atmosphere changed. The tiger felt like it was fighting an incredibly powerful enemy, while before, the man felt like an average human. The sudden change in feeling made the tiger hesitate.

When Gravis had seen that the tiger would not care about him, even when he was so close to it already, he took the chance to attack. Gravis had not activated his Will-Aura until the tiger was injured. If he activated his Will-Aura earlier, the tiger would never allow such an easy attack to land.

The tiger continued roaring in pain, rage, confusion, and fear. It had never been in this situation before, and it didn't know how to handle it. Was it supposed to attack Gravis? The tiger wasn't sure. The feeling that Gravis gave it was an enormous cold pressure. Should it flee? Then it would have to go back to the wild, where there were stronger beasts than the tiger.

While the tiger continued thinking, Gravis had thought of a battle plan. The next attack would decide the whole direction of the fight. If Gravis attacked its front, the tiger would have two choices. It could bite or swipe with a claw. The tiger was faster than Gravis, so he had to decide his course of action before the tiger started reacting. In some sense, one could say that Gravis could only act based on prediction and not on his opponent's action.

If Gravis decided to slide beneath the tiger and it swiped him, everything would be fine. The fight would take a similar direction to his previous battle with the lion. Yet, if the tiger decided to bite him, it would nearly kill him with a swipe if he slid beneath it. It was a 50/50 in that case. Gravis didn't like those chances and decided against sliding beneath his opponent.

Instead, he started running to the tiger's front. The tiger's instincts kicked in, and it bit towards Gravis. Luckily, Gravis hadn't decided to slide under the tiger. Instead, Gravis started jumping before he was in the tiger's bite range. The bite missed, and Gravis used all his strength to hit the upper side of its snout.

The saber hit the bone of the tiger's snout and broke it. The snout-bones of tigers were very fragile and thin, and a good hit could make them collapse easily. As the tiger jumped back in pain, the bone fragments cut its nose's insides, and a thick stream of blood started flowing out. It could not breathe through its nose anymore and took heavy breaths through its mouth instead.

The fear in the tiger's eyes increased, and slowly, panic began to build. Its rage diminished, and fear gradually replaced it.

Gravis took note of the subtle changes of the tiger and immediately attacked again. If the tiger decided to flee, it would be a hassle to hunt. This was not the cave of the practical test. Escaping was a real possibility that could happen. Everyone knew that winning was always easier than killing because of this.

Gravis saw the fear in the tiger's eyes and took a gamble. When he reached the tiger's front, he started sliding forwards on the floor. Just like he thought, the tiger was too scared of getting its head anywhere near Gravis, so it swiped with its claws. Gravis

easily slid beneath the claws and arrived under the tiger. This time, he had an even better plan than when he fought the lion back then.

Gravis quickly found what he was looking for, raised his saber to the tiger's skin like a razor, and ran it along its underside... right through the middle between its hind legs. The genitals were not protected, and he severed them easily. Gravis didn't remain and left the tiger's underside.

The tiger felt a pain that it had never even imagined before. It seemed like the whole world broke, and all the pain in the world concentrated between its legs. The tiger went insane, screamed, fell to the floor, spasmed, and acted without any thought. It could not create any rational thought at that moment.

The tiger lay on its side, and Gravis quickly ran behind its back. He then jumped up and slid his saber into its ear with all his power. It went in deeply, but Gravis didn't try to push it any deeper. Instead, he immediately jumped away and let the saber stick. In the tiger's current state, it would surely do the rest.

Not disappointing him, when it felt the pain, the tiger raised its leg and tried to push the thing away that was stuck in its ear. Its leg hit the sticking saber with all its strength. Yet, the saber was made of void-stone. Even Orpheus called void-stone "pretty hard". It was absolutely impossible for the tiger to destroy the saber.

So, when the leg hit the saber, instead of breaking, the saber bent and cut out a long trench in the tiger's ear. Flesh got flung out by the saber, like it was a catapult, and the saber flew away. Gravis already predicted what the tiger would do in that situation and quickly retrieved the saber, which had landed close to him.

The tiger was bleeding profusely from its destroyed eye, its nose, from between its legs, and from its ear. Gravis also had lightly scratched the tiger's brain when the saber was in its ears. It was only a matter of time until it died of blood loss.

