

Paragon 131

Chapter 131 - 131: Disappointing isn't it?

Klaus watched as the light slowly dimmed from his vision. 'So this is how I die,' he thought, the only thing flashing through his mind as he faded into nothingness.

The thought of his mother hit him hard. He could picture her devastation, the grief she would feel upon hearing about his death. It was too much for him to dwell on, but it was too late now. The arrow had pierced his chest, leaving behind a potent poison that was swiftly taking its toll.

The weapon used against him was the Doomsday Night Bow, a weapon designed for extreme circumstances by Arcadian City. It was meant to be used only if the Zombies overran the human army. The bow was powered by hazardous minerals, which made it dangerous to use repeatedly.

Prolonged use could harm the city itself. Yet, somehow, someone had chosen to use it on him.

The arrowhead contained a deadly poison, that spreads instantly upon contact. Whoever the masked figure was, they hadn't just aimed at him for target practice—they intended to kill him, and they succeeded with terrifying precision.

Klaus lay motionless in the War Goddess's arms, his once calm face now pale, drained of all life. He was dead—or so it seemed.

In the quiet of that moment, the battlefield around him seemed distant. The War Goddess held him tightly, her tears falling silently. She had caught him, but it hadn't been enough. The poison had done its job.

-

-

-

"Is it done?" a man in a dark room asked, staring intently at a projection of a masked figure—the same one Klaus had seen before his death.

"Yes, my Lord, he is dead," the masked figure responded.

"Good. You know what to do next," the man replied calmly, his tone cold and calculated.

A short while later, a post appeared on the dark web. The message it contained was perhaps the most provocative and chilling one a person could ever write: "Arrogance is bliss, fare thee well, warrior. It was just Business" Alongside the text was an image of Klaus lying lifeless in the War Goddess's arms. The post was marked by a name that, when seen, caused widespread panic: "The Dark Order."

Just like that, the assassins behind Klaus's death were revealed, and yet nobody knew who they really were. The Dark Order was a mysterious organization that had surfaced ten years into the apocalypse, known for assassinating powerful figures over the years.

When they first appeared, few took them seriously. But as time passed, their reach expanded, and their reputation grew. Their signature move—posting the aftermath of their assassinations on the dark web—brought them infamy. With each high-profile target they took down, their power became undeniable.

A saying has emerged in the years since: "If your name appears in the Dark Order's books, not even the Yama King can save you." Klaus had become one of those unfortunate souls.

Everyone knew Klaus had made enemies, especially after publicly humiliating a Legacy and calling them nobodies. It was clear he would face tough opposition, but no one could have predicted that a young warrior like him would be targeted by the Dark Order. This marked the first time they had assassinated someone so young, which shocked and saddened many.

The news of Klaus's death spread like wildfire. His fans, who had watched him rise and overcome impossible odds, were left mourning all over the world. They had always believed Klaus could survive anything, but now, the grim reality of the situation was too much to bear. The world had lost one of its brightest young warriors.

-

-

-

They say that when you die, your soul travels through the nine planar worlds and heads to the underworld, a realm beyond all existence.

In the underworld, it is said that you become a servant to the Yama King, forever bound to serve him. Yet, there is hope. If your deeds in life were pleasing to the immortals, they might bargain for your soul, granting you the chance to enter reincarnation.

It's also believed that those with strong ties to fate can bypass the underworld entirely, sent straight into reincarnation. They are reborn as wealthy and powerful individuals, their lives shaped by the fate they carried.

People say many things, but it all revolves around one central idea: fate. Those blessed with it are reincarnated. But the real question is, what happens if you don't have fate? Or, more unsettling, what if fate itself doesn't want you?

What if your existence is so unique that even the heavens hesitate to claim your soul after death? That's a rare and troubling situation, and Klaus has just found himself in it.

