

Lightning 321

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 321: Last Trial

The months passed under the constant training. Joyce became progressively more powerful, but she still wasn't ready to face someone two complete Stages above her. Yet, she had made incredible progress, and her Battle-Strength was now on the same level as Manuel.

Nero was also rather impressive. He was only a small bit behind the other two, but he was still very powerful. People like them couldn't even be classified as Ascender's Talents anymore. They were all already beyond that, just like Gravis.

Joyce and Manuel also managed to condense level two Unity Wills. Now, even if they completely stopped tempering themselves, they would still be able to ascend. Their wills were just as powerful as Gravis' will when he had been in the initial Stage of Spirit Forming. This showed their abnormal power.

Sadly, they didn't have Gravis' unique connection to their elements, which made them lack just that little bit of reaching his level. Tempering would also become progressively more difficult after they left the Heaven's Trial.

Due to Gravis fighting a priest and also having his unique Tree Stage, he had a considerable edge in regards to his will. Even if those two had level two Unity Wills already, they wouldn't be able to condense a level three Unity Will in this lower world. There was just not enough tempering for them.

After nine months, the door to the last trial opened. The group looked wordlessly at each other and nodded with motivation. This would be their last trial and also their most difficult one. After that, they would get their reward and leave the Heaven's Trial.

The atmosphere between Gravis and Joyce was awkward. Both knew what the other thought, but none of the two wanted to give word to their feelings. Joyce was romantically interested in Gravis, but she knew that he wouldn't accept her advances.

After the door opened, the group walked through the door and stopped in the small hall. This time, there were four doors in front of them, each door having a big '1' above it. Everyone would need to get through the trial by themselves. The team could no longer fight together.

When they saw this, they sighed. Their paths would split again, and no one knew who would survive this trial. Nero was the first person that went into his trial. He wordlessly entered, not because he didn't care for his friends, but because he trusted in their power. There was no sense in saying goodbye since they would all see each other again shortly.

Manuel had long noticed the awkward air between Joyce and Gravis, so he was the second one to leave. With a wink and a wave, he entered his door. After that, only Gravis and Joyce were left.

"Joyce," Gravis said slowly as he turned to her. Joyce looked back at him with uncertain eyes. "After this trial, I want to talk with you. I think I have a solution that we can both live with," he said. "I'm not sure what you will think of this solution, but I guess that you will be happy with it."

Joyce put her hands to her chest in surprise. "What? Really?" she asked with hope.

Gravis nodded with a smile. "Yes. I've had a long time to think, and I have a solution, but I won't tell you until you manage to overcome the last trial. Take it as a motivation to come out alive," he said. "Get through this, and we might have a future."

Joyce felt her emotions bubble inside her and nodded with a heartfelt smile. "Yes," she said.

Then, she took a deep breath and turned to her door with fiery eyes. "This trial won't stop me!" She turned to Gravis one last time. "Just wait for me!"

BANG!

Joyce charged through the door without a second thought, and like this, Gravis was alone again. Yet, in comparison to all the other times, Gravis didn't feel alone. Right now, he felt like all his companions were fighting with him. They would soon meet each other again.

Gravis took a deep breath. "Nine months in the fourth trial, just one month short of me reaching the Self Stage," he said. "You are probably worried that I would break into the Unity Realm. Then, this trial won't be able to hold me. This last trial is truly your last and ultimate weapon, huh?"

Gravis laughed a little. "It doesn't matter which enemy you send at me. You are not able to send stuff at the Unity Realm at me, so no matter what you send, I will just stomp over it. I really wonder what you have prepared for me."

After Gravis said that, he entered his door.

After around a minute of walking, Gravis felt the air vibrate. He was still inside the hallway, yet the air was already bursting and moving with Energy. Gravis kept watch over his surroundings and narrowed his eyes. "What a powerful Formation Array," he said.

Such movement of the Energy could only come from a powerful Formation Array, and Gravis also felt the complexity. Normally, Gravis was able to discern some functions of a Formation Array based on the movements behind it, but everything that happened right now was way too complex.

Gravis even guessed that the Formation Array surpassed this world's limit. Such complexity shouldn't be possible for a lower world. "You've asked for help from the highest Heaven, huh?" Gravis said. "Something like this is too complex for you. Yet, if the highest Heaven agreed, it's probably not against the rules. Now, I'm interested."

After a couple of minutes of walking, Gravis felt something happen that he thought was absolutely impossible. He even stopped moving when he felt it. He would have never expected that something like this would happen.

"My Karmic Luck is increasing," Gravis said as he looked at the ceiling. "I wonder, why are you suddenly increasing my Karmic Luck? What's your plan?"

Of course, no answer came.

After some seconds, Gravis continued walking, and after walking for some more minutes, he reached a door. He opened the door without waiting and entered.

BANG!

The door closed behind him, and Gravis looked at his new surroundings. Instead of a big arena, like the previous trials, he was inside a light-blue space. He couldn't see a floor, walls, or ceiling. Everything was just blue, like the world went on for infinity.

Yet, this was not what surprised him. There were two doors, other than his own, that were about a kilometer apart from each other. One door, obviously, lead to the core of the Heaven's Trial, while the other had his opponent.

Gravis immediately knew which door the opponent came from. That was because he already saw his opponent standing near the middle of the "arena", his back to one of the doors. Gravis' eyes narrowed as he saw his opponent.

Near the middle of the arena, Gravis watched as his opponent arrived. He had stepped into the arena first, and his opponent had come later. His eyes narrowed as he saw his opponent seeing him.

On one side was a young man with whitish-silver hair and crossed eyes.

On the other side was a young man with whitish-silver hair and crossed eyes.

One had Karmic Luck.

The other didn't.

Both Gravis looked at each other with narrowed eyes.

"So, this is Heaven's great plan," they both said at the same time.

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Chapter 322: Talking to Oneself

Both Gravis looked at each other with narrowed eyes. This could become troublesome. Heaven couldn't create something in the Spirit Forming Realm that could take down Gravis, so it instead went to the highest Heaven to copy Gravis.

The highest Heaven surely had enough knowledge to create a second Gravis from scratch. After all, the highest Heaven was probably also involved in creating his peculiar state. Something like this lower Heaven probably had no idea how his current state worked. Even Gravis himself wasn't sure why he could do the things he could.

BZZZ!

The Gravis with Karmic Luck summoned a Lightning Spear and threw it at the other Gravis. This Gravis only stood there and let the spear hit him.

Whoom!

The spear was absorbed without problems. Then, this Gravis used a Lightning Spear and shot it at the first one. The same spiel repeated, and the Lightning Spear was absorbed.

Both Gravis rubbed their chins in thought. Apparently, both of them were one with lightning, so they couldn't discern the real one with that method.

Whoom!

Both Graves summoned their saber, and both sabers sparkled with lightning. Both of them had a Lightning Crescent saved up. "Even weapons, huh," they both said in thought.

After some seconds, one Gravis looked at the third door and then back to the other one. The other one had the same idea and knew what the first one had planned. They both nodded at each other.

BANG!

Both charged at the third door but didn't use their lightning for acceleration. After they arrived at the third door, they summoned a Lightning Bomb each. Before the unstable Lightning Bombs could explode, they shot their preloaded Lightning Crescents at them.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

An incredibly powerful explosion echoed throughout the nothingness. Such a Lightning Crescent was equal to 400% of Gravis' lightning, and therefore, became the most powerful attack that he could summon.

The explosion reached the size of multiple kilometers, but the blue world just didn't seem to end. They were standing on something but also on nothing, seemingly in the middle of the air, but excluding the doors, there was nothing else. Actually, they weren't even sure if they were even standing on something. The explosion stretched far into the distance and vanished.

Both Graves looked at the door with interest and narrowed their eyes again as they saw that it was undamaged. After a while, they scratched their chins again. "This Formation Array is too powerful for this lower Heaven," the Gravis with Karmic Luck said.

The other nodded. "Using this Formation Array probably takes up a huge amount of Energy. Heaven has sacrificed quite a bit to stop us," he said.

Then, the Graves looked at each other again and approached each other. Both lifted their fists in tandem with serious eyes.

"Rock, paper, scissors!" they shouted and unveiled their hands.

The Gravis with Karmic Luck chose rock, while the Gravis without Karmic Luck chose scissors.

"I'm Gravis A," the Gravis with Karmic Luck said.

"Then I'm Gravis B," the Gravis without Karmic Luck said.

"Isn't it interesting that I won?" Gravis A said. "I think that's the use of Karmic Luck."

Gravis B lifted an eyebrow in mock interest. "I don't need Karmic Luck."

Gravis A laughed a bit. "I know, but it's fun to have it for once. You're just jealous."

Gravis B narrowed his eyes. "I'm not,"

Gravis A smirked. "I know. Even if we had the option to have Karmic Luck, we would probably not choose it. Having no Karmic Luck has worked out quite well up to now."

