

## Lightning 491

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### Chapter 491: Unexpected Gains

'I'm 50 now, huh?' Gravis thought with a disconnected and surreal feeling. 50 had always seemed kind of old to Gravis, but now that he was 50, he didn't feel that old. However, Gravis also remembered that if he compared his age to his longevity, it could be compared to him only being five years old. For mortal standards, he was old, but for cultivation standards, he was incredibly young.

Nearly no one reached the Unity Realm by going through the Self Stage before the age of 60. The ones able to reach it way sooner were either from higher worlds or were incredibly rare. Additionally, Gravis was about to reach the Nascent Nourishing Realm.

Reaching the Nascent Nourishing Realm in such a short amount of time was also quite outstanding, though not as outstanding as reaching the Unity Realm in his 20s. For humans, there were no bottlenecks between the Unity Realm and Nascent Nourishing Realm. Therefore, humans could also reach that Realm in a short time.

"I've never cultivated in seclusion for so long," Gravis said to the Grand Elder.

"You didn't? How old are you?" the Grand Elder asked with surprise.

"I should have reached the age of 50 recently," Gravis said.

The Grand Elder blinked a couple of times. "That's really young. Not bad, Gravis," he commented. For beasts, reaching the power of a level five Lord in 50 years was really good, but nothing that hadn't been seen before. After all, beasts didn't have any bottlenecks until they became Kings.

"Thanks," Gravis commented. "I'm ready to return to the Empress now."

The Grand Elder nodded. "Give me a minute to inform the others. We will return shortly."

The Grand Elder stopped moving after he said that while Gravis only waited. The Grand Elder was probably informing the present elders about some things.

A minute later, the Grand Elder appeared directly in front of Gravis. Then, he grew until he was just as big as Gravis. "Grab my hand," he said.

Gravis did so, and in an instant, they were already gone from the Law Comprehension Area. Gravis' body hadn't become more powerful, so he still felt the pain of the rapid acceleration.

As they were traveling, Gravis looked at the lightning leaving the Grand Elder's backside and lost himself in thought. He started remembering the pool, but the pool in his mind transformed into lightning in nearly an instant.

The pool had only been a metaphorical picture that Gravis had seen while tempering his Will-Aura. Obviously, he had actually looked at his lightning during all of this. He remembered his years of interacting with his lightning, and he quickly realized that he knew a lot more than before.

For some reason, Gravis started understanding how lightning could be that fast. He saw the movement of the Energy inside the lightning, and understanding appeared inside his mind as he lost himself in watching the Grand Elder's usage of the lightning's Law of Speed.

"Please stop for a second," Gravis said.

Whoom!

The Grand Elder stopped immediately and kept holding Gravis' arm so that he didn't fly off into the distance due to inertia. Some muscles in Gravis' arm tore, but he couldn't pay any attention to that now.

The Grand Elder looked at Gravis with a raised eyebrow while Gravis looked at his right hand.

BZZZ!

Gravis summoned some lightning and looked at it. Then, he remembered the Grand Elder's usage of the Law.

"Oh, I get it," Gravis commented.

"What do you get?" the Grand Elder asked in confusion.

For the first time in a long while, Gravis smiled a heartfelt smile. The Grand Elder was a bit surprised when he saw that since he hadn't really seen Gravis smile like this before.

"Look!" Gravis shouted.

BZZZZ!

Gravis flew into the distance. Yet, lightning came out of his backside, and he moved just as quickly as when he used his Lightning Transformation. Right now, Gravis' speed with his actual body was the same as his speed inside his Lightning Transformation.

Gravis zapped around the place as he tried out this new method of moving as the Grand Elder watched him with widened eyes. "Did you just comprehend the lightning's Law of Speed?" the Grand Elder asked.

Gravis stopped and looked at the Grand Elder with a smile. "I did! Watching lightning has unconsciously increased my knowledge about it. This Law is amazing! I can finally move around that quickly without transforming into lightning!"

The Grand Elder was still taken aback. "It's great that you understood, but why are you so happy about it? I already realized that you have a frightening talent in regards to lightning, but you could have moved this quickly even without understanding this Law."

Gravis only smirked. "Well, I have this saying. Advantages have disadvantages, and disadvantages have advantages. You probably haven't noticed, but I can't just transform into lightning without taking a huge risk."

Now, the Grand Elder grew interested. "Which is?"

Gravis was about to share his life story anyway, so he might as well tell the Grand Elder about his Lightning Transformation. "When I transform into lightning, my foundation becomes fluid..." Gravis explained as he told the Grand Elder how his Lightning Transformation worked.

The Grand Elder was incredibly interested in the Lightning Transformation, and after understanding it, he finally understood why Gravis was so happy. While being in the middle of a fight, transforming into lightning would decrease Gravis' comprehensive strength.

This meant that the Lightning Transformation was only really useful at the beginning of the fight. Yet, as soon as Gravis was in a losing position, his Lightning Transformation would become nearly useless.

In short, the Lightning Transformation only gave him an edge if he already had the edge in the fight. As soon as he lost his advantageous position, the usefulness of the Lightning Transformation would drop drastically.

The true usefulness of weapons only showed itself in a crisis since that was the moment when one needed the weapon the most.

With this new Law, he could make use of the Lightning Transformation's biggest strength without having to transform into lightning. Yet, just as Gravis always said, using this Law had another drawback.

"It wastes quite a bit of my lightning to use it," Gravis said. "My Lightning Transformation doesn't use up any Energy while moving this quickly, but this kind of movement does. I can probably only use it in short bursts in a fight. If I don't, my lightning will drain very quickly."

The Grand Elder nodded. "That's normal. Laws always require the Energy in our bodies to work."

Gravis nodded back. "However, it's still quite an upgrade for my fighting style. Additionally, this new Law allows me to use an ability that hasn't been useful for a long while."

"Oh?" the Grand Elder uttered in interest.

"Look," Gravis said as he landed on the ground.

Then, Gravis readied himself.

**BANG! BZZZZ!**

The ground below Gravis exploded with lightning as his body shot forward with incredible speed. While he did that, lightning also left his backside. With the combination of the explosion and the Law, Gravis was even faster than inside his Lightning Transformation.

"Impressive," the Grand Elder commented. "That's a lot of speed for your Realm."

This was what Gravis hadn't been able to use for a long time in serious fights. He still remembered how he had managed to accelerate rapidly in the lower world with these explosions. Yet, as soon as he got the Lightning Transformation, this technique had become nearly useless.

Yes, he had used it against the crocodile, but he had only used it because he hadn't unleashed his full power in the first place. In a serious fight, he would have simply transformed into lightning. But now, he could actually use it in serious fights again. His old, lost technique had returned.

Of course, this kind of insane acceleration still ate up over 10% of Gravis' entire lightning reserves. He had to use it sparingly, but that was only a small price for his gains.

BZZZ!

Gravis shot over to the Grand Elder again. "Let's continue," he said.

The Grand Elder nodded and shot off with Gravis in tow.

After some minutes, they arrived on top of the Mountain of Pride, and Gravis saw the Empress again. Just like last time, she still sat on her throne in the same position.

The Empress looked at Gravis. "You have accepted that it's impossible to become a King without going through the mandatory procreation?" she asked directly.

Gravis nodded. "Yes, I have accepted it."

The Empress nodded back as the Grand Elder took up his position beside her.

"Then, fulfill your promise and tell us your circumstances. As long as I'm here, no other beast will be able to eavesdrop on our conversation."

Gravis sighed.

"I didn't come from a lower world, and I'm not a beast," Gravis started as he began to tell his life story.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 492: Striders**

Gravis told the Empress and the Grand Elder as much as he was allowed to share. Stuff like the concept of Karmic Luck or the fact that beasts were only there as fodder for cultivators, he kept to himself.

During his tale, the Empress and the Grand Elder interrupted him a couple of times with questions. A lot of the concepts Gravis was speaking of sounded foreign to them. They also doubted the existence of Heaven for a long time.

One had to remember that Heaven had never shown itself in this world until recently. Telling someone that there was some super-powerful being, hidden from everything in the world, was not really convincing. Some being was keeping watch over the entire world? Please!

Extraordinary claims required extraordinary proof, and luckily for Gravis, his brief run-in with Heaven in the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning acted at this sort of proof. The Grand Elder had been the only beast present who had paid attention to Gravis' words before Heaven showed itself.

Back then, the Grand Elder had no idea whom Gravis was talking to, but with the revelation of Heaven's existence, he finally knew. This occurrence that had stumped the entire world for years now finally made sense.

Without this occurrence, the two wouldn't have believed Gravis' ridiculous tale at all. Yet, the Grand Elder had seen the proof, and the entire world had felt the proof when everything shook and stormed. The Empress trusted the Grand Elder, and when the Grand Elder told her about what had transpired, she also believed Gravis.