He died, that much was clear. But instead of his soul being taken to the underworld or entering the cycle of reincarnation, he woke up in a place both strange and familiar in a strange way...Lol. The environment was serene and lush, the air thick with the scent of life. Yet, there was an unsettling feeling, like something dark was lurking just out of sight.

Klaus stood up, confused and wary. He had never felt this way before. It wasn't pain or fear—it was something deeper. A cold, creeping sense of wrongness.

"Mom will be devastated by now" He muttered not bothering to take in his surroundings for the moment. A while later, he sighed and then started to look around.

His surroundings were beautiful, like a dreamland. Tall trees with golden leaves swayed gently, their branches whispering in the soft wind. A river flowed nearby, its surface shimmering with light. The sky was painted in hues of pink and orange, casting a warm glow on everything.

But Klaus couldn't shake the feeling that something was watching him, something ancient and powerful. He glanced around, trying to spot any movement, but the landscape seemed empty.

"Where am I?" he muttered to himself, his voice echoing slightly in the stillness.

This place felt like it was caught between worlds. It wasn't the underworld, and it definitely wasn't the mortal realm. It was something else entirely, a place where time and space seemed distorted.

Klaus began walking, following the river's edge. His senses were on high alert, every muscle in his body tense. He couldn't trust this place, no matter how peaceful it seemed.

As he walked, the feeling of being watched grew stronger. Shadows moved in the corners of his vision, but whenever he turned to look, nothing was there. The air felt thick, heavy with something unspoken.

Suddenly, a voice echoed through the trees, soft but clear.

"Disappointing, isn't it? To die a virgin"

Klaus froze in his tracks, his eyes darting around the eerie, twisted landscape. There was no one in sight, yet the voice felt like it came from everywhere—echoing through the dead trees and creeping into his mind.

"Who's there?" Klaus demanded, his voice sharp.

There was no direct response. Instead, the space around him began to ripple and distort. Before he could react, he felt a force pulling him away. His vision darkened, and for a moment, he was suspended in nothingness. Then, just as quickly, his surroundings shifted, and he found himself standing in a new place.

When his vision cleared, he was face to face with someone he had never expected to see. A monk with dashing violet hair, handsome features, incredible cheekbone, and somehow, dual pupils. One dark, one white. And he looks exactly like Klaus, but more mature and Handsome.

"Tea?" the figure asked casually, extending a cup toward Klaus. Before he could refuse, a steaming cup of tea appeared in his hands.

"You... who are you?" Klaus asked, still trying to make sense of the situation.

The stranger smiled faintly, leaning back as though enjoying a quiet afternoon. "My mother calls me Haus. My Uncles once called me Fruity," he said with a small chuckle. "But to the rest of the universe, I was known as the Renegade Monk."

He then looked back at Klaus with a smirk, "And who might you be Little Fella"

Klaus looked up and down at his mirror image and then narrowed his eyes before replying.

"I'm Klaus," he replied. "But I don't think I'm a 'little fella.'" He said the last part with a half-smile, trying to gauge who—or what—this person was.

Haus chuckled, the sound light but somehow ancient. "Ah, Klaus. A name with strength. But names can only tell so much, don't you think?"

Klaus raised an eyebrow, still gripping the cup of tea he hadn't asked for. "You still haven't answered my question. Where am I, and what's going on?"

Haus looked at him for a while and then asked a question that made Klaus's heart Skip a beat, "Tell me Klaus, do you believe in reincarnation"

Chapter 132 - 132: A Mother's Sacrifice

"Do I believe in reincarnation?" Klaus repeated the question slowly, his brow furrowed in thought. It wasn't a question he had ever seriously considered. Reincarnation—the idea of being reborn after death, starting over as someone entirely new, someone with no memory of their past life—was something he'd only heard in stories.

Klaus found himself uncertain. How could he answer something he barely understood? His life had been filled with battles, survival, and defying the heavens -well, he hasn't yet, but who is asking? The thought of starting over, losing everything he had learned and fought for, felt foreign to him.