In a rare moment of clarity, the tiger's remaining eye looked at Gravis, and absolute fear took hold of it. The tiger got up and immediately fled into the distance. If it had done that earlier, Gravis would feel annoyed, but right now, it was already near death. All the blood flowing from its body left an unmissable trail behind, and Gravis just had to calmly run after it.

Even though the tiger was still faster than Gravis, it could not hold out for long. If Gravis just continued following, he would find it sooner or later.

Two male twins with identical swords were walking around the forest. They had heard a big commotion coming from their east. Obviously, a big fight took place, and they wanted to see if they could reap any benefits. One of the parties in the conflict would

probably retreat, heavily injured. If they killed both fighters when they were injured, they could earn a lot of money.

They had not seen who was fighting. Before they had arrived at the location where the fight took place, a heavily bleeding tiger with only one eye came running towards them. "A heavily injured, ferocious beast! It's our lucky day!" one of them shouted towards the other.

They both smiled at each other and charged the tiger with their swords.

Today, they would make a lot of money.

Chapter 29: The Tiger's Death

The twins charged at the approaching tiger and split up. One went to its left, while the other ran to its right. Their attacks were incredibly synchronized. It looked like they were two arms of the same being. At the same time, they both lifted their swords and slashed at the tiger's neck.

BANG!

The tiger swiped, and the twin on the side with the uninjured tiger eye got swatted away like an annoying insect. The poor man smashed through two trees until his body finally stopped. He had tempered skin, but it didn't help him at all. All the bones in his bodies were broken, and multiple organs were turned to mush.

CLANK!

While the tiger killed the man, the other twin had slashed the tiger's neck but bounced off harmlessly. The twin didn't even notice that his brother was already dead. Instead, he felt shocked that he bounced off the tiger like it was a metal wall. There was only a single reason the guy could think of, why this tiger was so hard.

'That's not a ferocious beast. That's a demonic beast!' he screamed in his mind. Just when he realized the danger he was in, a gigantic paw pressed him to the ground. The tiger quickly bit his head off, swallowed, and continued running. It had to get away from that one scary human.

Some seconds later, Gravis arrived at the place and saw the corpses. Gravis sneered. "Wanting to steal my prey, but not having the strength. Idiots!" Yet, Gravis went through

their bodies to collect their weapons and money. The weapons were okay, nothing special. The two men also had about 70 silver together. All in all, it was alright. Together with the weapons, the two men's worth was around the same as a fully intact ferocious beast corpse with a mission.

"This can't even be called luck. It's just some change," Gravis complained and continued following the tiger's trail.

After around ten minutes, Gravis saw the tiger in front of him. It obviously had slowed down due to its injuries. Gravis had long retracted his Will-Aura. He slowly closed in on the tiger, but the tiger didn't notice. When Gravis was close enough, he stabbed his saber into the tiger's behind.

The tiger let out a high yell and tried to dislodge the saber. Gravis had already jumped on the tiger's back and was furiously moving it around. The more blood it lost, the faster it would die.

Right now, it was bleeding from all its orifices. It was bleeding from its mouth, its nose, its ear, its eye, its genitals, and from its behind. Gravis had no other choice. Breaking the tiger's hide was incredibly difficult. There was a reason why only people with tempered muscles could do anything against low-rank demonic beasts. What else could he attack?

The tiger was heavily breathing right now, and its concentration seemed to have weakened too, judging by its constantly defocusing eyes. Gravis didn't get careless and continued stalking the tiger. If it suddenly attacked out of desperation, he could still die. Like this, more minutes passed.

Gravis always kept close to the tiger so it couldn't relax. When its eyelids slowly fluttered, Gravis did a sudden jump forward and stabbed his saber in its remaining eye. The tiger only managed a weak roar of rage and barely lifted its paws. Gravis had long retreated. He watched the tiger and felt some pity for it.

Yet, he shook his head. The tiger had terrorized a village and nearly plundered it of all its animals. If the animals ran out, it would probably attack the villagers. It had to die. Gravis gripped his saber and slashed the side of its body. The tiger couldn't even lift its paws anymore, and Gravis quickly ended its life with another deep stab into one of its eye sockets. The tiger was finally dead.