Gravis B rolled his eyes. "Am I really that annoying to talk to?" he asked.

Gravis A lifted an eyebrow in interest. "Am I?"

Gravis B nodded. "I think so."

Gravis A rubbed his chin in thought. "Maybe I should work on that."

Gravis B shrugged. "Is it really necessary? We don't want to be too close to others," he said.

Gravis A looked unsure. "I guess, but having a skill is better than not having one."

Gravis B sighed. "I guess you're right."

Both were lost in thought, and Gravis A looked at Gravis B. "Huh, I really do get lost in thought sometimes. You look just like you are worried about someone close to you dying."

Gravis B perked up. "Huh, is it really that bad?"

Gravis A nodded. "Yes. You looked incredibly serious like you don't want anyone to talk to you."

Gravis B rubbed his chin again in thought. 'This could become an issue if I need to get close to others in the future,' he thought.

Gravis A pointed at Gravis B. "There! You're doing it again!" he shouted and then sighed while rubbing his temple. "Man, it's challenging to find a conversation with you when you completely space out."

Gravis B lifted an eyebrow and looked at Gravis A. "But aren't we talking right now?"

Gravis A also rubbed his chin now. "I guess we are," he said in thought.

After some seconds, Gravis B shook his head. "Okay, I see what you mean now."

Gravis A cursed under his breath. "We need to work on this," he said.

Gravis B nodded. "We do."

Some more seconds passed. "So, how do we solve this issue?" Gravis B said.

Gravis A thought about this. "There should be something that Heaven wasn't able to copy. I guess that you probably also felt like you just left the hall and went through the corridor. Then, you felt that complex Formation Array, and entered, right?"

Gravis B nodded. "Exactly. But I arrived first in the hall. I guess you probably stopped for a bit because you felt your Karmic Luck increasing."

Gravis A nodded back. "Yes. That's why I came later."

Gravis B narrowed his eyes. "It could be that you are the copy then."

Gravis A continued scratching his chin. "Possible, but Heaven is sly. Even though it has fucked up a bit, it's still really clever. It could be that it gave the real Gravis Karmic Luck to make the other Gravis think that the Gravis with Karmic Luck is a fake."

Gravis B looked back at the door. "Possible. So, it's down to a 50-50 again."

"Well, not exactly," Gravis A said.

Gravis B nodded. "Yes. It's obvious that only one of us can proceed from here. This means that Heaven wants us to fight."

Gravis A continued. "But with our aggressive fighting styles, there is probably a chance of over 90% that we will both die at the same time."

Gravis B ruffled his hair in frustration. "Both of us think that we are the real one, and we both don't want our path to end like this. None of us is willing to sacrifice himself because we both think we are the real one. Yet, if we fight, we will both die most likely."

Gravis A took a deep breath. "This is a really sinister weapon. Heaven is keeping to its rules, but it used our strengths as weaknesses to force us into death. I'm pretty sure that it also won't allow us to reach the Self Stage. There is probably some deadline in place for that."

"I know that. You don't have to state the obvious. I'm you, after all," Gravis B said.

Gravis A looked with furrowed brows at Gravis B. "Am I really that direct? That was kinda rude, you know?"

Gravis B shrugged. "Who cares about rudeness? Politeness is just there to- "

"Shut up. I know that," Gravis A said.

Now, it was Gravis B, who looked at Gravis A with furrowed brows. "Huh, I really am a dick in conversations."

"Yeah, that's what I just said," Gravis A said.

"But you still did it anyway," Gravis B answered.

"To prove it to you," Gravis A said.

Gravis B rolled his eyes. "Come on, as if. You just thought that I was talking down to you, even though you know exactly that I don't."

Gravis A remained silent for a while. Was Gravis B right? Did he get offended because of that?

"Hey, your thinking face is back," Gravis B said.

Gravis A looked at Gravis B with annoyance. Gravis B was constantly interrupting his thinking process, annoying Gravis A to no end.

"Don't look at me like I just killed your friends," Gravis B said with narrowed eyes.

Sparks seemed to appear between their eyes for some time.

Then, both sighed at the same time.

'How do my friends manage to talk to me?' They both thought as they were lost in thought, scratching their chins.

Chapter 323: Equation

"Isn't the thought actually pretty terrifying that one of us thinks that he has existed for 22 years, even though he has not been alive for even a day?" Gravis B said.

They both sat in the middle of the "arena". It was rather hard to determine the middle of this ever-ongoing expanse of nothingness, but they decided that the middle should be where the distance to each door was about the same.

Gravis A nodded. "It really is terrifying," he said. "On top of that, if everything is the same for both the copy and the original, is there even a copy and an original?"

Gravis B rubbed his chin. "Well, one of them has actually lived for longer than the other, so an original should exist," he explained and then lifted a finger. "I think what you meant to say was that one might not be alive or a real human."

Gravis A also scratched his chin. "Yeah, that should be more accurate. One has been birthed by two people, while one has been created by Heaven."

Gravis B continued. "Yet, wasn't it Heaven that gave life to everything in the first place? So, isn't the origin of both of us the same? Is a human created by Heaven less of a human than a human birthed from two people?"

Gravis A furrowed his brows. "I see what you mean. I wonder, is it our memories, soul, and feelings that make a human? Is a life birthed from Heaven worth less than a life birthed from people?"

Gravis B thought for a while. "I don't think so. We both think we are the original, and if our path ends, we will both be just as hurt as the other. Emotions and the will are what makes a life, I think, at least."

Gravis A nodded. "I also think so. Even though I believe I am the original, I would still feel bad if I were to kill you. After all, you are me. This would be the same as killing myself, just without the direct repercussions to my own life."

Gravis B laughed a little. "Isn't that interesting? No matter if one or both of us die, Heaven would have successfully killed me. So, from a certain perspective, Heaven has won."

Gravis A furrowed his brows. "Is that really a win, though? I mean, if one of us survives, he will still be a danger to Heaven."

Gravis B scratched his chin more. "Speaking of," he said, "I wonder, would the copy still live on or just dissipate?"

Gravis A hadn't thought of that and also fell into thought now. "Honestly? I have no idea. It could be that the copy will vanish, but it could also be that the copy lives on, thinking it's the real Gravis."

Gravis B furrowed his brows again. "That actually sounds reasonable. I think the others are facing the same trial right now. If it doesn't matter which one survives, they will most likely survive this trial."

Gravis A nodded. "One of the Joyces will just kill herself for the other one. The Manuels will probably have a fair competition, but I'm unsure about Nero. He should be in a similar situation to us. After all, two attacks with the dagger would easily kill the other one."

Gravis B sighed. "So, this trial is specifically horrible for us because we have such an aggressive fighting style. The chances are incredibly high that both of us would die, which would be the only true way to fail this trial."

Gravis A ruffled his hair. "This is infuriating," he groaned. "We have already seen through the entirety of Heaven's scheme, but we still can't see a way out of this!"

"I know what you mean," Gravis B said as he leaned back. "Are we really forced to kill each other?" he mused.

Gravis B wasn't worried about a sudden attack from Gravis A. After all, Gravis B wouldn't do something like that, which meant that Gravis A thought the same. That was how it was even possible for them to talk to each other like this.

"I wonder," Gravis A said, also leaning back now. "Why didn't Heaven create a copy and modify it slightly so that it would attack? Like this, we would be forced to fight each other."

"What a stupid question," Gravis B said, bored. "You already know the answer, so why ask the question?"

Gravis A rolled his eyes. "I'm just making conversation, dude," he said. "But yes, I know the answer. If Heaven altered the second Gravis, the original Gravis would immediately know that he was the original. All hesitation would leave him."

Gravis B sighed. "Yes. On top of that, if the copy were the one to survive, it would be a completely different Gravis. I mean, Heaven basically has full control over everything in this trial, but at the core, this trial is still meant to temper people. The highest Heaven might have something against something like that happening. You know, directly altering the cultivator."

Gravis A nodded. "To be brutally honest, the highest Heaven hasn't proven to be such a bad guy until now."

Gravis B narrowed his eyes. "Have you already forgotten Stella?" he asked with coldness in his voice.

Gravis A sighed again. "I didn't. I just meant in comparison to this lower Heaven. Yes, the highest Heaven has still done something horrible with Stella, and I won't forgive it for that, but in comparison to this lower Heaven, it's many times more approachable."

Gravis B looked into the "sky" from his laying position. By now, both of them were lying on the floor, beside each other. "But in comparison to this lower Heaven, everything seems more approachable. I don't think that it can be used as a standard for judging others."

Gravis A snorted. "Yeah. What's the point of comparing everything to this lower Heaven, when everything will obviously be better than it?"

"True," Gravis B said.

After that word, a long period of silence emerged. None of the two said anything as they just remained silent, thinking about a way out of this situation.