Gravis' tale ended after his fight with the Golden Dragon. The Empress and Grand Elder already knew everything that happened after that.

After Gravis was done talking, over half a day had passed. Usually, Gravis would only need a couple of hours to tell his life story, but the ensuing discussions about the foreign concepts took up a lot of time. Yet, Gravis didn't mind since he wasn't under any time pressure.

"Your resistance towards the mandatory procreation makes a lot more sense now," the Empress said. "Additionally, you also had a realistic shot at escaping this requirement, but it seems like you are required to perform it now either way."

Gravis sighed. "Sadly, yes. Nothing against you, Empress, but I simply have no attraction towards any kind of beast. It has nothing to do with the body but with the different mindsets that you have. Also, family is commonly incredibly important to humans."

"I still don't quite understand that," the Empress commented. "After all, we beasts also all look different from each other, but I think I can empathize with your feelings."

"Empress, now that you know about humans, I have a question," Gravis said.

"Ask," the Empress answered curtly.

"Your upper body is very similar to humans," Gravis said. "You could have chosen any other upper body with a greater combat potential, but you have chosen to look similar to a human. Why is that?"

Such a question was a bit personal, but since Gravis had shared his secrets just now, she didn't mind reciprocating. "Funnily enough, before you have told me your story, I wasn't quite sure about the reason why I chose this body."

Gravis lifted an eyebrow. He hadn't expected such an answer.

"When I became an Emperor," the Empress said as she looked at the horizon in thought, "I let the Laws guide my evolution. I didn't think about what kind of body I wanted but just trusted my instinct and feelings on this. I wasn't quite sure why I chose this kind of body back then until just now."

"Ever since I have become an Emperor, I have felt closer to the Laws than ever before. Originally, I believed that this was just the inherent feeling that every Emperor shared, but now, I don't think so anymore."

"I think the Laws have chosen this body for me because it creates a stronger connection with them. You, humans, have bodies that are many times weaker than ours, at least, that was what you have said. So, there must be other powers that let you close the gap."

"I think that one of these powers is a stronger connection with the Laws. I'm not sure, but humans having a closer connection to the Laws might be one of the things that allow them to fight beasts. You're a good example of that," the Empress said.

"Me?" Gravis asked with a lifted eyebrow.

The Empress nodded. "You have already comprehended three Laws while you're still a Lord. Of course, we can only count two of them since you have basically absorbed your Law of Punishment Lightning. For

us beasts, understanding two Laws while still being a Lord is extremely outstanding. Yet, that might not be true for humans."

Gravis scratched his chin in thought. "I think that's a possibility," he said after some seconds. The Empress didn't know this, but this explanation also fit the circumstance that humans were supposed to become as powerful as possible, not beasts.

Gravis was pretty sure that the further one progressed along the path of cultivation, the more important Laws became. Giving humans a stronger connection towards the Laws would also create a lot more powerful humans, which was what the highest Heaven wanted in the first place.

Though, one could also see it from the other side. Weakening the connection towards Laws for beasts might give humans the edge they need to actually triumph over beasts in the later Realms.

When there were only two sides, it was basically impossible to find the "normal" state. It could be that the connection towards the Laws for beasts was weakened or that the connection for humans was strengthened. Gravis didn't know.

After seeing that Gravis had stayed silent for a while, the Empress smirked. Her horizons had expanded, and with that expanded horizon, she was now able to find more answers to questions she hadn't even had in the past.

"Your explanation has given me a solid guess for another mystery of the world," the Empress said with a smirk.

"Oh?" Gravis asked.

The Grand Elder mostly remained silent and let the Empress and Gravis talk as he was just thinking about the world and Heaven. Right now, he was questioning a lot of things, which he hadn't questioned before.

The Empress pointed toward her back. "Look behind my throne, into the distance. What do you see?" she asked.

Gravis was unsure what she was referring to, but he complied anyway.

"I see your Empire," Gravis said. "I see some resting beasts, some resources, and some plants, but I still don't get what you want me to look at."

The Empress chuckled a bit as she shook her head. "I said look, not use your so-called Spirit."

Gravis had, obviously, only used his Spirit to look behind her. His eyes wouldn't be able to see any farther than his Spirit Sense's range anyway unless something truly gigantic was far in the distance.

Gravis walked behind the throne and looked past it. Nothing had really changed. He saw the same things. "I don't get it," he said after a while.

"Do you see those beasts that look like herbivores?" the Empress asked.

Gravis indeed saw them. They kind of looked like green and brown cows without the horns. "I see them, so?" Gravis asked.

"Try inspecting them with your Spirit," she said with a smirk.

Meanwhile, the Grand Elder's eyes widened as he realized what the Empress had just found out. As he thought about it, he also realized how much sense it made. No one had ever questioned the existence of these beasts. After all, they simply existed like any other beast. What differentiated them from the rest?

Gravis moved his Spirit Sense towards the herbivores, but his eyes widened as he realized something terrifying.

His Spirit Sense couldn't reach far enough to feel these herbivores. How was this possible!? His Spirit Sense had a reach of over 150 kilometers!

The Empress saw Gravis' face and giggled. In the past couple of hours, she and the Grand Elder had shown this same look on their faces, but now, it was Gravis' turn.

"These are the Striders, Gravis," the Empress said. "They are visible from nearly any location with an Empire on it. They reside in the absolute center of the entire world, the place where only the most powerful Emperors can live."

Gravis' mind was going crazy. "But you're only the leader of a level three Empire," Gravis said in shock.

Normally, such a comment would have been seen as disrespectful, but the Empress understood that Gravis didn't mean it that way.

"Exactly," she answered with a smirk. "These striders are over 100,000 kilometers away from here. If you look very closely at their feet, you will realize that they are standing on something white and fluffy. That's the cloud layer. They're not standing on it, but it looks like they are due to them just being that big."

Gravis still couldn't fully comprehend what he had just witnessed. He had seen these herbivores a couple of times, but he had never even paid any attention to them. To him, they simply looked like some distant cows. Yet, he hadn't known just how distant they were!

Gravis looked at the cloud layer and found that it resided around 20 kilometers above the floor. If that same thing held true at their location, these beasts must be truly massive! Gravis did some quick calculations and found that every single Strider was over 20,000 kilometers tall! This felt incomprehensible to Gravis. On top of that, there were ten of them!

"Every single Strider has an above-average power when compared to a level five Emperor," the Empress explained.

When Gravis heard that, he finally realized why these Striders existed.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 493: World Management**

Gravis immediately realized why these Striders existed. With his knowledge, this wasn't difficult to discern. Obviously, such a high number of congregating level five Emperors that didn't fight each other wasn't the result of some normal beasts procreating. There was a deeper reason for their existence.

Normally, every beast strived for power, and this should include the Striders as well. Under normal circumstances, they should have long since battled each other or other level five Emperors to the death until one of them managed to ascend. Yet, they didn't.

So, why were they just here like that?

Obviously, they had been created by Heaven for a specific purpose. This reason was rather simple. These beasts acted as some kind of final exam for level five Emperors for their ascension.

Heaven created these Striders for two reasons. First of all, their above-average Battle-Strength would force every ascender to be powerful. If the ascending beasts were too weak, they would not even serve as tempering for humans as soon as they reached the highest world. Additionally, the chances were high that the average Emperor wouldn't even manage to get through the higher world.

Due to these Striders, only the Emperors that managed to become outstanding would reach the next world. Additionally, every Emperor that failed would get reabsorbed by this world. A level five Emperor had a terrifying amount of Energy inside them, and if their quality weren't high enough, it would be better to just directly recycle them.

The other reason was the terrifying amount that level five Emperors needed to reach the Immortal Realm. As far as Gravis knew, the required amount of eaten corpses didn't decrease with an increase of a Realm. Based on that, every level five Emperor would need to eat eight other level five Emperors.

How many beasts did someone have to eat to become a level five Emperor? How many beasts have the beasts that got eaten have eaten? By all intents and purposes, a level five Emperor needed eight times the amount of food as a level four Emperor.

This world was big, but Gravis wasn't sure enough if it was big enough to continually create level five Emperors one after the other. Maybe there weren't even eight level five Emperors in this world right now. If Heaven did nothing regarding this situation, there would only be one ascender after who knew how many years.

Heaven used its own Energy to create these Striders for that exact purpose. As soon as someone became a level five Emperor, they only needed to kill the Striders to ascend. Then, they would absorb the Energy and take it to the higher world, and the higher Heaven would send the same amount of Energy back to the middle world.

The middle Heaven didn't lose any kind of Energy during this process since it would just receive more Energy from the higher world.

This situation could be likened to the management of money. Pure Energy was a liquid asset for Heaven, and by creating these Striders, it converted these liquid assets into hard assets. The total amount of Energy for Heaven wasn't lowered. Most of it simply existed in a different form.

