

Lightning Is the Only Way

Chapter 6: Fighting Experience

It had been two months since Gravis started going to the research assistant preparation course. In that time, he learned more about pitfalls in cultivation and what he had to look out for in the lower realms. Some basic fighting methods and general weapon usages were included as well. He also got a crash course in every essential side-path in cultivation.

Pill refinement: Alchemists mix and refine natural resources into pills, which increase aspects of a cultivator. Faster cultivation speed, one-time upgrades, auxiliary uses, and many more different pill effects were all covered. A general overview of how pill concocting worked was also part of the course.

Equipment forging: Forgers mix and refine natural resources into armor, weapons, artifacts, and treasures. At some point, either the cultivator got too strong to use mortal armaments, or the necessary natural resources got too hard to refine into useful gear. Gravis also learned the absolute basics of that.

Formation arrays: Rules, attributes, laws, and similar things were used as a basis to create a specific effect. It required one to be at the energy gathering stage in order to make any progress in formation arrays. Without energy, it was impossible to come into contact with these kinds of concepts. It was even harder to manipulate them for one's wishes.

Cultivation inscription: at early levels, everyone could write down their cultivation and battle techniques, but starting at the spirit accumulation stage, the description of said methods only got harder. Words were not enough to describe all concepts at this stage.

There were, of course, other side-paths in cultivation, but those four were the essential ones. Every single one of them was vital to progress in one's path. Pill refinement was necessary to speed up or stabilize cultivation. Without useful equipment, one can't bring out their full battle power. Formation arrays were essential for fleeing or for fortifying one's base. Without cultivation inscriptions, one would not be able to learn new techniques from others, starting at the third major realm.

All in all, those two months varied between boring and exciting for Gravis, but in the end, he was happy that the theoretical part was over. The remaining four months were

for gaining practical fighting experience. Gravis was excited! Finally, he could fight for the first time in his life!

Gravis was standing in a black hall, together with his about 30 other classmates. Not much light came into the building, the only source being the door behind them. The expressions in the faces of his classmates varied like the colors of a rainbow. Some looked scared. Some looked excited. Some looked nervous. Some looked happy.

"Alright!" Forneus loudly clapped his hands. With his clap, a little over 30 portals opened in front of the youngsters. "Everyone will take one portal each. Inside those portals, you will fight a varied mixture of things. Monsters, humans, plants, cultivators, and even the environment itself will be your enemy. Since it's your first time, you will only face one enemy at a time. Your only goal is to kill your enemy. If the environment is your enemy, you will need to survive with as much stamina to spare as possible, or your next enemy will have a huge advantage."

"You need to kill and survive for as long as new enemies appear. There is no time limit." Most of the youngsters sighed in relief. When Forneus saw that, he grinned maliciously. "That is a bad thing. It means that, if you can't defeat your enemy, you will die. This is a genuine life and death battle. If you can't win, you will die."

Before the youngsters could react to his words, Forneus' energy rumbled, and every youngster got pushed towards one portal each. "For your info: On average, about 20% of people die in their first test." Forneus grinned more. "Good luck!" With a clap from Forneus, everyone shot into a portal, no matter if they wanted to or not. A comfortable chair appeared, and Forneus sat down, having no care in the world.

One second, Gravis saw the hall, and in the next, he only saw a humongous glowing red cave, at least a hundred meters in diameter. The stones and walls in the cave looked like they were at their melting point, but he did not feel any heat from them for some reason. Fortunately, the light of the walls illuminated the entire cave in red light.

On the right side of the cave, he could see a rack of different weapons. He could see spears, swords, sabers, poles, axes, poleaxes, hammers, daggers, and many more. Every weapon was made of black stone. Through his basic course of equipment forging, he could tell that all weapons were made entirely out of void stone. Void stone was very sturdy for the lower realms, but using it as a weapon was senseless since it absorbed all the energy it came into contact with, including the users. Fortunately, Gravis could not use the energy yet, so he could ignore that aspect.

Gravis immediately ran over to grab a weapon. The words of Forneus were still ringing in his head. He could actually die here. He thought this was just a practical test a couple of minutes ago. His excitement from being able to fight vanished, and was replaced with nervousness and fear. He quickly skipped the other weapons and took the saber.

While Gravis learned about the different weapons in the theory lessons, he felt that the saber suited him the best. A sword was an allrounder and was the most popular weapon, but it lacked the purity of killing power the saber had. While a sword could cut both ways, the necessity of an edge on both sides took away from the weapon's weight. For Gravis, swinging a saber felt way more satisfying than swinging a sword.

Suddenly, a bright purple light appeared about 20 meters in front of him. The light quickly vanished, and Gravis saw a tortoise. The weapon rack also disappeared. Apparently, he could not change weapons mid-fight. He made his choice and could not change it anymore. The tortoise was only around a meter high, but its head looked imposing. Dark red scales covered the head, and some of the scales poked out like natural blades. As the tortoise slowly moved toward Gravis with a neutral look in its eyes, its muscles bulged with every step.

Gravis' breath quickened, and he tightened his grip on his saber. This is it! His first fight! He screamed and ran at the tortoise. He looked into its eyes as he ran closer. The closer he got, the more his fear increased. The tortoise looked forward. To Gravis, it seemed like the tortoise would not falter even if the heavens broke down. Gravis suppressed his fear and continued his charge.

'I can do this! I can kill it! I must kill it! I'm nearly there! I will survive!' Gravis shouted in his head, but the closer he got, the more oppressed he felt. His expression changed from fiery battle intent to horror. 'I will die!' and Gravis stopped his charge.

Suddenly, Gravis felt an enormous wind pressure, and his hair flew back. Just centimeters in front of his face, was the head of the tortoise which just snapped its jaws at him. The powerful impact of the jaws ringed in his ears and reverbed in the cave. It sounded like a gigantic steel plate fell onto the floor with its flat side. That bite would have absolutely crushed his head. If he hadn't stopped, he would be dead by now.

Gravis' hair stood on end, and he immediately jumped back with all his might. Where he stood before, another bite of the tortoise thundered, again ringing in his ears. Cold sweat continuously flowed down his back, and his heart thumped loudly in his ears. He nearly died. It was so incredibly close. 'Why was I charging in like a madman? We learned to never charge into a fight blindly.'

Gravis further retreated, and the tortoise slowly made its way over to him. This continued for about a minute. Gravis slowly calmed down. The tortoise was slow. As long as he retreated, he would not be in danger. He could work with that! He needed a plan since he could not run forever. He had to find a way to kill the tortoise.