BZZZ!

A small ball of lightning appeared in Gravis A's hand, and he chucked it over to Gravis B. Gravis B, who hadn't expected something like this, seized with surprise, but the ball of lightning just got harmlessly absorbed.

Gravis A snickered a little from the side when he saw Gravis B jerking up. Gravis B was at first, a bit annoyed, but then sighed. He could understand why that was funny. Seems like Gravis A got him.

BZZZ!

Gravis B threw a Lightning Spear over, but Gravis A didn't even react. "Oh, come on. You know that you can't surprise me with that. After all, I've already used it myself."

"I did it more for myself and less for you," Gravis B said.

"You mean for me?" Gravis A asked with a smirk.

Gravis B snorted. "I guess so."

BZZZZ!

Gravis A chucked another ball, but it got stopped before it could hit Gravis B. The ball harmlessly floated in the sky. "Yet, now you do the same thing again."

Yet, instead of answering, Gravis A looked with interest at the floating ball. "How can you make it hover like that?" he asked.

Gravis B was a bit taken aback by the stupid question. "Because it's lightning, and lightning is me."

Suddenly, both Gravises opened their eyes wide in realization. Then, they looked at each other and laughed loudly in happiness. Then, both of them stood up and looked at each other with grins.

"If Gravis A equals lightning," Gravis A said.

"And Gravis B equals lightning," Gravis B said.

"Then Gravis A equals Gravis B!" they both shouted at the same time as they charged at each other. At the same time, they summoned their sabers and threw them to the side.

BANG!

Both Gravises collided into each other.

Their lightning fused.

Their Spirits touched each other. Feeling that it was just more of itself, the Spirit combined into one, and the Spirit Spaces fused.

Their wills clashed for a bit but then mixed. The compression of the will went from 0.2% to 0.1%.

The lightning doubled. The Spirit doubled. The will doubled. The only thing that didn't double was the body.

The new Spirit and lightning gathered at the touching torsos of the two Gravises, and after some seconds, it randomly entered one of the two bodies.

BANG!

One Gravis opened his eyes, while the other fell over, dead.

"Heaven only allows one of us to survive. Yet, that doesn't mean that one of us has to die. We just have to become one," Gravis said with a smirk. Then, he laughed loudly.

"Thank you, Heaven! You've allowed me to become even more powerful! Not only is my Spirit now incredibly strong, but my lightning has also reached the Tree Stage now. You're too kind," Gravis shouted, performing a mock bow.

Whoop!

Gravis retrieved both sabers. His weapon had just doubled. So, that was nice.

Gravis looked at his trembling Spirit Space. His Spirit Space was way too large right now and had problems staying stable. Yet, Gravis only had to reach the Self Stage to solve that issue.

With a smirk, Gravis looked at the sky again. "You fucked up again, Heaven! You wanted to kill me, yet you increased my strength again. Man, it must suck to be you right now," Gravis shouted while chuckling.

Seeing that no answer came, Gravis entered his Spirit Space and looked at the Spirit Space filled to the brim with lightning.

"Time to reach the Self Stage."

Meanwhile, Heaven was preparing itself for its battle against Gravis. Its secret weapon had failed.

Now, nothing was standing between Heaven and Gravis anymore.

It had to win this fight!

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Chapter 324: Self Stage

Gravis concentrated and went into his own Spirit Space. The size of the Spirit Space had increased by quite a bit due to his fusion with his copy, or was it the fusion with the original? He still wasn't sure if he was the copy or the original, but that didn't matter. There was one real Gravis, and it didn't matter for how long he had been alive. He had his memories, and they were what created him.

Even with the new size of his Spirit Space, everything was still packed with lightning. Just like the first time after he had entered his own Spirit Space in the Tree Stage, it became difficult for him to move around. The lightning was seemingly solid and filled everything.

"Let's start!" Gravis said and then willed for his Spirit to condense. The lightning began to pulse, and the familiar pain reappeared. This time, it was more powerful than ever before. It was nearly as intense as the pain he had felt when he broke into the Spirit Forming Realm.

Yet, Gravis' will was many times more powerful. This intense pain had made him screech and scream in pain when it had first appeared, but now, Gravis only gritted his teeth with all his power. His eyes

became red with pain, but he didn't need to scream. It was indescribably painful, but it didn't even come close to making him doubt his path.

As the pulsing increased, he felt the pressure of the lightning reduce. It was all slowly gathering in the middle of his Spirit Space.

Multiple hours passed and, by now, only a small clump of lightning was left in the Spirit Space. Every other area was completely empty. Gravis noticed that the lightning was no longer shrinking, yet the pain still remained.

"I guess there is only one last step left," Gravis said through gritted teeth.

Gravis walked to the lightning. It was around two cubic meters big and radiated an incredible aura of pure destruction. There was so much lightning that if Gravis decided to detonate it, he would probably destroy a huge chunk of the Core-Continent. Yet, to him, it was just more of himself.

Whoom!

Gravis stepped into the lightning ball without any hesitation. As soon as he entered, he felt the lightning get absorbed into his body. This was not Gravis' real body, but only an illusory body created out of his own thoughts.

The illusory body absorbed all the lightning in a matter of minutes, and after that, nothing was left. The pain stopped, and only Gravis stood in the middle of his Spirit Space. Yet, the body was no longer illusory. It was now a body entirely made out of pure lightning. He was now his Self.

Gravis took a deep breath and opened his eyes.

WHOOOOOM!

His Spirit Space widened, and he felt his Spirit also become more powerful. He felt pure power course through him as he saw his Spirit reaching further and further into the distance.

After some seconds, his Spirit Space stabilized. It now had a diameter of 100 meters. His Spirit also stabilized, and Gravis smirked when he felt its range.

"1,000 kilometers," he said.

He hadn't been able to test his Spirit's range previously since the walls, ceiling, and floor blocked his Spirit. Yet, he was in the fifth trial right now, a space that stretched seemingly into infinity.

BZZZZ!

Gravis also compressed his lightning. Even though his lightning had doubled, it could still only be considered to be in the Tree Stage. Therefore, the newly compressed lightning also fit snugly into his dantian. Like before, there was still a lot of space left.

BZZZ! BOOM!

Gravis summoned a small Lightning Bomb to test the ratio between his Spirit and Lightning. "One to six," Gravis mumbled with furrowed brows. "Shouldn't it be one to four? Why is it one to six?" Gravis looked at the sky. "Is it due to my special kind of way that I broke through?"

Gravis rubbed his chin, but then he noticed something. "What is this?" Gravis involuntarily said.

He felt his physical body, lightning, and Spirit resonating with each other. He felt like he only needed a thought to combine them. Yet, Gravis didn't do that. "I guess this is the way to reach the Unity Realm," Gravis said.

'So, just like the name implies, the Unity Realm represents the unity between all my three centers of power,' Gravis thought. 'By establishing the connection, all my centers of power would be connected to each other. I guess they can then also flow into and support each other. So that's why the Unity Realm is so much more powerful.'

One had to know that increasing one center of power way further than the others would increase the power more than increasing all of them for only one level. Someone at the initial Stage of Spirit Forming with a Sapling Stage body would have a way higher chance of winning than someone that had everything at the Seed Stage. Of course, that was without considering the Will-Aura.

With every center of power connected, one could move all their power around. If one wanted, they could make their bodies become mortal, make their Spirits become weak and frail, but unleash an absurd amount of Energy, many times higher than their maximum.

If Gravis had been able to connect his centers of power previously, the fight against the priest in the first trial would have been a cakewalk. He could have moved the power of his Spirit and physical body into his lightning and could have released a ridiculous amount of lightning that would have destroyed the priest. The Jade Tokens wouldn't have mattered.

The same thing would happen if he moved his lightning and Spirit into his physical body. His physical strength would have become so powerful that he could easily punch the priest and throw him against the wall. With another punch, he would have decimated the priest.

'It's not yet time to break into the Unity Realm,' Gravis thought. 'My Spirit and body are at the Tree Stage, but my lightning isn't. First, I want my lightning at the same level or maybe even more powerful. After all, that ratio between my Spirit and lightning doesn't seem right.'

Gravis scratched his chin in thought. 'Maybe the particular way in which I broke into the Self Stage increased my Spirit farther than the maximum allowed. Since my Lightning can also be increased without any apparent limit, I should make it equal to my Spirit. This means that I need to quintuple my lightning.'

Gravis smirked while thinking. 'Luckily, I already know just the way to achieve that. Sorry, Heaven, but our fight has to wait for a little longer,' Gravis thought.

Then, he turned to the sky. "As soon as I break through, I can fight you. The time has finally arrived, huh?" Gravis said. He didn't want to tell Heaven his real plan so that it couldn't plan around it. He wanted to take Heaven by surprise.

Of course, no answer came from Heaven.