Due to that, a cycle appeared. Heaven transforms Energy into Striders. The Striders get eaten, and their Energy enters a different beast. The beast ascends. The higher Heaven gives Energy to the middle Heaven equal to the amount of Energy that the beast possesses. Heaven transforms Energy into Striders and so on.



This was a cycle that allowed the middle Heaven to increase the number of ascenders manifold. Gravis found this system quite impressive and thought-through.

"They are there to increase the number of ascenders without wasting a ridiculous amount of food," Gravis said to the Empress after he remained silent for a couple of seconds.

The Empress smiled and nodded. "That's what I thought," she confirmed. "A level five Emperor needs a terrifying amount of food to reach the next world. Everyone in the world thinks that these Striders are some sort of mighty overlords that want to live in peace and are afraid of the upper world, but apparently, that's not true."

Gravis nodded. "Has anyone ever managed to talk to one of these?" he asked.

The Empress shook her head. "No, they don't talk with anyone. Additionally, if someone attacks one of them, the others don't get involved at all. The common consensus is that these Striders are too proud to intervene in fights or talk to us. Yet, now I think that they simply don't have the mental capabilities to communicate with us. Maybe they are not even aware of their own existence."

Gravis agreed with what the Empress had said, and he also remembered another detail. His father had said that this middle world belonged to the top 10% of middle worlds in regards to power. This kind of genius method might be one of the reasons for the strong standing of the ascenders from this world.

As he thought about these things, Gravis also started thinking about other natural middle worlds. His father had also said that this world was over three times as big as the average middle world. A bigger world allowed for more beasts to appear inside it. Yet, even such a big world had issues with creating enough food for an ascender to appear.

What did the smaller natural middle worlds use to create their ascenders?

A smaller world had way fewer resources than a bigger world, obviously. So, in order to create some ascenders, these kinds of worlds needed to be micromanaged way more.

It often happened that corpses got destroyed, that a stronger beast killed a weaker beast and didn't eat the corpse, or that both combatants died, leaving both corpses uneaten on the ground. This world had enough resources to ignore these resource-wasting occurrences, but smaller worlds definitely didn't.

Gravis guessed that smaller natural middle worlds probably had their Heaven dictate the fights. This meant that these fights wouldn't be as unfair in order not to waste any resources. This might allow the smaller natural middle world to create just as many ascenders as this one, but the quality would be like night and day.

One ascender went through a ton of one-on-one battles against equally powerful opponents, while the other ascender had to deal with a ton of crazy and unfair fights. The harder the fight, the better the tempering. Because of the different environments, the Emperors in this world were probably much stronger than the average ones.

Gravis shook his head to regain his bearings. "Sorry, I was lost in thought," he said to the Empress after some seconds.

"It's no problem. I have also thought a lot about our world ever since you have finished your tale," the Empress said as she waved him off dismissively.

Gravis took a deep breath and closed his eyes to ready himself. The workings of other worlds weren't on the top of his priority list right now. He had delayed the moment for long enough, and it was finally time to go through with it.

Gravis turned to the Empress and looked her deep in the eyes.

"How and when will the procreation take place?" he asked seriously.

### Lightning Is the Only Way

#### **Chapter 494: Procreation**

"Right here, right now," the Empress said directly without any emotion.

Gravis took a deep breath through his teeth. "Right here? In front of the Grand Elder?" Gravis asked as he looked at the Grand Elder.

The Empress looked a bit confused at Gravis. "Yes. Is there an issue with that?"

Gravis was a bit taken aback when he heard the Empress. Even though he had lived here for many years, he still felt like he had received a culture shock just now. "I mean, having sex is something intimate, in my opinion," Gravis said carefully as he tried to convey his standpoint.

"Oh!" the Empress said as she chuckled a bit. "You think we're going to have sex? No, we won't," she said.

Gravis blinked a couple of times. "Then, how are we supposed to create a child?" he asked.

Whoop!

Three small, almost translucent balls floated over to Gravis from behind the Empress. "These are three of my unfertilized eggs. Your seed simply needs to enter them. That's all," she said.

"Huh," Gravis uttered as he looked at them. "I hadn't thought that this was possible."

"What? You think every Lord and stronger mates like a mere animal? Please," the Empress said with disdain.

Gravis had a couple of objections to that, but he kept them to himself. "Well, okay. I think this makes things much easier," he said.

Whoop!

Three tiny seeds left Gravis' body as they floated into the eggs. With Gravis' Spirit, it was no issue for him to find the three best ones inside his body. He simply used his Spirit to make them leave his body. As soon as they entered, the Empress nodded and retrieved the eggs.

Some seconds passed in silence.

"So, that was it, huh?" Gravis commented.

"Yes, did you expect something more?" she asked with boredom.

Gravis had a complicated expression on his face. "Kind of, but also not. Don't get this the wrong way, but I think this method is better. So, what will happen now?" he asked.

"It takes around seven years for a Divine Beast to be born. During this time, I will leave the eggs out here. You should realize that with my power, something as weak as the weather won't affect their growth. I will keep watch over them in an effort to understand more about the Law of Life. If you want, you can also check on them," the Empress explained.

"With this, you also have earned the status as a breeder. This status will only hold until the time when you become a King. After that, you can decide how you want to live your life."

Gravis scratched the back of his head in discomfort. This whole situation felt a bit surreal to him. He had always imagined that having a child was something very emotional and intimate. Apparently, this hadn't proven true. Right now, Gravis didn't feel any different than before.

"I'm guessing that I need to wait until they have left their eggs to become a King?" Gravis asked.

"Yes," the Empress answered. "This will take around seven years. Do whatever you want during that time. By unveiling a spy hidden among my Elders, you have gained more privileges. You can enter any Law Comprehension Area until you become a King."

Gravis remembered that snake he had met in the Law Comprehension Area for Punishment Lightning. It felt like it had been just yesterday, but at the same time, it also felt like it had been forever ago.

Gravis thought about what he should do with this new privilege, but he wasn't sure. He could watch his own lightning as long as he wanted. Additionally, he still had the CMO inside his Life Ring. Were there any other Laws that he could try to comprehend?

After a while, Gravis shook his head. "Would it be okay to access these privileges at a later time? Right now, I already have two directions for understanding more Laws."

The Empress nodded. "Sure. When you decide to make use of your privileges, contact the Grand Elder."

Such privileges couldn't hold out forever. Gravis was pretty sure that, at some point, he would use up his contributions. Due to that, he decided to take advantage of the privileges for a time when he was at some sort of bottleneck regarding Laws.

"Then, I will be going now. You can find me somewhere around here for the next seven years," Gravis said.

The Empress and the Grand Elder only nodded. Then, Gravis turned around to leave but suddenly stopped as he came up with a great idea.

"Wait a second," Gravis said, eliciting a raised brow from the Grand Elder and the Empress. "Is it okay if I stay here to watch the eggs with you?" he asked the Empress.

"I already gave you permission for that," the Empress answered with annoyance.

BZZZZ!

Gravis transformed into lightning and created a second Gravis. Why not look at both the CMO and the eggs? Both things were related to the Laws of Life, and if he paid attention to both of them, he might be able to extrapolate some concepts from each other.

The Empress and the Grand Elder were a bit taken aback as they saw Gravis creating another one of himself. They had heard him speak about his abilities but seeing it was something completely different. Seeing two Gravises in front of them felt incredibly weird.

BZZZ!

One of the Gravises shot away into the distance, while the other one stood beside the eggs to watch them.

"That ability is quite useful," the Grand Elder commented as he rubbed his chin in thought. "I could comprehend Laws and keep watch over the Empire at the same time."

"If you're fine with having your strength halved," Gravis commented. "If you take several minutes to fuse again due to the distance, one of your bodies might have already died, halving your strength permanently. I can only do this because of you two. After all, it makes no difference to me since anything you can't deal with is something I also can't deal with."

The Grand Elder nodded in thought. "True," he commented.

After these words, silence returned on the peak of the Mountain of Pride. Humans might find this silent atmosphere to be awkward, but that didn't hold true for beasts. Most powerful beasts didn't have a need for social interaction. It made no difference to them if someone was present or not.

Beasts generally had way less shame than humans. A solid example of that was the fact that all beasts were naked all the time. What others thought about them wasn't really important to beasts.

Meanwhile, the second Gravis found a mountain and dug a cave. Due to his status, he could live close to the Mountain of Pride, even though an Emperor was living on the mountain. Of course, Gravis didn't simply enter the mountain but asked the Elder for permission.

The Elder didn't really care about Gravis living there. It made no difference to him if Gravis was there or not. It was one thing if any random beast had asked the Elder, but by being a mate to the Empress, Gravis had proven his Battle-Strength.

Strength was something that every beast respected. Gravis might not be an Emperor, but his Battle-Strength was incredible. Due to that, the Elder didn't feel like someone unworthy was staying too close to him.