Gravis sat down and relaxed for some minutes. The fight might have seemed easy, but that was only because Gravis didn't make a wrong prediction. If the tiger hit him even once, he would be the dead one. Without perfect execution, he would have no chance. Yet, this life and death tempering was what he needed. The more trials he passed, the

stronger he would get. Also, while the corpse was not as complete as his other kills, it would still be worth a lot.

Gravis stood up and carried the tiger above his head while running back to the Hunting Guild.

The hunters were drinking merrily when they heard a commotion from the wall. They heard the hunters in the bounty hall being excited. "Hey, do you hear that? Those guys only get that excited when they get a demonic beast. Think Wilfred's team is back from their hunt?" one of the Hunters asked another one.

The other hunter rubbed his chin in thought. "I don't know. They usually take longer to finish their hunts. This seems a little early. Do you think-"

The man couldn't finish his sentence as a blood-drenched Gravis walked through the Hunting Guild's door. The hall went completely silent, and everyone looked at him in shock. He actually came back, and by the looks of it, he didn't even seem injured. As experienced hunters, they could all see that the blood on Gravis was not his own. There were no cuts on his clothing, and he didn't move in an awkward fashion.

A lot of them gulped and realized why the guys over in the bounty hall sounded so excited. He had finished the mission!

Gravis had already received his bounty reward. It was a little less than eight gold. Now, he just had to receive his mission reward. He knew that he couldn't get the reward until someone from the bounty hall gave the lady behind the counter their report. So, he waited.

After a while, someone from the bounty hall sent the report, and Gravis walked to the lady. She seemed shocked that Gravis had returned, but didn't dare to comment about it. She took out the contract fee as well as the reward. In total, Gravis now barely had enough for three Skin-Pills.

Finally, he came closer to tempering his skin!

Chapter 30: A Lesson

Gravis quickly went to the town and bought two Skin-Pills. He wanted to keep some money as a contracting fee for future hunts, so he didn't buy three. When he received

the Skin-Pills, he left the town and went to a nearby river. He didn't want to be disturbed when he was training.

Gravis had learned in his world that external skin training would help in bringing out the best effects of the Skin-Pills. So, he ran along the river until he found a waterfall. Waterfalls could cool the skin and slowly temper it. It was an excellent way to train it.

When Gravis arrived, he saw another person sitting beneath the waterfall. He was a young man in his teens, and he seemed to be also training his skin. Gravis didn't mind since the waterfall was wide enough for multiple people. As Gravis got closer, the youngster opened his eyes and watched Gravis with wary eyes. His hand was slowly moving to his weapon.

Gravis noticed but didn't care. He went to the other side of the waterfall and sat down. The youngster didn't do anything but remained wary of Gravis.

After some minutes, Gravis' emotions fully calmed down, and he began to synchronize with the waterfall. He took out one of the pills and swallowed them. When he ate the pill, Gravis slowly felt a warmth spreading all over his body. The medicinal effects were nourishing his skin.

With his elemental synchronicity, Gravis increased the power of the waterfall above his body. The stronger the tempering, the more effective it would be. He would remain like this until all the nutrients in the pill would be fully absorbed.

When the youngster saw Gravis taking a Skin-Pill, greed shone in his eyes. He had been training for over a year under this waterfall, and he never had the money to buy those expensive pills. If he could steal Gravis' pills, maybe he could fully temper his skin in a matter of days.

The youngster was watching Gravis warily. If he could take him by surprise...

Gravis had his eyes closed, but his connection to the water allowed him to see every change in the youngster's expression. 'Is this another one of your weak enemies, Heaven?' Gravis thought to himself. If the youngster didn't do anything, Gravis wouldn't bother with him. But if the youngster decided to attack him...

The youngster was unsure. On the one hand, he thought of himself as an honorable person. He never attacked anyone out of greed, but on the other hand, a Skin-Pill was just what he needed. Those pills were incredibly expensive. The youngster was wrestling with himself. Should he, or should he not?

Some hours passed where nothing happened. The youngster gritted his teeth, grabbed his weapon, and stood up slowly. He leaned against the stone wall behind the waterfall until he couldn't be seen anymore. Then, he slowly crept closer to Gravis.

He moved until he was behind Gravis, gripping his sword tightly. The youngster couldn't see, but Gravis' eyes had already opened and looked to the front with a sharp look.