Gravis laughed a bit and looked at the doors leading to and from this trial. The door that was previously closed had long since opened, and Gravis walked towards it.

"Let's see what you have for me as my reward for beating this trial," Gravis said with a smirk.

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Chapter 325: Recounting of Events

Gravis walked through the corridor for a couple of minutes until he came to a big, open hall. In comparison to all the previous areas, this hall looked more majestic. There were some ornaments, and the whole hall was made out of gold. There were no lamps, but for some reason, the gold shone some light into the hall.

In the middle of the hall was a rotating orb with lots of symbols floating around it. Gravis guessed that this was probably the core of the whole Heaven's Trial. Behind the core were four closed treasure chests. The fact that there were four probably meant that everyone had survived.

Of course, Gravis didn't need to look at the treasure chests to know that. After all, all his companions were standing before the orb, looking at him with smiles. Everyone had survived.

Pack!

Joyce hugged Gravis. "I'm so happy that you survived," Joyce said with an elated voice. "When I saw my trial, I knew immediately that you were in mortal danger. I'm glad that you won against your copy!"

Gravis smiled a bit and, surprisingly, returned the hug. Joyce was shocked by Gravis hugging her. He had never done anything like that before. Was the thing he had said true? Did he really have a solution to their current situation that both could accept?

Manuel smirked at Gravis when he saw him hug her, while Nero only looked to the side like he didn't see anything. After some seconds, Gravis pushed Joyce away gently.

"Well, I don't know if I beat my copy or my original, but I survived," Gravis said with a slight laugh.

And like that, the whole group furrowed their brows. "What do you mean?" Joyce asked. "The fact that you are here means that you are the original."

Gravis only smiled and shook his head. "This Formation Array was way more complex than you think, and you also underestimate the power of Heaven."

"Would you mind explaining?" Manuel asked with furrowed brows.

"Well," Gravis said, "Heaven didn't create a simple copy. It created another one of us. The copy, as you call it, has a Spirit, a mind, a soul, memories, and everything that creates a human. So, it was not just some construct, but another living being that was identical to us."

Joyce and Manuel tried to wrap their heads around what Gravis had just said while Nero looked at one of his daggers. "So, I could be the copy?" he asked.

Gravis nodded. "Yes. Heaven created life, and with enough power, Heaven can just create another one of us. If Heaven is powerful enough, it can understand and see through our existence and then just sculpt another one of us. Of course, this lower Heaven doesn't know how to do that. This was the work of the Heaven from my homeworld."

The mood of the group became complex. They started doubting their own existence. When Gravis saw that, he only shook his head with a smile. "It doesn't matter if we are the copy or the original. All our ambitions, goals, dreams, memories, and everything about us is the same. Therefore, as long as one of you survived, you get to live on."

The group remained silent for a while. "But why would Heaven do such a thing?" Manuel asked, not shocked but curious.

"Heaven probably wanted to force a change in us," Gravis said.

Manuel frowned. "So, Heaven manipulated us?" he asked.

Gravis shook his head again. "No. When two of the same people meet under these conditions, one of them has to change. If they both stay identical, they will both die. I don't think that Heaven had any specific plan in mind but just wanted to force us to grow in some way. It doesn't matter what change would take place. It only mattered that one of us changed. This is also a kind of growth."

The group remained silent for a while again, lost in thought. If someone else claimed such ridiculous nonsense, they wouldn't believe that person, but Gravis knew a lot more about Heaven and how the worlds worked than everyone else in this world. In regards to Heaven, he was the supreme authority in the subject.

"Tell me, how did you all survive this trial?" Gravis asked.

Joyce and Nero stayed silent, so Manuel stepped forward. "We decided to do a sparring match. Whoever manages to inflict an injury on the other person that would endanger a mortal's life would be the winner. The loser would then commit suicide."

"And I guess you won?" Gravis asked.

Manuel nodded. "It was close. After many minutes of fighting, I saw an opening in my copy and delivered the blow. My copy was shocked at first but then laughed. After some well-wishes, it exploded."

Gravis also nodded. "Your path has been halted today, yet it still continues. You have been confronted with the possibility of failure, but you were only a watcher. I think this can strengthen your motivation."

Manuel's eyes widened a bit, and then he fell into thought. "I think you're right. Seeing myself die was a complex experience. It was like a mirror of what could happen."

Gravis nodded with a smile and then turned to Nero. "How about you?" he asked.

Nero didn't seem comfortable in answering, but he complied either way. After releasing a sigh, Nero started telling his experience in the fifth trial. "We decided on the same route as Manuel. Whoever managed to bury one dagger into the other's body would be the winner."

"And you won?" Gravis asked.

Nero released a shaky breath. "No. I lost."

Gravis' eyes shone. "Interesting. Tell me," he said.

Nero released another sigh. "After a long fight, we both managed to bury our daggers into the other. My copy was a split-second faster, so he had won." Nero looked with visible discomfort to the side. "But I couldn't let my path end, so I buried my second dagger into him, killing him. I can still see his look of shock and betrayal before my eyes."

Gravis nodded. "Don't beat yourself up over it," Gravis said nonchalantly, surprising Nero. Wasn't Gravis an advocate of justice? "Since your copy was shocked, it meant that it couldn't believe that you would do such a thing. Therefore, a change has taken place. You have differentiated yourself from your copy by throwing pride to the side to continue on your path. A readiness to sacrifice such a thing for your goal is good. Such an attitude will only help you on your journey."

Nero took another deep breath and continued looking to the side. He understood what Gravis was saying, but it still didn't feel comfortable. He felt dirty and guilty for what he had done. Gravis noticed this but didn't say anything else. Nero had to handle this problem by himself.

Then, Gravis turned to Joyce.

Joyce looked with discomfort to the ground. Her face radiated sadness, grief, and tragedy. "We decided on a life and death fight," Joyce said, surprising Gravis a bit. He had expected that they would solve this differently. It seemed like he still didn't know Joyce well enough.

Joyce sighed. "We mostly decided to do this to temper ourselves and to increase our battle experience. After a couple of exchanges, we had already healed ourselves multiple times. Yet, my copy and I never used any attacks that would kill each other. I just couldn't bring myself to kill her."

Gravis nodded. "So, how did it end?" he asked.

Joyce furrowed her brows, and some tears welled up in her eyes. "I used a horizontal attack to force her to evade towards the ground or air. At that point, I would be able to hit her. But instead of ducking or jumping, she smiled happily at me and let the strike bisect her," Joyce said.

Gravis also sighed. "I guess she thought that you were the original," Gravis said. "She had seen your resolve and thought that she was the copy. The change in your trial is complex. It could be that your copy has changed and died, or that you have changed and became more determined. Something like this is hard to discern," Gravis said.

Joyce released a trembling sigh. Her copy's death still weighed on her mind. Apparently, only Gravis and Manuel were alright with their outcomes.

"What happened to you?" Joyce asked after a bit.

Gravis smiled and started telling them what happened to him in the fifth trial.

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Chapter 326: Solution

Gravis told them how he met up with his copy and how they first tried to destroy the trial. The group was a bit surprised since they hadn't thought about doing anything like that. They had just accepted their trial without trying to break it.

Well, it was understandable, actually. After all, everyone in the group was only in the initial Stage of Spirit Forming. Breaking something like the Heaven's Trial required just too much power. Gravis was in a different situation since he had enough power to fight something like that.

Together with his copy, Gravis could have annihilated the area of every previous trial. The power of two Gravises was just too great. Of course, Heaven had anticipated something like this, which was why it made the area for the fifth trial special.

When Gravis told them about the solution he had found for the trial, the group's eyes widened. Something like this was possible?

"Could we also have done this?" Nero asked nervously. He still felt terrible about how he had won the fifth trial.

Gravis scratched his chin. "You could not have done the same," he said. "You don't have the ability to change yourself into something that can be fused. Two Spirits can't fuse under normal circumstances. The only reason why this was possible for me was that my Spirit could be converted into lightning. At most, you would have been able to fuse your Energy."

Nero sighed. "And since the Spirit is the core of a person, we would have still been forced to kill each other."

Gravis nodded. "Sadly, yes."

"By the way," Joyce said with interest. "I can't feel your Spirit. Does that mean that you have reached the Self Stage?" she asked.

Gravis smirked and nodded.

Instead of being excited and happy, Joyce sighed in sadness. "That means you will leave us soon, right?" she asked.

Gravis also sighed but walked closer to Joyce and put his hand on her shoulder. "It was bound to happen eventually, but let me first tell you about the solution I came up with regarding our situation."

Joyce perked up and looked into Gravis' eyes with expectation.

"Right now, we can't get together," Gravis said, destroying Joyce's hopes, "but that won't be the case forever, right?" he asked.

Joyce furrowed her brows. "I'm not sure what you mean," she said.

Gravis only shook his head gently and looked at Manuel and Nero. "I need to talk to her privately," he said to them.