As soon as he entered his newly-dug cave, Gravis sat down and concentrated on the Life Ring. He hadn't looked at the CMO in forever. He wondered if watching the eggs at the same time would increase his comprehension ability.

With this, another seven years of sitting around and thinking began.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

**Chapter 495: Watching**

Gravis kept close watch over his developing children as the years passed. In the beginning, these eggs didn't feel any different to him than looking at any other beast. Yet, as time passed, Gravis slowly started building a connection with them.

In the beginning, his feelings hadn't truly realized that these were his children, but Gravis kept telling himself, "these are my children," over and over again. He kept saying that to himself as he saw their slow development through the transparent eggs.

As time passed, he started feeling for them. A close feeling of kinship appeared as Gravis felt things he had never felt before. To him, it felt warm and soft. Just watching the growth of these small things felt enticing and interesting to him. It was like he couldn't pay attention to anything else anymore.

In the fourth year, they slowly started developing traits that were similar to Gravis. Their scales hadn't appeared yet, but their general body shape started reflecting Gravis' body shape. Tiny arms, tiny legs, and tiny tails also started appearing on their bodies over time.

In the sixth year, these small things started moving a little bit from time to time. By now, Gravis' had already realized that these small things were three fragile lives that existed only because of him and the Empress. He had created these small babies, just like his father and mother had created him.

"Am I truly ready to be a parent?" Gravis asked himself with uncertainty. As his connection with the tiny things strengthened, he started becoming nervous. What if he made a mistake? What if he wasn't able to guide them correctly? What if he hurt them unknowingly?

These were his children, and children were nearly always more important than the lives of the parents. By now, Gravis started thinking that stopping to cultivate in order to have a family wasn't such a bad thing after all.

Yes, Gravis still hadn't achieved his goal, and he still wanted to have true freedom, but if he were put before a choice, he wouldn't know what to choose anymore. Thinking about being before such a choice hurt him immensely, and he tried to distract himself whenever his head went to that place.

'I only need to stay with them until they can fully rely on themselves. When I tell them my problem in the future, I'm sure they can understand my viewpoint. I don't need to choose between my children and cultivation. With enough time, I can have both,' Gravis thought to himself.

By now, Gravis was no longer watching the development of his children with the intent to comprehend a Law of Life in mind. Right now, he only watched them because he felt close to them. He simply wanted to watch his children's growth. Gravis even only partially paid attention to the CMO since his whole mind was occupied with watching his developing babies.

As Gravis realized his changing mindset, he sighed and looked at the sky. 'Father has told me that Heaven has only created these feelings of closeness so that it will drive us to power when we lose our close ones. Yet, am I not considering abandoning my path for this exact reason?'

'Maybe mother was right. Maybe, when Heaven initially created the highest world, it had a different reason. Maybe it felt alone in its world and betrayed. Maybe it only wanted to create beings that genuinely cared for each other,' Gravis mused to himself.

The workings of the highest Heaven were a mystery, and not even his father managed to see through all of them. One could only discern things about Heaven based on what it had shown them. Unfortunately, the highest Heaven kept to itself most of the time, making it nearly impossible to learn things about it.

Not everyone was a nice person, and not everyone was a selfish person. Some humans genuinely were ready to sacrifice their lives for people in need that they didn't even know, but some humans would also kill their closest relative for some gold. Humans came in all shapes, sizes, and colors.

Was Heaven similar to humans? Just because nearly everyone believed in Heaven's fairness, did it automatically mean that it was fair? Just because his father believed Heaven to be an evil and selfish being, did it automatically mean that it was selfish and evil?

Humans often acted differently than they thought themselves to be. There were people in the world that believed themselves to be kind and good but would be willing to kill someone if they even looked in their direction.

Yet, some humans believed themselves to be evil, but as soon as they were confronted with an opportunity to kill someone for wealth, they would find a justification to not take the wealth. Maybe they said that they didn't need the wealth of someone that weak? Maybe they said that it was beneath them to kill someone like that?

Was Heaven similar? Maybe Heaven truly believed that it only wanted as much Energy as possible and acted that way. Maybe Heaven truly had the power to kill his father but decided not to kill him due to his Energy attraction. At least, that's what it maybe believed itself.

Maybe, Heaven actually didn't want to kill his father since he was the only being that stood on its level. There was a realistic chance that Heaven simply didn't want to be alone, just like many other humans. Maybe it had created humans like this because it felt alone?

Gravis sighed again as he shook his head. 'Thinking about this is useless. Maybe I am simply projecting my own way of thinking onto a being that I can't understand.'

In the seventh year, Gravis only paid attention to his children. Right now, he didn't care about his incoming breakthrough to the Nascent Nourishing Realm or about his progress in understanding more Laws. As long as his children's path wasn't steadfast and clear, Gravis wouldn't care about anything else.

'Is it really bad to build attachments?' Gravis asked himself. 'My progress has halted, but my days have been as colorful and joyful as never before. Every time I see them move, I have this urge to watch, hug, and protect them.'

Gravis kept looking at the eggs. By now, the three little lives inside looked almost identical to him. The only thing missing was their scales since they still hadn't completely appeared. Yet, some small things started growing out all over their skin. Gravis was sure that these little things would become their scales in the future.

Gravis thought of himself as a human, and his children didn't look like humans at all, but that didn't stop Gravis' love for them. By now, he had realized that his children were pure beasts. There was no inkling of a developed will or Spirit inside them.

Feeling a Spirit or will wasn't anything difficult for someone as powerful as Gravis. This showed him that his children had nothing human in them. Yet, was that so bad? No, it wasn't. In terms of personality, Gravis agreed with beasts more than with humans anyway. Did it matter that his children were beasts and not humans?

Gravis didn't think that it mattered. No matter how they looked or how they acted, they would be his children. As he thought this, Gravis also realized why his father still kept in touch with his more pampered and arrogant siblings.

To Gravis, it didn't matter if these siblings of his died or not, but that wasn't true for his parents. Just like Gravis had watched his children, his parents had watched their children. In Gravis' mind, even if his children turned out to be beasts that he wouldn't like one bit, he would still love them and think of them as his own flesh and blood.

'Yet, is that good?' Gravis thought with uncertainty. 'If one of them becomes someone that suppresses everyone else and relies on my love and goodwill to suppress good beasts, is it really right for me to support them then?'

Normally, Gravis would have immediately said that doing that would only be corrupting the children and that it would be hypocritical. Yet, right now, Gravis only wanted his children to be happy. Was it so wrong to play favorites when it was regarding the closest beings he had in his life?

BZZZZ!

His lightning didn't like these thoughts one bit. Gravis felt himself becoming angrier at himself as his thoughts continued. Lightning wanted fairness and honesty, and these thoughts were not fair nor honest.

After some minutes, Gravis calmed down again and released another sigh. "Maybe it's better this way. I think my love may have blinded me. If they are hellbent on becoming truly powerful, I will act according to my lightning. Pampering them would only hurt their future path anyway."

"But, if they want to live in peace, I will bring them to a place where they don't have to worry about fighting," Gravis said to himself.

His lightning was fine with that answer.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 496: Areas**

"Gravis, it's time," the Empress said from her throne.

Gravis nodded. "I know. They should come out of their eggs soon," he said.

"We need to split them up. They can't be born near each other," the Empress said.

Gravis' eyes widened as he heard that. Separating the siblings at birth? Why would the Empress suggest something like that?

Gravis looked with cold eyes at the Empress. "Why?" he asked evenly.

The Empress had already expected such a reaction from Gravis. "Think about who their parents are," the Empress said. "I'm a powerful Emperor, and you have an incredibly powerful body and fighting instinct."

"As you know, when beasts are born, they can't even realize their own existence. In the beginning, they are nothing but a powerful body guided by pure instinct. Due to that, the first thing they will do after exiting their eggs is to try to eat the closest thing on their level, which are the other eggs."

"So, as soon as the first one breaks through their shell, they will try to kill their siblings and eat them while they're still not born yet," the Empress explained.

Gravis' heart shook as he heard that. Just imagining the picture of one of his children eating the others felt horrifying! They were his children! Why would they try to kill each other!?

Of course, Gravis' will was powerful enough to stay rational. He always tried his best not to let his emotions dictate his actions. Too many mistakes would appear if one always trusted their feelings to make the decisions for them.

"You have more experience in that. I will trust you on this matter," Gravis said after taking a deep breath to calm down.

The Empress nodded.

Whoosh!

"Empress," an Elder said deferentially as he appeared before the Empress. Gravis hadn't even been able to keep track of the Elder due to his power.

"Area A 1, Area A 6, Area A 11," the Empress said to the Elder.

The Elder nodded and went to the eggs. Then, some wind appeared that made the eggs levitate gently.

"Wait a second," Gravis said, making the Elder look at him neutrally. "I want to follow and keep watch."