He glanced at the figure sitting across from him, who was watching him with patient eyes, waiting for a response. Klaus didn't want to appear confused or weak, so he forced out an answer, one that felt safe, if not entirely true.

"I suppose it's possible," Klaus said, his tone guarded.

Haus smiled at his response, as though amused by Klaus's hesitation. There was a quiet understanding in that smile as if the stranger knew Klaus's uncertainty ran deeper than he let on.

Klaus shifted uncomfortably and then took a sip of the tea in his hand, letting the warmth spread through his chest. The flavor was rich, yet unlike anything he'd tasted before. Curiosity tugged at him.

"What is this tea made of?" Klaus asked his voice light, trying to steer the conversation away from the heavy topic of reincarnation.

Haus's smile deepened a glint of mischief in his eyes. "Ah, now that's a question worth asking."

"What if I were to tell you, you just drank memories from your past life?" Haus said with an amused smile,

Klaus froze mid-sip the second time, lowering the cup slowly. His mind raced as he processed the figure's words. Memories? From his past life?

"You're joking right," Klaus said, his voice calm but his heart pounding. "Memories can't be... drunk."

Haus's smile widened as if enjoying Klaus's reaction. "Is it really so hard to believe? You are a Paragon after all"

Klaus felt the weight of the teacup in his hand, suddenly heavier than before. He doesn't know much about the Paragon thing, but he knows for a fact he will figure things out in the long run. Now, it's just too wild for him to comprehend.

"How?" Klaus asked, his tone more serious now.

Haus leaned back, still smiling. "The tea you drank is no ordinary brew. It is made from the essence of your forgotten lives, distilled into a form you can consume. Each sip unlocks fragments of who you were before."

Klaus glanced down at the tea, its surface calm and unremarkable, yet now it seemed ominous. "And what if I don't want to remember?"

Haus shrugged casually. "That's the thing about memories—they don't ask for permission. You've already consumed them. Whether you choose to acknowledge them or not is up to you."

Klaus wanted to say something in return, but the words wouldn't come. Suddenly, a wave of dizziness hit him, and before he could make sense of it, Haus's voice echoed inside his head.

"Well, I didn't expect I'd be drugging myself," the figure laughed, but Klaus was too dazed to respond. His vision blurred, and then everything went black as he slipped into unconsciousness.

-

-

-

"My queen, we are under attack!" a young maiden cried, bursting into a room. Inside, an enchanting woman with features so striking that she could destroy entire nations with just a smile immediately stood up.

Beside her, lying peacefully on the bed, was a young boy, no more than seven years old. His innocent face held a calmness that seemed like the very essence of peace and love.

The queen turned as she heard the maiden's panicked voice. She walked and glanced out the window and saw the chaos outside. Thousands of people dressed in black are clashing with her guards and soldiers, the battle raging at the gates of her city.

"The King said you must take Haus and run. Do not return until he comes for you," the young maiden urged, handing the queen a jade tablet before drawing an arrow into her bow and rushing toward the door.

The queen needed no further urging. She quickly picks up the boy, still sleeping, into her arms. The maiden led her to a hidden passage, guiding them through the palace's secret tunnels. Within moments, they emerged outside the grand city, now fleeing into the wild.

But no sooner had they made their escape than ten masked figures appeared from the shadows, chasing after them with alarming speed. The queen and the maiden ran as fast as they could, the boy cradled tightly in her embrace.

"My queen," Suddenly, the maiden said breathlessly, "it has been an honor serving you in this life. If there is a next life, I hope I will serve you again."

The queen turned, fear and realization flooding her eyes. "Haniva, no!"

But it was too late. Haniva had already made up her mind. In one swift motion, she ignited her soul, her body bursting into lightning flames that shone like a beacon. The explosion of light created a barrier, buying the queen and her son some precious time to escape.