Manuel just waved dismissively while Nero walked to the side.

Gravis turned back to Joyce and used his Voice Transmission from now on. "I can tell you about the levels of the worlds and my homeworld because if you keep ascending, you will reach it eventually. At that point, we will be in the same world. When that time happens, and if you are still interested, we can be together," Gravis transmitted.

Joyce's eyes widened. "I will reach your homeworld? I thought that our worlds have no connection," she transmitted.

"Before I tell you more about this, I want to know if you really want to go through with this. Some of the knowledge I am about to transmit to you can be dangerous for your path. If you are not fully committed, it would be better not to know these things," Gravis transmitted.

Joyce remained silent for a couple of seconds. She was thinking through these things seriously. If Gravis said that this knowledge was dangerous, then it was probably really dangerous to her. Gravis never exaggerated.

Yet, was her path, will, and motivation so weak that it could be damaged just because someone said something?

"I want to know," Joyce transmitted, "because my path won't be influenced just because someone said something. My path is more stable than that. So, you can tell me."

Gravis smiled when he heard that. That's what he wanted to hear! If his words actually swayed her, he would have given up on her. Only such a powerful will would be able to keep her going until she reached his homeworld.

"Alright, then please pay attention and don't tell the others about what I'm going to say now. You have a goal now, so you can deal with this mountain that I am about to drop on you while the others can't," Gravis transmitted.

Joyce nodded with motivated eyes. "I won't!"

Gravis also nodded. "We are currently in a lower world. This is the lowest kind of world," Gravis transmitted, and Joyce nodded. This was no new information. After all, no one ascended to their world.

"The world above this one is the middle world. After that come the higher worlds, and after that comes the highest world, my homeworld. In total, you have to ascend three times," Gravis said, shocking Joyce into silence.

Most people believed that the next world was already the highest world. Joyce had thought that there would still be a world after the next world. The way Gravis had spoken about his homeworld and about his knowledge, Joyce had already anticipated something like this. Yet, there was still another level?

Joyce realized how weak everyone actually was in the grand scheme of things. What status would they even have in Gravis' homeworld?

"If you reach my homeworld, we can be together," Gravis said.

Joyce wasn't sure how to react. How long would it take for her to reach Gravis' homeworld? It already took decades to reach the Unity Realm. What about the next Realm, or the Realm after that?

Yet, Joyce just clenched her fists. This was really destructive for someone's path, but she wouldn't get disheartened by this! "I understand!" Joyce transmitted with motivation. "The only thing I have to do is get stronger! I have been doing that until now, so I just need to continue doing that, right?"

Gravis smiled when he heard that. Gravis actually told her this for two reasons. One reason was to give her a goal if she really wanted to pursue Gravis, and the other reason was to show her how far the distance was between them. If, after thousands of years, she still wanted to be with him, it would show her love for him. At that time, Gravis would reciprocate her feelings.

Yet, no one knew what the future would bring. Maybe this was all a fancy crush of a young adult. If she grew out of it, that would also be fine. There were many outstanding individuals in the world, and some of them might even be able to grasp Joyce's heart.

"I will pursue you! I will reach your homeworld!" Joyce transmitted with determination, but Gravis could also hear a slight nervousness in her voice. "But..." Joyce hesitated.

Gravis smiled. "What? You can tell me."

Joyce clenched her fists again. "I want a down payment for my investment!" she transmitted, her voice shaking in Gravis' mind.

Gravis raised an eyebrow. "What do you-"

Suddenly, Joyce lunged forward and planted her lips on Gravis'. Gravis froze. He had not seen that coming. Yet, with an internal sigh, Gravis reciprocated her kiss. They stood there for some seconds until they parted.

Joyce seemed to be out of breath, and her face had completely reddened. Manuel whistled from the side when he saw that, eliciting a side-eye from Gravis.

Gravis was still shaken by this, but he quickly regained his bearings. His heart fluttered, and for the first time in a long while, he felt his feelings go out of control. Usually, he had a firm hold on his feelings, but this time, he felt genuine warmth course through his chest.

Gravis scratched his chin as he fell into thought. This situation was something entirely new for him, and the things he felt interested him.

"Argh," Joyce groaned after some seconds. Then, she stomped her feet in frustration. "I went ahead and kissed you, but what do you do? You just fall into thought! At least say something!" she shouted with a red face.

Gravis' thoughts were rudely interrupted by her voice. Yet, he only smiled and laughed. "Sorry," he said with embarrassment, scratching the back of his neck.

Joyce thought she saw the young boy from the Hunting Guild again as she saw Gravis' embarrassment. He had been just as embarrassed when he met her back then. Joyce just laughed and walked away. By being able to make Gravis embarrassed, she had achieved her goal! This reaction showed that he genuinely cared for her. That was all that she needed to know.

Gravis looked with confusion at the retreating Joyce. Why was she laughing?

Did he make a mistake?

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Chapter 327: Leaving After Three Years

The group quickly walked to the treasure chests after some more talking. Finally, they could get their just reward for surviving this trial! Everyone went up to one treasure chest and opened them at the same time. When they saw what was in there, their eyes widened in excitement.

"Are these the pills that only the Heaven Sect has? You know which ones I mean, right?" Joyce asked, unsure. If that were true, she would be able to barely believe it. Those pills were what every cultivator yearned for in their dreams.

Manuel picked one up, looked at it closely, and smirked. "Yep. Sure enough, these are the Ascension Pills," he said with an excited voice. "Only the Heaven Sect knows the recipe for these pills, and they don't sell them!"

Nero and Gravis had no idea what those two were talking about. "What do they do?" Gravis asked.

Joyce shoved the pills from her treasure chest into her Spirit Space with excitement. "They are the only pills in the world that can help a cultivator temper their Spirits!" Joyce said and then ate one. After some seconds, her smile intensified. "They're awesome!" she shouted.

Gravis remembered that the spies from the Heaven Sect that he had fought back when he entered the Core-Continent had eaten some pills to reach the Seed Stage. Were these those pills?

Nero smiled helplessly. "Don't bait us into asking. Just tell us how much one pill gives you," he said.

Joyce pouted and looked at Nero. "Way to destroy my fun," she commented and then turned to Manuel. "One pill increased the Magic in my mind by about one month of tempering!" she said.

Manuel's eyes widened. "One month?" Then, he turned back to the pills in his treasure chest. After some calculating, he spoke again. "So, these pills can allow us to reach the halfway mark to the Tree Stage?" he asked, incredulously.

One couldn't fault Manuel for his disbelief. They were not even halfway through the initial Stage, yet they were about to advance two Stages? This would save them a little bit more than 20 years of bitter cultivation!

When Gravis heard all this, he rolled his eyes. 'Of course, Heaven gave us a reward that was basically useless to me. After all, I am already at the Self Stage,' Gravis thought and looked at his own pills. 'But Heaven has made a major miscalculation with these rewards,' Gravis thought with shining eyes.

He wanted to smirk in triumph, but Heaven might realize that he actually had a use for these pills. 'My plan just became way easier.'

Everyone pocketed their pills and stood up. No one asked Gravis for his pills, even though all of them knew that Gravis didn't need them.

"I would suggest not taking these pills, for the time being, Nero," Gravis said as he turned to Nero.

Nero nodded. "I know. I still need to temper my will, and the stronger I am, the harder it will be. I will wait until I have a level two Unity Will. I'm planning on only taking enough to reach the Seed Stage."

Gravis furrowed his brows. "Why? At that time, you can only temper yourself against Sapling Stage cultivators and middle-grade Spirit Beasts."

Nero smiled a bit. "Because I need strength to reform the Darkness Sect," he said, surprising Gravis.

"Reform the Darkness Sect?" Gravis asked.

Nero nodded. "You know of my belief. Why is it that only so few people have my outlook? That's because the disciples learn from their teachers. You have killed the Darkness Sect's upper echelon, so it's the perfect time to reform it. The group from the Darkness Sect has died in the trial, and there are probably less than three elders in our Sect now, including the new breakthroughs."

Gravis also smiled. "And with you at the Seed Stage, you will be able to beat every elder one-on-one, huh?" he asked.

Nero nodded again. "Yes. I will take up the mantle of the Sect Master, and I will change the Darkness Sect."

Manuel patted Nero's shoulder. "That's a noble goal, and I wish you all the best in that endeavor. When you succeed, contact me. I will inform the Wind Sect of the new Darkness Sect, and we might be able to bury the enmity between our two Sects. After all, Byron is already dead."

Nero also smiled at Manuel, and wordlessly nodded. Nero was a man of few words, but his expressions showed everyone that he wasn't emotionless.

After they finished talking, they all looked at a door behind the treasure chests. The door was open, and above it was an inscription that just read 'EXIT'. They walked to it but turned around at the last second to throw one last glance at the room.