The Elder furrowed his brows.

BZZZZ!

A lightning bolt suddenly shot up the Mountain of Pride and entered Gravis. This was the Gravis that had kept watching the CMO during all these years.

BZZZ!

Then, Gravis split into three. He easily had enough power to create three bodies. He had so much lightning inside of him that every single body was even stronger than Gravis when he had newly reached the power of a level five Lord.

The Elder's eyes nearly fell out of their sockets as he watched Gravis multiply.

"Let him follow," the Empress commanded. Then, she looked at Gravis with cold eyes. "Don't involve yourself in their development, Gravis. Let nature take its course," she said.

The Gravises sighed. "I understand," he answered.



The Elder was still stunned by Gravis' performance, but the orders of the Empress took priority. "Follow me," he said.

The Gravises nodded and followed the Elder as they flew towards the west.

"What's with these weird phrases that the Empress has said?" one of the Gravises asked the Elder after some seconds.

"All offspring of our members are assigned to safe areas when they are born," the Elder answered without looking at him. "The area-code tells us where the offspring is assigned to."

"Areas having the A-code are only open to the Empress, a select few powerful elders, and the offspring of Fodders," the Elder answered.

"Fodders?" Gravis asked with a raised eyebrow.

The Elder nodded. "Fodders are weak Lords that earn contributions for the Empire by birthing children. Since these Lords have weak powers, their offspring will also be weak. Due to that, their offspring will provide some training and food for our more powerful offspring."

Gravis' stomach churned when he heard that. Some beasts had children just for these children to act as food? This sounded horrible to Gravis.

"Why would they do this?" Gravis asked.

"Since these areas are only accessible by so few powerful Emperors, the number of Divine Beasts is very low. Over 99% of the offspring in these areas will never meet a Divine Beast. This means that there are very few more powerful beasts residing in these areas, making the fights fairer and winnable."

"The Fodders are betting on their luck. With good or average luck, their offspring will never meet an offspring of an Emperor. Only the beasts with the worst luck will come across a Divine Beast."

"These areas have an incredible assortment of natural treasures, resources, Energy, and an abundance of other beasts with similar strengths. It's the best place for the Fodders' offspring to grow," the Elder explained.

Gravis thought about this for a while and had to agree. Over 99% of the beasts there had a below-average Battle Strength for their Realm. This gave their offspring the best shot for surviving. Yet, Gravis had another question.

"But doesn't that hamper the growth of our offspring's Battle-Strength? After all, they will only fight weak beasts," Gravis asked.

"You should know that the areas are divided by major ranks," the Elder answered. "All beasts inside the first major Realm reside in these areas until they become powerful enough. This means that a Divine Beast can meet a beast with a weaker Battle Strength but with a more advanced Realm. Fighting above your level is great tempering."

Gravis knew that the first major Realm the Elder referred to was the Realm of a Demonic Beast. This meant that his newborn children could come across a High-Rank Demonic Beast shortly after their birth. A Low-Rank Demonic Beast being able to kill a High-Rank Demonic Beast could be considered a miracle.

"Divine Beasts also need more nourishment in the beginning," the Elder continued explaining, "and they also have an inherently stronger drive to reach supreme power. It's only a matter of time until a Divine Beast attacks a beast one or two levels above themselves. Due to that mindset, their Battle-Strength will increase."

Gravis nodded. "What about the numbers in the area-code?" he asked.

"Those reflect the place of the areas," the Elder answered. "1 to 5 are in the west, 6 to 10 are in the north, 11 to 15 are in the east, and 16 to 20 are in the south. Only the Empress has access to the first area of each direction. That's why she has assigned your offspring to areas A 1, A 6, and A 11. There are no other Divine Beasts in these areas."

Gravis nodded again. At least, his children would have the best start in life.

"What about the time when they reach the second major Realm?" Gravis asked.

"They will be placed into area D," the Elder said.

"What's with areas B and C?" Gravis asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Area A is only for the strongest and weakest of offspring. Area B is for the second strongest and second weakest. Area C is a free-for-all that everyone can use. Areas D and E are for the second major Realm."

"Area D has all the beasts of area A and half the beasts of area C. Area E has all the beasts of area B and the other half of area C. Area F is the only area for the third major Realm, and all areas congregate there," the Elder explained.

Gravis thought about this and realized that this made sense. His offspring would have the weakest of opponents initially, which allowed them to gain enough experience with their bodies to be ready for future battles.

As soon as his children became Energy Beasts, they would be transported into an area with a wide variety of beasts. These beasts would probably be average and slightly above average. After all, if someone were able to create powerful offspring, they would choose area A or B. Only the beasts that didn't fulfill the power requirements of areas A and B would place their offspring in area C.

Then, when his offspring became Spirit Beasts, they would be placed into an area that reflected the real world. They would be able to meet the weakest and strongest of beasts. This was quite an effective and efficient system.

"Would the beasts from different area As meet each other in area D?" Gravis asked.

"No," the Elder answered. "Area C is by far the biggest, and it has enough beasts to allow us to split the beasts from area A into another five areas. They will only meet each other in area F."

Gravis nodded. He had thought as much.

After all of Gravis' questions had been answered, they continued flying in silence. Gravis was already quite fast, and Demonic Beasts didn't need to be that far apart.

After some minutes, they arrived at their destination. A gigantic forest stretched as far as the eye could see, but directly below Gravis was something different.

A barren wasteland with a lot of circular walls could be seen below Gravis. All of these circular walls enclosed a tiny space each, and looking at it from above, Gravis got reminded of a honey-comb. He saw many empty "cells", but the ones that were occupied only had one egg inside them or a newborn baby of a mammalian beast.

"It's impossible to break the walls from the outside," the Elder explained before Gravis could even ask. "The cells can only be broken from the inside, and only if the offspring is powerful enough to actually destroy the walls. This gives the offspring enough time to grow and stabilize themselves before their first battle."

Whoosh!

One of the eggs entered one of the "cells", and one of the Gravises flew to the sky above it. Gravis would stay several kilometers above ground to not get noticed by the beasts. With this, he would be able to keep watch.

Gravis had already noticed a vast number and variety of Demonic Beasts roaming around the forest and fighting each other. One could say that the forest was packed with life.

"Let's continue," the Elder said.

Then, the Elder flew towards the north-east while two of the Gravises flew after him.

### [Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

#### **Chapter 497: Aris**

CRK!

The sound of a cracking egg echoed throughout the surroundings. The egg was rather hard, and it proved to be rather difficult to break out of it. Yet, the small lizard did its best.

CRRK!

A tiny black and shiny arm broke out of the egg. The tiny arm aimlessly tried to grab something but didn't find anything.

Bonk!

The egg fell over onto its side as the weight inside the egg shifted. The egg fell onto the arm, giving the small thing its first experience with surprise.

CRR!

The claws on the tiny arm created some scratch marks in the soft earth beneath it as it tried to salvage the situation. After a while, the arm retracted, and a small black snout came out of the egg as it took its first breath of fresh air.

Whoop!

The snout retreated as two tiny hands grabbed the edges of the hole.

CRRRRRK!

The power of the arms was quite surprising as they widened the hole in the egg. After seeing that this approach worked, the tiny black thing did its best to free itself from its prison.

CRK!

Half of the egg got destroyed as the small thing felt light for the first time on its face. It had an elongated black snout with some small teeth poking out of its sides. The tiny thing looked into the sun and quickly closed its eyes due to the blinding light. Out of reflex, it held its small hands in front of its eyes.

After waiting for some seconds, the tiny thing looked around, but it didn't dare to look up again. By now, the tiny being could be fully seen.

It was only around ten-centimeters-tall and had black, glowing scales encasing its entire body. The scales were so black that it looked like they absorbed all the light. Reptilian eyes looked around their surroundings as the small beast took the world in with interest and curiosity.

What was this soft stuff below it? Why did this soft stuff rise further away? Why did it hurt to look up? What was this strange feeling around its own body? Was this earth? Was this temperature? Was this light?

The tiny being knew nothing about these concepts, and all of them felt foreign to it. It had no knowledge of anything and simply tried to make sense of its surroundings.

Sniff, sniff!

Yet, all of this was forgotten as it smelled something enticing. It turned around and looked at the broken eggshells, the pieces of its former prison. For some reason, it had the urge to eat them.

Following its instincts, the tiny being started crunching on the eggshells. It proved rather easy to eat the eggshells, and the tiny being almost couldn't believe that something this fragile and delicious had been able to suppress it until now.

For some reason, the tiny being got angry at the broken eggshells. These eggshells had kept it away from experiencing this world!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

It started to scratch and bite the eggshells. After a while, it also started using its legs and tail to throw the eggshells away. It didn't know why, but it hated the fact that it had been held prisoner by these weak things.

After some minutes, the tiny being felt proud of its accomplishments as small shards of egg were strewn all around its small enclosure.