Tears streamed down the queen's face as she ran, her heart heavy with grief. She didn't stop, couldn't stop. Not until her son was safe.

The boy stirred in her arms, blinking awake. "Mom, why are you crying?" he asked softly, looking up at her tear-streaked face as they sped through the forest.

"Nothing, my love," she whispered, trying to keep her voice steady. "We're almost there."

Haus turned his head to look behind them. His eyes widened in innocent confusion as he saw five masked figures in hot pursuit. "Mom, are those the bad people you told me about?"

The queen's heart clenched at the sound of his voice. "Yes, Haus," she said, forcing a gentle smile. "But today, they won't catch us. Mother will protect you."

The boy's small hand reached up to wipe a tear from his mother's cheek, and she kissed his forehead in return, her mind racing with what to do next.

They were running out of time.

The wind whipped past them as they continued their escape, but the masked figures were gaining ground. The queen could feel their dark energy growing stronger. She had no choice but to reach the teleportation formation contained in the jade tablet Haniva gave her.

The trees blurred as they rushed forward, but the queen knew they couldn't keep this pace forever. Her own strength was dwindling, and the loss of Hanna weighed heavily on her heart.

Suddenly, an arrow whizzed past, narrowly missing her. The queen gasped, her body tensing as she darted through the thickening forest. Haus clung to her, his small fingers clutching the fabric of her dress.

Suddenly, they appeared in front of a waterfall. Right in front of the water, a circular structure lay on the ground, covered in glowing runic diagrams. The queen wasted no time, rushing forward and placing her son in the center of the formation.

"Mom?" Haus asked, his voice small and confused, watching as his mother stepped away from him, toward the edge of the circle.

"Haus, know that I love you more than anything in this life," she said, tears streaming down her face. Her voice trembled with emotion, but she kept her gaze steady on her son.

At that moment, the five masked figures came within range. One of them shouted, "Slut! Hand over the cursed child and accept your death!"

The queen's heart tightened, but she refused to show fear. She turned her attention back to the formation. The runes began to glow brighter, responding to her presence and energy.

"In this life, no one will touch my son while I am alive," the queen declared, her voice resolute. The formation beneath Haus began to hum, the magic taking hold.

Before the masked men could rush toward the boy, the formation activated, casting a bright light around him. Haus looked at his mother, tears welling up in his eyes, but before he could say anything, the light swallowed him, and he vanished.

The queen smiled, her heartbreaking but full of resolve. She had done what she had to do.

One of the masked figures snarled, realizing what was happening. "Stop her!" he screamed, but it was too late.

The queen ignited her soul, her body bursting into flames of radiant power. "For my son," she whispered.

BOOM.

A deafening explosion tore through the area, obliterating everything within a 20-mile radius. The queen's body and soul erupted in a blast of pure energy, taking the five masked figures with her and destroying the formation in the process.

In her final act of love and sacrifice, she ensured that Haus would never be located again, leaving behind nothing but ash and silence in the place where she had given her life to protect her son.

The Last Paragon in the Apocalypse

Chapter 133 - 133: Raised By Monks

Somewhere far away, a beam of light descended from the heavens, brightening the forest for a moment. When the light faded, a boy of about seven years old could be seen sleeping on the ground.

He looked innocent and peaceful in his slumber. Suddenly, three bald men appeared beside him. One of them held a Seraphi Rod, another wore large, woven beads around his neck, and the last carried only a cane.

The monk with the beads examined the boy closely. "Where is he from?" he asked, looking puzzled.

"I don't know," replied the monk with the Seraphi Rod. "But we can't leave him here. We have to take him back to the monastery. The Grandmaster will know what to do."

They carefully lifted the boy, making sure not to wake him. The one with the beads wrapped a warm cloak around the child for protection.

As they began their journey back to the monastery, the forest seemed to hold its breath. The trees whispered softly, and the air was filled with an otherworldly calm.

The monks moved swiftly but gently, navigating through the dense forest. They were careful to avoid any obstacles that might disturb the boy's rest.