They had lived in this Heaven's Trial for about three years. Manuel had entered as an Ascender's Talent. Joyce and Nero had entered as average cultivators. Yet, everyone was leaving as monsters. Their Will-Auras and Battle-Strength couldn't be classified as Ascender's Talents anymore. This Heaven's Trial had utterly changed them.

Gravis had entered as a monster, and he would exit as a fully grown monster. He was the third most powerful being in this world, and when he decided to reach the Unity Realm, he would be able to contest with Heaven as the most powerful being.

After some seconds of silent watching, the group turned around and left. Gravis was the last to leave because he had been watching the Formation Core for a bit. It just intrigued him. After about two minutes, he realized that everyone had already left. Gravis scratched the back of his neck in embarrassment and went after the group.

"As if," sneered one elder in red robes. "Your Darkness Sect winning the inheritance? You couldn't even defeat someone at the Seed Stage. What makes you so confident?"

A skinny elder in black robes only huffed. "You know exactly that you can't judge that monster with normal logic. Also, as for the inheritance, not everything is a straight-up fight. On top of that, when there is a fight, it's not against many enemies at once. With one powerful sneak-attack each, our group can take out most challenges without any issue."

"Now everyone," one elder in white robes said, waving his arms to calm the present elders. "We've been over this many times. We can't predict who will win, and the teams we are rooting for might've already died. After all, the inheritance doesn't allow for a Spirit's death to transmit outside."

Both elders turned to the speaker with a sneer. "Oh, shut up," the red elder said. "You only say that because you know that your Light Sect has no chance whatsoever. Don't infect us with your defeatist attitude."

The white elder's face changed from a calming smile to a hard look, like he was looking down at the brute from the Fire Sect. "We can do more than just heal. If you underestimate my Light Sect, you will only die. Yet, what could I expect from a brainless, battle-hungry beast like you?" the white elder asked tragically while shaking his head.

The red elder's anger started boiling like a volcano. He really hated these holier-than-thou light cultivators. They always acted like they were the mediator for every conflict, but as soon as something went against their interests, they would be the first to betray everyone else. After all, they believed that the light shone down from the Heavens, and everything was beneath them.

"Oh, you wanna have another go?" The red elder shouted while taking out a halberd.

"Tch," the black elder spat from the side. "You haven't been able to touch him for the last ten times. What will be different now?" he taunted.

Now, the gaze of the red elder concentrated on the black elder. "So? He was unable to injure me. If we draw this fight out long enough, I will outlast him!"

"Oh, shut up," a woman in blue robes groaned from the side. "You get bored so fast that you never go through with it. Also, aren't your Sects supposed to be allies?" she asked.

Instead of shooting back, the red elder looked away. If one looked closely, they would see that his face got a little redder. Not thanks to anger, though. "Well, such a fight is boring," he said. Then, he turned and looked the blue elder in the eyes. "So, about that marriage..."

The blue elder groaned again. "You wish. I rejected you multiple times already. When will you learn that you're not my type? I am more into wind cultivators," she said.

"Oh, rejected again. That's gotta sting," an elder in green robes commented from the side. He had an arrogant smirk on his face. After all, the elder from the Water Sect just said that she liked wind cultivators, and he just so happened to be a wind cultivator.

"Alright!" the fire elder shouted as he pointed to the wind elder. "Today is the day you die!"

"Shhh, shut up for a second," the water elder said as she looked at the door before them. The exit for the Heaven's Trial was always at the same place, so every elder waited for their disciples to return at the exit. "I think I hear something."

Everything went silent, and all the elders looked at the door. Their Spirits couldn't penetrate the door, so they could only listen with their ears. Sure enough, they heard some faint footsteps coming from beyond the door.

CRK!

The door opened, and all the elders looked with bated breaths at the exit.

Which group survived the inheritance?

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Chapter 328: More Schemes

As the door opened, three people exited. Joyce was shielding her eyes from the blinding light with a smile. Manuel had spotted the elders from his Sect and gave them a thumbs-up, and Nero looked with vigilance at the surroundings.

Nero saw about 17 people looking at them. Eleven of these people were elders from the Elemental Sects, while the other six had no element. Those were probably parents or teachers from the loose cultivators.

The reason why there were eleven elders from the Elemental Sects present was because every Sect, except the Darkness Sect, sent two elders, while the Lightning Sect was completely missing. Even the Earth Sect had sent two elders, even though they knew that their group had died even before entering the Heaven's Trial. They were probably looking for a chance to rob the winners.

Eight of the elders and everyone without elements looked crestfallen at the exiting group. The fact that those three exited meant that everyone else had died. The two elders from the Wind Sect smiled but also sighed. Their group had died, but at least Manuel was still alive.

Meanwhile, the elder from the Darkness Sect had a glimmer in his eyes. If he played it right, he could become rich. If he and the darkness disciple in the group backstabbed the others, they could get all the rewards.

As for the potential repercussions from the other Sects? Fuck them! So what if the Darkness Sect was attacked by people in the Tree Stage? If his plan worked, he wouldn't go back to the Darkness Sect. What did his Sect's demise have to do with him? He was only there for himself.

Some other elders started watching the group with greed in their eyes. The Darkness Sect was selfish, and the elder wouldn't risk his life for one of his disciples. The only people they had to fight were the Wind Sect elders. The Water Sect, Earth Sect, and Light Sect were very interested in the treasures. The Fire Sect wouldn't care since they wouldn't attack people weaker than them. They would probably just watch in interest.

Slowly, the six elders started talking to each other. They had to iron out their plan's details and how to fight the two elders from the Wind Sect with the least amount of casualties.

"Is the monster dead?" the darkness elder transmitted to Nero.

Nero showed a slight smirk. "Yes," he answered.

The darkness elder's eyes shone with greed. "How about we claim their two portions for the Darkness Sect?" he transmitted to Nero, obviously meaning Joyce and Manuel.

"Sure," Nero answered coldly. "You take out the Life Lightning cultivator while I take out Manuel. He would expect an attack from you, but not from me. That's why it's better that I take him out."

The elder narrowed his eyes. "Deal," he transmitted to Nero. Then, he slowly started vanishing from everyone's perception. Most of the people present concentrated on planning their attack, while the loose cultivators started walking away. Thanks to his supreme stealth, the elder managed to avoid everyone's perception.

"Protect your dantian and head," Nero transmitted to Joyce with urgency.

"What?" Joyce asked, but then suddenly felt a mortal danger. Out of reflex, she bent down to protect her head.

PUCHI! WHOOSH! PUCHI!

Two daggers came out of nowhere. One hit her in the back, while the other barely missed her head. Yet, the elder quickly angled his dagger downward. Without another second passing, his second dagger also buried itself into Joyce's back.

Both daggers had been loaded with the darkness element, and there was no way that she would survive such an attack.

BZZZ!

Yet, all the Life Energy inside her returned as she transformed part of her Energy into Life Lightning. The new Life Energy was also absorbed since the elder was two Stages above her. Joyce had to fully heal herself six times to outlast the darkness element inside her. Yet, she managed to stay alive. All of this happened in less than a second.

The elder's eyes widened.

SHING!

Joyce's sword stabbed through the elder's throat and entered his brain. The elder hadn't expected for Joyce to survive, so he hadn't been prepared for her counterattack. On top of that, his body was way more powerful than her. What could she even do?

Yet, the elder had bad luck. Joyce's Life Lightning was the ultimate counter to the darkness element. On top of that, she had seen Gravis fight against someone with a way more powerful body. He had used this same move to kill his enemy, back in the fourth trial. Of course, she remembered that move and practiced it.

Thanks to these two factors, she had managed to kill someone two whole Stages above her. Under normal circumstances, she would probably die.

Joyce immediately retrieved her sword and kicked the body of the elder away. Meanwhile, everyone was watching this with widened eyes. Someone at the initial Stage had just killed an elder? How was this possible!?

Manuel was also shocked for a second, but he quickly saw how Nero only smiled. Manuel quickly connected the dots in his head and realized what Nero had done. "Thanks," he transmitted to Nero.

"No problem," he sent back.

Joyce nearly hyperventilated as she saw the corpse of the darkness elder. She had just killed her first human, which shook her.

All the enemies in the Heaven's Trial had been soulless puppets. That's why this was her first time killing an actual human. Her mind went wild as her emotions rampaged inside her. Her body had moved before her mind could even process what was happening. She had killed the elder entirely out of habit.

"You never killed a human," Nero transmitted to Joyce, eliciting a shocked gaze from her. "You need to jump over that barrier at some point. I thought, since he was planning on killing us anyway, this would be a good opportunity for you to jump over your shadow. The earlier, the better."

Joyce's insides were still raging, but with a deep breath, she calmed down. "I understand," she transmitted back. "Thanks."

"No worries," Nero transmitted back.

Meanwhile, the two elders from the Wind Sect ran to the group and turned to the remaining six elders. One had already attacked, so there was a high chance that the others would also attack. They had to protect the group!