Grumble!

Yet, the tiny being felt hungry again. It looked at the small pieces of eggshells with regret. They had all become dirty, and many pieces were so small that they couldn't even properly be eaten anymore.

This was the tiny being's first encounter with regret.

It shouldn't have destroyed the shells. Now, it would become much harder to eat. The tiny being did its best to gather the pieces again and proceeded to eat them. It didn't like the taste of earth, but there was nothing it could do. It simply found no solution to this problem.

Sadly, the tiny being wasn't developed enough to realize that it could simply clean the eggshells. To it, it felt like it had to eat the eggshells as they were.

However, all of this had been quickly forgotten as it finished its meal. It finally didn't have this urge to eat anymore. Yet, another urge appeared. The tiny being opened its mouth widely as it felt its eyes starting to close by themselves. It felt groggy and didn't want to look at the world anymore.

In no time at all, it laid down and started sleeping.

Suddenly, the tiny being opened its eyes as it looked around again. It felt like no time had passed, but in truth, it had slept for multiple hours. Additionally, it looked around in confusion as it realized that everything had become smaller.

What the tiny being didn't know was that, with the nourishment of the egg, it had become a Demonic Beast. It had grown to be a full meter long. In just a couple of hours, the tiny being had become not-so-tiny anymore.

Now, a human would tremble in fear in front of this black lizard. In human standards, it couldn't be called cute anymore. In just a couple of hours, it had transformed from a tiny, helpless baby into a predator.

For some reason, the beast also knew what it was called. For some reason, its mind told it that it was called Aris. It, no he, was Aris.

Aris had no idea why he knew his own name, but it felt right. For some reason, Aris was sure that his name was Aris. Aris also knew that what he was feeling right now was called hunger. It wanted and needed food!

Aris growled a bit as he used his vocal cords for the first time in his life. His frustration guided him into releasing it with a growl. Aris looked around and saw the walls enclosing him.

When he saw these walls, Aris became enraged again. Was this another prison!? Aris hated prisons!

BANG!

Aris jumped forward but fell over as he misjudged his movements. Yet, that only made him angrier. He started scrambling forward with all his limbs as he charged at the walls.

CRR! CRR! CRR! CRRR!

He scratched the walls with all his power, but these walls proved to be much harder than the fragile egg. The walls were quite powerful, but Aris saw progress as chunks of the wall fell to the side.

After around a minute of digging, Aris suddenly got a brilliant idea. He looked upward again and saw the black sky. For some reason, there was no more light falling onto him anymore. Aris hesitated for a second but then started digging his claws and feet into the wall. Then, he started climbing upward.

Why dig through this hard wall when he could simply climb over it? Aris felt proud of his genius as he ascended the wall.

After some seconds, he managed to reach the top. The walls were only three meters tall, and it didn't prove hard for Aris to climb over them. Yet, as soon as Aris reached the top, he looked with widened and curious eyes at the world.

It was so big!

What were these brown and green, tall things? What was this green stuff on the ground? Why was everything so dark? What was this shining half-circle above him? Why were there small lights above him?

Aris stretched his claws to the sky as he tried to grab the shining crescent in the sky. Yet, he wasn't able to reach it. He tried a couple of more times, but he gave up when he realized that he nearly fell back into his prison. One day, this small crescent would be grabbed by him!

Aris looked towards the ground outside but felt some fear due to the height. This was way too high, and for some reason, he was afraid of falling down. Something inside of him told him that falling would be bad.

Aris tried to climb down at the other side, but it was challenging to find any hold with his current position atop the wall. Several hours passed in which Aris hesitated on how to climb down. Was climbing up a good idea? Would he be stuck here forever?

Yet, Aris smelled something.

It was an enticing smell. This smell was awakening something in him. This was the smell of food!

Aris looked towards the origin of the smell, and he saw something. It was a one-meter-tall lion, and it looked rather intimidating and muscular.

At least, that's what a human would think.

BANG! BANG!

Guided by instinct, Aris jumped off the wall and landed on the ground without any issues. Surprisingly, the fall didn't hurt Aris even a little bit. Additionally, he had jumped over ten meters just now.

"RAAAAAH!" Aris shouted with all his power as he charged at the lion. He charged with all fours, but after feeling this position to be awkward, he righted himself and only ran on two legs.

This lion was not an intimidating foe.

This was food!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

**Chapter 498: Centipede**

"RAAAAH!"

The lion looked towards the origin of the shout and saw a small beast charging at him clumsily.

More food had appeared.

The lion was a Low-Rank Demonic Beast, and it had realized that weak beasts appeared from the direction of the earth walls in random intervals. These beasts had no experience and became easy food for the lion. Staying here had proven quite fruitful.

The lion righted itself and charged at the approaching attacker. This fight would end quickly, just like all the other ones. As the attacker neared the lion, the lion lifted one of its claws to strike the opponent.

BANG! CRK!

The swipe hit, but for some reason, the lion wasn't powerful enough to throw the attacker to the side. Additionally, its claws broke on the attacker's scales. The lion had never experienced anything like this!

BANG!

The lion was thrown into the distance as a huge gash nearly tore its right front-leg off. The lion panicked, and after sliding for a couple of meters, it got up again.

BANG!

But not before the attacker reached it and started wailing on the lion with all kinds of random attacks. Yet, all of these attacks proved effective as chunks of flesh got thrown into the distance. The lion couldn't do anything as it was reduced to chunks by the attacks.

In less than a minute, the lion's life ended. Aris had made his first kill, and it had proven incredibly easy. After seeing that the lion stopped moving, Aris calmed down again and looked at the corpse. For some reason, he wasn't satisfied. He somehow felt disappointed.

Aris didn't know why he felt this way. He wanted food, and now he had food. Something inside him told him that he shouldn't eat the corpse. Yet, his hunger disagreed. So, Aris dug in and began to consume the corpse, but he didn't feel happy or fulfilled while doing so.

Surprisingly, Aris managed to eat the entire thing in just a couple of hours, even though the lion had been even bigger than him. Additionally, his size hadn't even changed. It was almost like the lion had disappeared from the world.

Aris felt some tiredness return, but he didn't want to sleep now. He wanted to hunt more! Something inside of him told him to find more powerful food. This lion had been too weak!

Because of this feeling, Aris started walking into the forest in search of more prey. His hunger hadn't disappeared, and he wanted more!

Aris saw some small animals on his travel through the forest, but he ignored them. For some reason, he despised eating these small and weak things. He wanted something more powerful!

CRK!

A heavy thing fell on top of Aris and bit him in the neck, but the attacker's teeth broke on the scales. Aris became panicked as he was attacked and wildly flailed around.

BANG!

His tail hit the attacker, who got flung into the distance by the powerful hit. The attacker hit a tree and broke it with the impact. Aris stood up, his panic replaced with fury, as he charged at his attacker. He quickly found his attacker and could finally see what they looked like.

It was a black panther who had already received major injuries from the tail swipe. Aris arrived quickly and ended the panther's life before it could stand up again.

Yet, in comparison to last time, Aris didn't eat it. He was still hungry but not so hungry that it overwhelmed his inherent disgust for anything weak. With that thought, Aris left the corpse behind as he continued walking in a random direction.

More attacks appeared as the hours passed, but Aris never ate the corpses. All of these beasts were too weak! He hated that they were all so weak!

After a fruitless journey, Aris stopped. Now, his tiredness was stronger than his drive for finding powerful prey. Without looking for any kind of shelter, Aris simply laid down and began sleeping.

Yet, that had proven to be a bad idea. It wasn't because Aris had been ambushed by something powerful, but that he had been ambushed by too many weaklings! His sleep has been interrupted several times as weak beasts just kept jumping on him. Luckily, Aris was able to fall back asleep quickly.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The sounds of heavy footsteps awoke Aris as he looked into the distance. There, he saw an over ten-meter-long centipede. The centipede had already noticed Aris, but it ignored him. In the centipede's eyes, this beast simply appeared too weak. The centipede required prey on its own level. After all, it was a Mid-Rank Demonic Beast.

As Aris saw the centipede, his blood began to boil. This centipede looked powerful! All tiredness vanished from his mind as battle-intent took over.

BANG!

Aris shot forward as he charged at the centipede. By now, Aris had gotten used to walking and running, and he wasn't clumsy anymore. He had already realized that he could also use his legs and tail as weapons.

The centipede noticed the attacker and turned to him. Then, it snapped its gigantic pincer-like teeth at him.

Aris felt that this attack wasn't as weak as all the others he had experienced. His brain scrambled to find a way out of this situation. Fortunately, he managed to come up with a solution and simply jumped over the attack.

The centipede's teeth snapped shut, but it hadn't caught anything. Surprised, the centipede looked upward and saw the falling Aris. Aris had used way too much power in his jump and jumped too high. He



was well above the head of the centipede, giving it enough time to react. After a second, the pincers already pointed towards Aris again.