The youngster lifted his sword and remained in that position for multiple seconds. He was trying to force himself to attack Gravis, but it was incredibly hard. After a while, Gravis took out the second Skin-Pill, like he didn't notice the youngster behind him. The effects of the first one already ended, and he didn't want to waste more time.

When the youngster saw the second pill, his greed took over, and he slashed down with his sword.

SWOOOOOSH!

The waterfall immediately went wild and pushed the youngster's body into the river below. He couldn't even finish his attack before he was already underwater. He did his best to swim towards the surface, but the currents were pulling him down for some reason. The youngster began to panic and began to swim wildly.

After around a minute, when he was nearly out of air, the currents eased up, and the youngster broke through the surface, taking a huge breath. His panic slowly subsided, and he turned around towards Gravis.

Cold eyes. That was the only thing the youngster saw. Gravis was looking at him with cold eyes from his position under the waterfall. The youngster felt fear and had a distinct feeling that Gravis was responsible for the waterfall's weird behavior. He felt like Gravis was warning him not to do something this foolish again.

The youngster gritted his teeth again. Suddenly, he turned around, swam to the riverbank, and ran towards the town. Gravis looked at the youngster's leaving back and shook his head. Had he not seen how the youngster was always in conflict with his own emotions, he would've killed the youngster. The fact that the youngster was this conflicted, meant that he was not beyond salvation. He hoped this would wake the youngster up.

Gravis continued training under the waterfall and didn't think about the encounter anymore.

About an hour later, Gravis noticed a commotion coming from the river. Four men were walking towards the waterfall. Judging by their armor, two of the men were personal guards. One of them was a middle-aged man in beautiful robes. His muscles bulked

through the robes, and he walked at the front of the group. Behind the three men, Gravis could see the youngster from before.

Gravis' eyes narrowed. He spared the youngster so he may learn from his mistakes and grow. Yet, the youngster returned with reinforcements. Gravis shook his head. 'Seems like I was too naïve,' he thought to himself with regret. He tried to believe in the good of the people, but that was apparently only a dream.

The middle-aged man stopped a couple of meters in front of Gravis, pointed his fingers at him, and shouted. "How dare you! You attacked my-"

"What do you want?" Gravis interrupted the man.

The man felt a little shocked, and one of the guards walked forward. "Insolence! Who do you think you are? You are speaking to-"

"Stop with the bullshit. What do you want?" Gravis interrupted again.

The men gnashed their teeth. Surprisingly, the middle-aged man didn't feel rage, but relief. Obviously, he was here to steal Gravis' wealth and silence him. He initially felt a little bad about doing it, but Gravis' infuriating behavior made it easier for him. He beckoned to his guards, and they ran towards Gravis.

Gravis sighed. It didn't have to be this way. Suddenly, the water in the river went crazy and grabbed the men like a whip. They couldn't even react before they got pulled underwater. The youngster's eyes showed deep panic. 'Why did I do that?'

The surroundings were silent again. Gravis continued training, while the four men were slowly drowning in the river. Gravis felt helpless in this situation. He wanted to spare the youngster, but he realized that the youngster probably wouldn't have changed.

Now that he thought about it, if Gravis were weaker, he would be dead by now. The youngster would've probably made his first human kill, and the next time would be even easier for him. The only reason why Gravis could feel pity right now was because he was multiple times stronger than his opponent. If he were weaker, he would be dead.

Gravis sighed again and shook his head. "The cultivation world really is cruel."

Some hours later, Gravis finished his training and inspected his skin.

"Are you serious?" he shouted towards himself in anger and shock. His skin had only been tempered to about 10%. He had used two pills already! Would he need 18 more pills to temper his skin? Gravis gnashed his teeth. Forneus had said, in one of his lessons, that the stronger the body was, the harder it would be to temper it. Gravis had

had tempered organs and blood for 15 years. He knew that he would need lots of pills, but not THAT many.

Gravis sighed in exasperation, stood up, and ran towards the Hunting Guild.

"Oh, wait!"

Gravis stopped and turned around. The water parted, and he jumped to the four corpses at the bottom. He searched through the bodies and took everything of value.

"About five gold. That's nice. Seems like this guy wasn't some nobody," Gravis said to himself with a grin. He jumped out and ran towards the Hunting Guild.

He needed more money!