The three people from the group also readied their weapons. They would need to fight the elders. The enemies outnumbered them, but the group wasn't even a bit nervous.

Meanwhile, the group of elders communicated with each other. "Did you see that? The darkness elder shot forward without hesitation. This means that he was sure that Gravis is dead. The darkness disciple in the group probably informed him. We quickly have to attack. Otherwise, the people from the Wind Sect might arrive," one of the elders said to the others.

The group narrowed their eyes and got into formation. The earth elders charged forward while the light elders stood behind them. The water elders flanked the earth elders on each side, ready to attack.

The elders from the Fire Sect retreated a little with interested expressions. A fight was about to take place! Nothing was more exciting to watch for them.

The wind elders gnashed their teeth. They would die today, but they would win as much time for the group as possible. They didn't do this because they were selfless, but because Manuel was in the group. He was part of their Wind Sect!

WHOOOOM!

Yet, after a second, no one was able to move anymore. Joyce, Manuel, and Nero smirked, while the Wind Sect elders were shocked. What was this supremely powerful Will-Aura? They felt like the user of this Will-Aura could kill them with just a mere thought.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here?" Gravis said as he stepped out of the Heaven's Trial.

All the present elders looked with shock at Gravis. His will was easily restraining them, but they couldn't feel his Spirit. This could only mean one thing!

'Self Stage!' they realized.

This wasn't good!

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 329: Unexpected Arrival

Gravis stepped forward under total silence. His group was not paralyzed, but they didn't need to say anything. They only smirked. The two elders from the Wind Sect were shocked that Gravis had already reached the Self Stage, but they were more relieved than shocked. They wouldn't die today.

The six attacking elders looked with terror at Gravis, while the fire elders looked with pity at the group. They could only shake their heads.

"Six people at the Sapling Stage attacking three in the initial Stage," Gravis said as he shook his head. "Pathetic. No wonder you won't ever ascend. You only care about resources but have lost all self-respect. Nearly every cultivator with the talent to ascend would feel ashamed if they were in your shoes. Why do you need the resources of weaker people if you are powerful enough to ascend by yourself?"

"We didn't-" one of them tried to transmit.

"Wait!" Gravis said suddenly, lifting one hand. The elders looked with anxiousness and fear at Gravis' lifted hand. What did he want to say? Gravis slowly lowered his hand. "I seemed to have stopped caring," he said evenly.

The elders couldn't comprehend the current situation, but Joyce chuckled a bit. When Gravis saw that, he was proud of himself. Finally, someone laughed at one of his jokes!

"Anyway," Gravis said as he looked at the water elders and the light elders. "Your Sect has not come into conflict with me before, so I won't look into it too much. I won't search for revenge on your Sects."

The four elders sighed in relief. They would survive this day.

When Gravis saw that, he raised one of his eyebrows in confusion. "Wow. You're really selfless. You're about to die, but the only thing you feel is relief that your Sect will survive. Good on you!"

"What?" the elders said in shock.

BANG!

Four Lightning Spears appeared around Gravis, which quickly shot at the four elders. In less than a second, those four elders had been reduced to ash. Gravis clapped his hands like he had just finished some work and was dusting them off.

"Now, to your Earth Sect," Gravis said as he looked at the two elders. Surprisingly, the two elders showed no fear. They knew they were about to die, but they wouldn't betray their beliefs. They were elders not only because of their cultivation level but also because of their strong beliefs. After all, elders also functioned as role models.

"So what if we die? We won't break our beliefs!" one of the elders transmitted with power.

Gravis rolled his eyes. "Sure, but honestly? I've had with up to here with your constant interfering!" Gravis said, gesturing to his neck with his hand. "First, your branch-Guild doesn't want to accept

repayment. Then you send a team after me and release a kill order. Then, your fucking Heaven's Trial group attacks me, and now you attack my friends. I guess your useless Earth Sect will become the next Darkness Sect!"

The elders were a bit nervous, but they kept up their steely gaze. "You can't break our will, even if you kill every single one of us."

Gravis smirked. "Well, let's see about that. Anyway, you have to go now. I'll send you off."

BANG!

Another two Lightning Spears finished the elders off.

Whooop!

Gravis gathered all the stuff from the six dead elders and turned to his group. Then, he pointed with his thumb at the two fire elders. "What about them?" he asked, eliciting a look of fear from the two elders.

"They only watched," Manuel said casually.

Gravis nodded. "Alright."

Whoom!

His Will-Aura disappeared, and everyone could move again. The fire elders released a sigh of relief but also felt a bit smug about the other dead elders. Serves them right!

"Anyway, I'm off. Heaven is calling," Gravis said.

Joyce's eyes shone. "Will you fight it right now?" she asked.

Gravis grinned. "Nope! I have two other things to do first. After that, our battle will commence. Give it like one or two days. See ya later!" Gravis said as he summoned a Lightning Board.

With a release of his lightning, Gravis shot off into the distance.

The group also sent their goodbyes with their Spirits and then turned to the elders from the Wind Sect. They would escort them to their homes. Though, they didn't really need an escort. The group was powerful enough already.

Meanwhile, Gravis traveled as fast as never before. The last time when he had been able to use the Lightning Board to its full effect had been when he had been at the Seed Stage. Therefore, the old speed and the new speed couldn't even be compared.

Gravis reached his target in nearly no time. When he saw his target, he smirked.

"Oh, you're back?" came a voice transmission from Lasar.

Gravis smiled and nodded. "Yeah. I'm nearly ready to fight Heaven. I only need to do two things, and then I will break through."

"Already at the Self Stage, huh?" Lasar sent with a defeated voice. "I managed to fight one high-grade Spirit Beast, but I am still some fights away from achieving a level two Unity Will. I really wonder how your will can become so powerful, so fast."

"Eh, mostly Heaven's doing. It wants to kill me, so it sends stuff at me. I survive, and there you have it, a strong Will-Aura," Gravis commented.

Lasar felt a mix of emotions. On one hand, he was happy that Heaven wasn't targeting him, but on the other hand, he really wanted Gravis' access to constant tempering.

"I guess the old man is already gone?" Gravis asked.

Lasar nodded. "Yes. He has ascended about a month after you entered the resource war. Meanwhile, I am stuck here. I just hope that something doesn't happen to grandpa while I'm not there."

Gravis scratched his neck. By now, he had entered the Lightning Sect. All the while, Lasar and Gravis were talking via their Spirits. "Well, the time dilation between the next world and this one is ten-to-one. So, ten years in here is one year there. If you manage to temper your will in about ten or twenty years, the old man only has to wait one or two years."

Lasar's eyes widened. "Really?" he asked. He had feared his grandfather's death nearly more than his own death. After all, Lasar had no family except for his grandfather. He didn't want to lose his only family member.

Gravis nodded. "Yep, so you shouldn't be worried."

Lasar sighed. "Thank you, Gravis. This really helps," Lasar said.

"Don't mention it," Gravis said dismissively. "Anyway, I am here for something specific."

"I was wondering about that," Lasar said. "With your attitude, I thought you would immediately fight Heaven as soon as you get the chance."

Gravis scratched his chin. "Normally, that would be true, but not in this case. First, I want to increase my Lightning to a point where it is equal to my Spirit. I don't want to take any risks with my cultivation. Who knows, maybe it is way harder to increase my lightning in the Unity Realm?"

Lasar nodded. "That makes sense. You intend to use the disciples?" he asked.

Gravis also nodded. "Yep, but of course, I won't do that without any pay."

Plomp!

A small mountain of pills appeared beside Lasar in the central hall. Meanwhile, Gravis was walking to the center of the Sect, right where the Freya's Birch was.

When the tree saw Gravis, it swayed happily and shot its branches at him. Gravis didn't resist and let the tree kidnap him. Instead of pulling Gravis closer, it immediately placed him on top of it, onto the same branch where Gravis stood all the other times when he fed the tree.

Gravis shook his head and smirked. "You only want food, huh?" he asked.

Meanwhile, Lasar slowly regained his composure. He had been too stunned about the pills appearing right in front of him. Were his eyes playing a trick on him? Weren't these the exclusive pills that only the Heaven Sect had?

"Are you sure you want to give all of these pills to the Lightning Sect?" Lasar asked, stunned.

Gravis nodded from on top of the tree. "Sure. Convert them to Contribution Points and inform the Sect about the new mission. I want lightning, and the disciples should get paid for their work. Sounds good?" Gravis asked.

Lasar nodded and immediately shuffled to get some stuff in order. These pills would be like a blessing for the Lightning Sect! What was some rechargeable lightning in comparison to a permanent increase in cultivation?

After a couple of minutes, the Sect started trembling. Lasar had publicized the news, and everyone was madly dashing to the central plaza. The heavy bodies of the cultivators shook the earth as they rushed with everything they got.