CRACK!

Aris couldn't evade in the air, and the pincers closed around him. Some of his scales cracked, but the attack hadn't injured him. Yet, he felt a crushing pressure on his chest as the teeth tried to break him apart.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Aris hit the pincer-like teeth with his hands in an effort to break free. The pressure increased on his torso, making him feel more panicked. His mind went wild as he tried everything to get free.

CRK!

One of the pincer-like teeth cracked as Aris hit it with all his power.

"SCREEE!" the centipede screeched as it threw Aris to the side. It had felt the sting in its weapon and decided against keeping Aris in its grip. Yet, its pincer-like teeth had been its most powerful weapon. If that didn't work, what would?

Aris righted himself and charged at the centipede again without any fear.

Meanwhile, the centipede quickly turned around and fled into the distance. This prey was too hard to kill. There was no point in continuing the fight.

Aris chased the centipede for several minutes, but it was just way faster than him. In the end, Aris had to abort the chase as he lost track of the centipede.

Even though Aris didn't have any food right now, he felt great. This brief brush with death felt exhilarating! He had never felt anything so amazing before!

This was a prey worthy of his hunger!

Yet, he had to keep his prey from fleeing in the future.

After this experience, Aris finally knew what he wanted. He wanted to consume powerful prey that could endanger his life. This was his purpose! This was his goal! This was his calling!

No beast realized it, but this was the birth of the Black Demon who would terrorize Area A 1 in the future!

Nothing in this region would be able to stop him!

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

### **Chapter 499: Three Fighting Styles**

Gravis watched as all his children experienced the world for the first time. Due to his size, he constantly was in the form of lightning so that no one noticed him.

When Aris fought the centipede, Gravis felt incredibly nervous. He knew that the centipede wouldn't be able to get through the scales that easily, but he was still nervous. Luckily, Aris managed to survive.

"Is this how you have felt when I participated in the practical exams, father?" Gravis asked as he looked to the sky. "Have you also wrestled with the thought of interfering if I were close to dying?"

Gravis sighed. "It's so difficult to just watch my children risk their lives. I know that I can save them from nearly everything, but I can't interfere without endangering their path forward."

Having the ability to resolve a conflict but not being able to use it was a harrowing feeling. It was one thing when his friends got into such a situation, but it was an entirely different one when it involved his children.

Gravis had this urge to just protect and pamper them. He didn't want them to go through these hardships. Yet, his children just didn't know any better. They followed their instincts, and their instincts told them that they needed to become powerful.

Gravis started understanding his father's conduct more. Back then, his father hadn't allowed Gravis to cultivate. Back then, Gravis had believed this to be unfair. Yet, the Gravis from back then just didn't know what he wanted. The Gravis from back then had no idea about the hardships and dangers that cultivation brought with it.

It was no wonder that his father didn't allow him to cultivate until the time when his goal and motivation had been set. Only when someone was ready to go through hardships that might kill any other mortal would they be able to walk the path of cultivation without regret.

Yet, Gravis had had a choice back then. His children, in comparison, had never received this choice. Beasts were too stupid without reaching, at least, the Spirit Beast Realm. They were forced to start on the path of cultivation until they became Spirit Beasts. Then, they would be able to choose their path.

Additionally, this was not the highest world. There were areas in the highest world with an Energy density even lower than a lower world. The further out one went in the highest world, the lower the Energy density. People living in these areas could live their lives in peace without having any kind of cultivation.

But this middle world was different. The continent was surrounded by ocean, and all the areas with low Energy density were in the ocean. This meant that a land beast that had been born in this world could only choose peace after they became Lords.

As soon as they became Lords, they could go to the continent's edges and create a small Tribe that didn't want to expand. As soon as the power of the Tribe Leader was stronger than the surrounding beasts, everyone in the Tribe could live in peace.

Yet, how much death and fighting did it take to create a Lord? Over 99% of beasts would never reach the power of a Lord. This meant that only a privileged few even had the choice of peace. If they wanted to survive, they had to kill and become stronger.

His three children were in this situation, and Gravis knew that he needed to let them grow naturally. They needed to become powerful enough to make their choice.

After a year of watching his children, Gravis could already see differences in their personalities. In the beginning, they had all acted identical, but their fighting styles and personalities had changed to suit the environment better.

His firstborn, Aris, had learned an incredible amount about fighting. His combat experience had skyrocketed, but he still wasn't able to kill a Mid-Rank Demonic Beast.

The reason for that was the fact that Mid-Rank Demonic Beasts were faster than Aris. As soon as they noticed that Aris wasn't that easy to kill, they fled into the distance.

One had to remember that the beasts living in area A had incredibly weak Battle Strength, which was related to mindset. These beasts weren't interested in tempering. The only desire they had was to survive. Due to this mindset, they never took risks, and therefore, never got any good tempering.

If Aris met beasts from area C, things might have turned out differently. Those beasts had an average Battle-Strength, and their mindsets were also different. Over half of these beasts would have fought Aris to the death.

Gravis never had any issues with killing beasts. Was that because he had fought different beasts?

No.

Nearly all Demonic Beasts that Gravis had fought in his life had no hesitation about retreating. The reason why they couldn't retreat was that Gravis never gave them a chance to flee.

Gravis' fighting style was completely different from Aris'. Aris tried to dominate the enemy by slowly taking the upper hand in combat. Yet, as soon as a beast noticed that they lost their advantage, they fled.

Gravis fought differently. In the beginning, most of the fights appeared equal or unfavorable to Gravis. Of course, Gravis only made it appear like this so that he could kill the enemy in a single attack. He kept his weapons hidden until the moment when he could kill the enemy in one strike. Naturally, it was different when the enemy actually was stronger than him.

Yet, as said previously, his children had already shown different personalities and fighting styles. Aris fought directly against his opponent without ever hiding anything. He simply clashed with them openly to see who was stronger.

His secondborn, the female Cera, had a different fighting style.

Cera's fighting style was a bit peculiar. When she fought, she always targeted the parts that gave her enemy their strongest weapon. When she fought a bird, she went for the wings. When she fought a cheetah, she went for the legs. When she fought a scorpion, she went for the tail. She attacked the very thing that proved to be the enemy's strongest trait.

In Gravis' mind, this fighting style was more effective than Aris' fighting style, but it was also risky when fighting someone much stronger.

Sometimes, enemies had a hidden weapon that one wasn't able to see immediately. Seeing the enemy become weaker and weaker would increase one's confidence. If that enemy then unveiled a powerful attack, Cera might not be ready to deal with it due to her confidence and shock.

Yet, Cera's fighting style had proven to be powerful. That was because she managed to kill several Mid-Rank Demonic Beasts already. Breaking the wings or the legs of an enemy slowed them down immensely, making it possible for Cera to chase them down when they decided to retreat.

His thirdborn, the female Yersi, had also developed a different fighting style. Gravis wasn't the biggest fan of that fighting style, but right now, it had proven to be the most effective for the current circumstance.

Yersi fought exactly like a generic Darkness Cultivator. She kept herself hidden and aimed to take the enemy down in a single attack. Similar to the panther that had attacked Aris in the beginning, Yersi hid in the darkness and targeted the enemy's weak spot with her strongest attack. As long as her enemy wasn't specialized in defense, she would kill them in one fell swoop.

Due to Yersi's successful fighting style, she had already become a Mid-Rank Demonic Beast. Additionally, she had already killed a High-Rank Demonic Beast.

So, right now, Yersi was the strongest, followed by Cera, and lastly, Aris.

Yet, this was only the beginning. Yersi might get the most resources out of her fighting style, but she also got the least amount of tempering. Either she killed the target directly, or the target would immediately flee. As soon as she had developed that fighting style, she hadn't openly fought with anyone.

Cera received the most tempering out of the three. Her fighting style made it hard for the enemy to flee, which forced them to attack Cera all out. Her fights were the longest and most intense.

Aris received more tempering than Yersi but less than Cera. Yet, that was only because of the enemy's weak mindset. When Aris would meet more powerful beasts, he might be able to receive the most tempering and also develop the most effective fighting style out of the three.

All his fights were open confrontations. If an enemy reciprocated, Aris would be able to have the most direct fight. Cera used a lot of trickery in her fights, which hindered her opponents from unleashing their strengths. Meanwhile, Aris received the full brunt of the enemy's power.

With all of this considered, even though Yersi was far ahead of everyone, everything was still open. As soon as they reached area D, things might turn upside down.

Yersi had a surefire way to kill a beast one level above her. Yet, if she didn't change her fighting style, that would be her limit. With that fighting style, she would never be able to kill a beast two levels above her.

Cera could maybe kill someone two levels above her, but her fighting style took too many chances. One hidden weapon could spell her undoing when fighting such a powerful opponent.