The journey was long, but the monks remained calm.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, the ancient monastery came into view. Its tall spires and sprawling grounds were bathed in the soft glow of the setting sun.

They reached the Grandmaster's chambers and gently placed the boy on a soft mat. The Grandmaster, an elderly man with wise eyes, looked at the boy with a mixture of curiosity and concern.

"We found him in the forest," the monk with the Seraphi Rod explained. "He was surrounded by a beam of light. We thought it best to bring him here for your guidance."

The Grandmaster nodded, his gaze never leaving the sleeping boy. "We shall see what fate has in store for him. For now, we will watch over him and learn more about his origins."

The monks left the chamber quietly, leaving the Grandmaster alone with the boy. The ancient man sat in contemplation, the weight of responsibility heavy on his shoulders.

"Finally, he has arrived. Our peaceful days are over," the monk said, his eyes fixed on the boy sleeping on the mat.

After a moment of silence, he stood up and left the room. He made his way to a different section of the monastery. There, in a room adorned with ancient scrolls and dimly lit by lanterns, five monks, each more aged than the last, were seated, sipping tea.

"The renegade has appeared, huh?" one of the monks asked, his voice laced with curiosity.

"Yes, Master," the Grandmaster Monk replied with a nod.

"Ha, so the prophecy was right. The heavens are in for a wild one," said one of the ancient-looking monks, a hint of amusement in his voice.

"Master, what are your instructions?" the Grandmaster Monk asked, his tone respectful and attentive.

"Nothing for now," the Master said with a thoughtful expression. "He has experienced a traumatic event, but it has been addressed. He will awaken as a new person, at least temporarily. Prepare your fellow monks for what is to come. Their calm and patience will soon be tested like never before."

The Grandmaster Monk bowed respectfully. "I will make sure they are ready."

He left the room and returned to the large hall where all the monks of the monastery were gathered. He looked at their faces—well, the shiny bald heads might be a more accurate description. After scanning the room, he said only one thing:

"Let your inner heart guide you."

With that, he dispersed everyone.

Two days later, the boy's eyes fluttered open. He was greeted by a sharp, splitting headache. Before he could scream, a voice echoed in his mind:

"Tea?"

He turned to see a bald monk smiling at him, holding a cup of tea.

The boy, still disoriented, stared at the monk and asked, "Senior, what happened to your hair?"

The monk's smile faltered for a moment, but he simply replied, "You'll find out soon enough. For now, have some tea. It will help you regain your strength."

The boy hesitated but accepted the tea, sipping it cautiously. His head still throbbed, but the warmth of the tea was soothing. As he drank, he glanced around the room, trying to make sense of his surroundings.

As the boy tasted the tea, he said, "It tastes fruity." He smiled up at the monk, clearly asking for more. The monk poured another cup, and the boy eagerly drank the entire teapot full of tea in less than ten minutes.

Once he had finished, he was dressed in a white robe and led to a different part of the monastery. The new area was a serene garden, filled with vibrant flowers and gentle butterflies. The moment the boy

saw it, he couldn't contain his excitement. He darted around the garden, trying to catch the butterflies with gleeful abandon.

"At least he looks happy," said one of the monks who had found him in the forest, appearing beside the monk who had served the tea.

"I think so," the other monk replied, watching the boy's joyful antics.

"Do you know his name?" the first monk asked.

"No," the second monk said with a shrug. "But he seems to like the word 'fruity.' Why don't we call him that until he remembers his real name?"

The first monk nodded in agreement. "It's a good idea. 'Fruity' it is, then."

The boy continued to chase the butterflies, his laughter echoing through the garden. The monks watched him, feeling a mixture of relief and hope. Despite the boy's mysterious arrival and the challenges ahead, his happiness at this moment was a small but welcome sign.