"Wait! I said, wait!" a few elders shouted at the charging horde of disciples. "Everyone can take part in this mission, but we first have to organize some things!" the elders shouted.

After several minutes, the disciples finally calmed down. Slowly, they climbed on top of multiple buildings to get closer to Gravis. The tree was incredibly tall, and it was challenging to hit Gravis from there. They could only use their Spirits to summon their lightning and shoot at him.

"Alright, everyone's at their-"

WHOOOOOOOOM!

The whole world fell into silence as everything was frozen. It was like time itself had been stopped.

Meanwhile, Gravis could also barely move. It felt like his whole body was encased in lead. He felt an enormous pressure acting on him, and his eyes narrowed. Only one person could release such intense pressure.

Slowly, from the thundering clouds, a single person floated down. The fact that he was flying already proved who he was. Only people at the Unity Realm could fly as freely as him.

Gravis looked into the High Priest's eyes, and the High Priest looked back.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 330: Battle of Words

Gravis and the High Priest locked eyes. The High Priest wore the most extravagant robes that Gravis had ever seen. They were so filled with ornaments, jewelry, and Energy Stones that it seemed incredibly difficult to walk in them. Yet, contrasting his pompous clothing, the priest only carried a single, long, wooden staff with him. That was probably his weapon.

"So, you're the High Priest, huh?" Gravis transmitted to him.

The High Priest narrowed his eyes. The ant before him didn't seem to fear him even a little bit. When had someone not kneeled out of reverence before him? Yet, what did an ant's opinion matter to an elephant?

"And you're the ant that wants to kill father," he sent back with disdain.

"Father? I thought Heaven was genderless," Gravis commented nonchalantly.

Gravis' lack of reaction to him was irking the High Priest. "It is. We assign Heaven a gender that we feel most comfortable with. To me, Heaven is my father," he said, his voice echoing throughout the Lightning Sect. He didn't need to use his Spirit to communicate with Gravis.

Meanwhile, everyone in the Lightning Sect looked with absolute shock and fear at the flying person. They had never seen the High Priest, but they felt like ants beneath him. This was the strongest person in this entire world! Even Lasar was fearful as he watched him.

Gravis' eyes glimmered. "Interesting," he said, his voice also echoing throughout the Lightning Sect. When the High Priest heard Gravis' voice, his eyes narrowed further. This proved that Gravis was still able to move under his Heavenly Pressure.

One had to know that the High Priest exhibited a Heavenly Pressure that was equal to a level three Unity Will. On top of that, there was a strong level suppression between them. This proved that Gravis' Will-Aura was way more powerful than his Heavenly Pressure.

"You can still move," the High Priest commented. "I see why you are father's enemy. Yet, what is so interesting about me calling Heaven my father?" he asked. The High Priest seemed to be in control of this whole situation. The way he talked also broadcasted this fact to everyone present.

Gravis only continued smirking as he slowly lifted his hand to scratch his chin. "A father is more overbearing than a mother. This lower Heaven's conduct is definitely more akin to an abusive father than a loving mother. Who would have expected that its strongest child would be afraid of its own parent?"

"Insolence!" the High Priest shouted, creating earthquakes that went through the entire Lightning Sect. "How dare you try to understand someone as powerful as me!? You don't know anything about my father."

The High Priest's voice also shook Gravis' body, but his smirk never vanished. "I heard your voice, and that is not the voice of an angry person. That's the voice of someone afraid of being punished."

The High Priest's insides shook, but he only appeared calm on the outside. "I really don't understand how you can be this fearless and foolish when confronted with your own death," he said.

Gravis snorted. "My death? Pfft! As if," he said.

The High Priest started getting angry. "Even if you break into the Unity Realm right now, you have no idea how to use your new powers. There is no way that you can survive. On top of that, your body, Spirit, and Magic need time to become stronger. What can you do in that timeframe?" The High Priest said in disdain.

Gravis smirked again. "The power increase of my centers of power might take a while, but the connection will be established instantly," Gravis said calmly. "As soon as I connect them, I will push everything I have into my body and Spirit. The level suppression will vanish at that point, and you will be the suppressed one. On top of that, you can't keep your Heavenly Pressure active all the time. At that time, I only need to waste some time to get acclimated."

The High Priest's emotions went haywire when he heard that. He didn't have a powerful will since he only borrowed Heaven's Will. That's why his emotions were so easily influenced. Yet, why did his emotions get riled up when he heard that?

It was because Gravis was right. His tactic would make him survive long enough to get acclimated. Even though the High Priest acted more akin to a spoiled child, he wasn't foolish. He knew that Gravis' Battle-Strength was unprecedented. The High Priest expected that Gravis could put up a fight even without his centers of power increasing.

The High Priest had the ability to push all his power into his Spirit and destroy the Spirit of others. That was how he had killed the priests. Yet, Gravis' will was just too powerful. The will strengthened the Spirit, and the High Priest feared that Gravis could survive that strike. At that point, everything would play out as Gravis had said.

Even Though the High Priest was definitely the more powerful one of the two, it was he who felt nervous. One wrong move would spell his doom, but on the other hand, if he didn't attack Gravis, and Gravis died to Heaven, Heaven would just destroy him. Both paths lead to death.

The High Priest released a shaky breath after a couple of seconds. "I see why father is fearful of you," he commented. For the first time, his voice didn't exhibit infinite confidence.

Gravis only continued smirking. "Speaking of, how and why did you arrive? As far as I know, Heaven shouldn't have been able to contact you for about five years or so."

For the first time, the High Priest's eyes widened in shock. This had been a secret, and only he knew about this fact! Heaven had truly been completely quiet for five years. No matter how much the High Priest prayed or asked for an answer, Heaven never answered him.

How could Gravis know that? Was it because he came from a higher world and knew more about Heaven? Were such things no secrets in the higher worlds?

"How did you know?" he asked with a shaking voice.

Gravis' smirk never left his face. Now, it seemed like he was the person in control of this entire situation. "Because up to five years ago, this lower Heaven had no one overseeing it. It was like a child alone at home. But five years ago, an actual adult appeared and forced it to follow the rules of the house. Under the adult's supervision, the child can't break the rules."

The High Priest felt his emotions go wild again. What rules? Heaven had to follow rules? "What rules?" he asked.

"It can't contact or interfere with the world directly," Gravis transmitted since he didn't want to implicate the whole Lightning Sect. If they knew Heaven's secrets, they would be in danger. "So, no more talking, no more new Heavenborn, and no more striking down of people."

The High Priest started hyperventilating. It was like a whole new world was being opened before his eyes.

Yet, Gravis didn't stop. "This means that it also won't kill you. The worst it can do is steal all your Karmic Luck so that you have no more luck in your life." Gravis and the High Priest weren't friends, so Gravis didn't care about the consequences of telling the High Priest Heaven's secrets.

The High Priest's mind was running as fast as never before. He was thinking about all the eventual things he could do without Heaven's constant supervision. Did that mean that nothing was stopping him anymore? He could finally do whatever he wanted?

Yet, the High Priest quickly shook his head to regain his bearings. Such a thought was too good to be true. Even though Gravis had proven that he knew a lot about Heaven, there was no guarantee that he wasn't lying right now. In the face of death, maybe even a lightning cultivator would resort to lies.

Though, the High Priest was still unsure about how to proceed. If he attacked Gravis, there was a high chance that he would die. Yet, if he didn't attack Gravis, he could also die to Heaven. The High Priest had feared Heaven for his whole life, and such fear wouldn't just magically vanish because someone had said some words.

'There is no other way,' the High Priest thought with frustration and nervousness. 'I have to take the risk, or I will definitely die!'

Gravis was still smirking, but suddenly, his smirk vanished. His eyes glazed over lifelessly, and his Will-Aura and Spirit vanished. Surprisingly, the same thing also happened to the High Priest. He landed on top of the Lightning Tower with lifeless eyes.

Everyone in the Lightning Sect could move again, but they didn't dare to. This was not a fight that they could interfere in. Even though everyone could move again, they still remained silent. Everything was up to Gravis now.

Meanwhile, inside Gravis' Spirit Space, two people appeared. One of them was Gravis, while the other was the High Priest.

After entering Gravis' Spirit Space, the High Priest sighed with relief. He had pulled it off without Gravis noticing anything. If Gravis had noticed the entry of the High Priest's Spirit, he could have reached the Unity Realm. Luckily, the High Priest had managed not to get noticed. Silently, he thanked Heaven.

Meanwhile, Gravis was surprised that he entered his own Spirit Space without him wanting to. But when he saw the High Priest, his eyes narrowed. To top it all off, Gravis also felt that his Spirit was isolated from everything else. He couldn't even feel his body or lightning, which made it impossible to reach the Unity Realm.

Gravis and the High Priest looked at each other again, one with narrowed eyes and one with a smug grin.