Due to Aris' fighting style, he would be able to receive the most attacks and learn a lot more than the others when he reached area D. As long as he gained more experience, he would definitely be able to fight two levels above him.

So, even though Aris was the slowest right now, this might be for the better.

There was an old proverb that fit the current dynamic rather well.

Sharpening the axe doesn't take away time from cutting down trees.

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

**Chapter 500: Progress**

Unsurprisingly, Yersi was the first to reach area D.

After killing enough High-Rank Demonic Beasts, she became a High-Rank Demonic Beast herself. She searched for more powerful prey but wasn't able to find any after several days of searching. She became increasingly frustrated as she realized that there were no beasts more powerful than her.

Due to that, she started reaching the edge of area A and was about to leave it.

BANG!

Yersi became incredibly shocked and afraid when a gigantic, white bird landed before her. This bird was so huge that she couldn't even see the entire thing! She had never seen anything even remotely like that.

This bird was the King who was responsible for keeping an eye on this area. Nearly no Divine Beast was fine with fighting beasts of their same level and always searched for more powerful opponents. Due to that, sooner or later, they would leave their area in search of more powerful opponents.

It was this King's job to inform the inhabitant about how to proceed.

"Eat enough beasts of your level to reach the next Realm. Then, you will meet more powerful opponents," the King transmitted to Yersi.

One had to remember that Energy Beasts had strengths equal to two levels higher than High-Rank Demonic Beasts. If Yersi entered area D without being a High-Rank Demonic Beast herself, she would most likely die.

Yersi wasn't able to fully understand what the King meant with his complicated words. She was still a Demonic Beast, and such concepts were foreign to her. Yet, she understood that she needed to eat more of the weak beasts present.

The authority of power that the King commanded compelled her to follow his orders. Due to that, she turned around and began to kill and consume one High-Rank Demonic Beast after the other. In just two weeks, she had consumed enough beasts to become an Energy Beast.

When Yersi had been a High-Rank Demonic Beast, she had been over ten meters tall, but as soon as she became an Energy Beast, her size decreased instead of increasing. This was an evolution, and her instincts guided her to keep her body as small as possible. Due to that, her size reverted to be only 1.5 meters tall.

When she became an Energy Beast, the King returned and took her away to area D. There, she would be able to find more powerful prey.

A couple of months after Yersi left area A, Cera also met the King responsible for her area. This king was a gigantic elephant. Cera also quickly managed to reach area D in two weeks after that.

When all this happened, Aris had just killed his first Mid-Rank Demonic Beast. By now, he had realized that he needed to destroy his opponent's means of retreat if he wanted to kill them. He despised that he had to do something like that, but he did it anyway.

Three months after Cera left for area D, Aris met the King responsible for his area. This one was a gigantic, emerald wolf. The wolf told Aris that he needed to consume more prey, but things went differently this time.

Aris hated this feeling that someone more powerful than him told him to do something. Instead of following the King's commands, he tried to pass by him.

BANG!

Aris was thrown back as the King shoved him away. Some of Aris' bones broke, but instead of becoming afraid, he only glared at the King with hatred. Then, he tried to pass the King again.

BANG!

More injuries appeared on Aris as the King struck him away. Yet, Aris continued in an effort to bypass the King.

Meanwhile, the King was nervous. He couldn't just kill Aris. Yet, Aris wasn't giving up! What was he supposed to do in this situation?

"Let him enter area D," Gravis said to the King.

"You do realize that he will most likely die, right?" the wolf answered.

Gravis sighed. "It's his choice. He is similar to me and doesn't want to be forced to do something. He wants more powerful opponents, and sooner than later, he will fight someone two levels above himself anyway. This situation will inevitably happen. So, there's no reason to delay it."

The King remained silent for a bit as he thought about Gravis' words. "Alright," he said.

Whoom!

A beam of light shone upon Aris, healing all his injuries. The King had called for a healer. Then, the King summoned some wind and took Aris with him to area D.

Meanwhile, Yersi had been confronted with reality. Whenever she had failed an ambush, the opponent would simply run away, but that had changed. Now, the beasts started fighting her directly if she failed in her ambush.

Yersi didn't have much experience in open combat, making it difficult for her to fight someone even one level above her. The enemy quickly overwhelmed her, but her scales protected her from harm.

Yet, that didn't deter the beast. Her first opponent chased her for hours, attacking her continually during all this. Due to that, Yersi was forced to battle the opponent openly. The direct fight took over an hour, but Yersi managed to kill her opponent. Yet, she had endured a mighty beating during the fight. Without her scales, she would have died several times over.

From this day forward, Yersi would need to fight many more open battles. Her ambush still worked most of the time, but as soon as someone fought her directly, it would become a slugfest.

Cera had it a bit easier but not that much. She had more direct combat experience than Yersi, but her enemies also had more combat experience than her previous ones. These fights required her to make use of more of her weapons.

Yet, thanks to these fights, Cera managed to realize the hidden advantage of her body.

This hidden advantage was her flexible waist.

She learned to evade attacks without actually stepping to the side, giving her a prime opportunity to counterattack. As soon as she realized that advantage, the fights became way easier. Beasts on that level weren't used to this kind of evasion.

When Aris arrived in area D, he nearly died several times.

These beasts were two levels above him, and one attack was already powerful enough to injure him severely. Luckily, due to his direct combat style, he already knew how to take advantage of his waist.

His first Energy Beast nearly killed him several times, and Aris was forced to retreat. Luckily, due to him only being a Demonic Beast, the opponent didn't care enough to chase him for a long time. Aris wasn't even close to being a snack.

When Aris had his first fight, Yersi and Cera already managed to kill their first opponents. Yersi still had a lead over Cera, but Cera was closing the gap.

Aris' second opponent also beat him severely, but not as devastatingly as the first one. Yet, Aris still had to dodge several sure-death strikes. In the end, he was forced to retreat again, but that didn't demotivate Aris.

In fact, the opposite was true. Aris felt as alive as never before. He loved this feeling of his own life hanging by a thread, unknowing of the nervous and sweaty Gravis who kept watching Aris' brushes with death. It took everything out of Gravis to not involve himself.

Aris' third opponent was about equal to him. The fight dragged on for a long time, but in the end, the opponent decided to retreat. This was one of the beasts that had also entered via area A, and it had a weak mindset.

Yet, Aris saw progress and wanted to become more powerful.

His fourth opponent fought with Aris for a long time, and in the end, Aris managed to kill his first beast two levels above himself. Yet, the last strike had nearly killed Aris. He was lucky to be alive.

Aris quickly consumed the corpse, but at his level, this singular corpse wasn't enough to make him become an Energy Beast, but that wasn't such a huge problem anymore. Aris had taken the first and hardest step. Killing the first opponent two levels above themselves was always the hardest.

The next fight also took a lot of time, but Aris managed to win without nearly losing his life.

After consuming that corpse, Aris finally became an Energy Beast. Cera and Yersi had already become Mid-Rank Energy Beasts by that time.

Yet, Aris was just as powerful as them now.

A year passed, and Cera and Yersi already became High-Rank Energy Beasts. They had also learned to use their lightning by now, which was surprisingly Destruction Lightning. Destruction Lightning was something that only Lords received with their evolution. Yet, Aris, Cera, and Yersi already had this as Energy Beasts.

Cera and Yersi left their areas and met their Kings again. Cera followed the King's command and ate more High-Rank Energy Beasts until she became a Spirit Beast. Then, she left for area F.

Yet, Yersi had felt alive as never before as she decided to fight enemies more openly now. She wanted more powerful opponents. Due to that, Gravis allowed her to get to area F without waiting for her to become a Spirit Beast. He had done the same thing for Aris back then, after all. It was her decision.

Aris wanted to exit the area while still being a Mid-Rank Energy Beast, but this time, Gravis gave a firm no. Two levels and three levels were a gigantic difference. One could overcome a two-level difference with tactics and battle experience, but that was not true for a three-level difference.

The opponent was too hard to injure, too fast to react, and too powerful to defend against. All manner of combat experience didn't save someone from overwhelming power.

Aris held firm and wanted to leave, but the King never gave him the opportunity. Aris first needed to become a High-Rank Energy Beast. It took hours to convince Aris to become more powerful, but he didn't like that one bit.

As soon as he became a High-Rank Energy Beast, he walked out of the area again and looked coldly at the King. He, obviously, wasn't happy in the slightest.

With this, all siblings entered area F. Now, they were in the same area and could finally come across one another. Gravis wondered how they would act when they met each other. Would they be interested when they saw someone like them, or would they directly try to kill each other? Gravis wasn't sure.

Aris managed to kill some Spirit Beasts and became a Spirit Beast himself.

Cera found some Divine Beasts and battled with them. Now, the enemies were no longer weak. Some enemies could also fight a level above themselves.

Lastly, Yersi fought her first opponent two levels above her.