The name "Fruity" quickly spread throughout the monastery. Everyone found the boy intriguing and enjoyed playing with him. Over time, his presence became a beloved part of the monastery. Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months. Years went by, and Fruity grew into a handsome young man with striking violet hair.

"Fruity, you are now sixteen. It's time to start practicing the scriptures," one of the monks said, using his rod to lift the now-grown Fruity up into the air.

"Nope. I don't want to shave my beautiful hair like you guys," Fruity protested, trying to wiggle away from the monk.

"You are a monk now. You must shave your hair," the monk insisted.

"Tell me, Uncle, why do monks shave their hair?" Fruity asked.

"Well... I... You..." The monk stammered, unable to find the right words.

"You see, Uncle, you shaved your hair without really knowing why. I prefer to look my best when I meet the Ice Princess," Fruity said with a playful grin.

"You brat..." The monk exclaimed in frustration.

"Uncle, language," Fruity said with a teasing smile.

Meanwhile, on top of a nearby mountain, six monks stood overlooking the scene.

"This kid is a menace," one of the ancient monks said, shaking his head.

"Master, do you think he'll ever let anyone touch his hair? He seems to have a strong attachment to it," the Grandmaster Monk observed.

The Master sighed. "He has his own way of doing things. Perhaps it's better to let him be for now. The scriptures and training can wait until he's ready."

The Grandmaster Monk nodded in agreement. "Very well. Let's hope he'll come around in his own time."

"What are you two thinking? He will never shave his hair. It's better if we allow him to carve his own path," one of the ancient monks said, watching Fruity hang off the rod of the monk.

"I think so too," another ancient monk agreed, his face breaking into an amused smile. "At least he is wearing the monk's robes. That's a bonus, I guess."

Just like that, Fruity was made into an official monk and will soon start practicing the teachings of the monk.

Chapter 134 - 134: A Genius but Lazy Monk

"Fruity, this is the Soul-Calming, Heart-Warming Sutra. Before you can learn any of the advanced techniques your uncle monks use, you first need to learn how to calm your heart and soul," a monk said, handing a stone tablet with intricate writings to Fruity.

Fruity took the tablet and examined the writings. "The soul attunes with the stars, making the heart lighten and calm like the moon," he read aloud.

The monk's eyes widened in surprise. "You... you can read this?" he asked, astonished.

"It's not that difficult, Uncle. No need to look so shocked," Fruity replied casually, his tone light.

"You," the monk started to say something but then stopped, unable to find the words.

"What next, Uncle?" Fruity asked with a small smile.

"Go to the Soul-Calming Tree and sit under it. Note my words, sit under, not on top. Focus on the Soul-Calming, Heart-Warming Sutra and start reciting it. Once you master it, I will take you to the Awakening Temple to awaken your spiritual Qi," the monk instructed before leaving.

"Tsk, who said I don't have inner peace?" Fruity muttered as he headed toward the small peak. "I'm surrounded by the best uncles. What else do I need?"

He arrived at a small peak where the Soul-Calming Tree stood. The tree looks magnificent, with branches woven into a canopy that cast dappled shadows on the ground. Its leaves are shades multicolored and alluring. Small, vibrant fruits hung from the branches.

According to the monastery's teachings, those who could achieve a state of attunement while surrounded by such delicious fruits were said to have attained true inner peace. Fruity approached the

tree, finding a spot beneath it to sit. He settled comfortably on the ground, preparing himself to focus on the sutra and find the calm he was being asked to achieve.

He set the stone tablet before him, watching as it floated gently in the air. Fruity focused his eyes on the tablet and began reciting the sutra. For a brief moment, he felt his mind calm and his heart warm, but just like that, the feeling quickly faded.

"Inner peace, inner peace, inner peace," he murmured, but his focus was easily distracted. "Dinner peace, dinner please."

The enticing fragrance of the fruits hanging from the branches began to overwhelm him.

"Maybe I should eat a few and then I might develop some resistance to it," Fruity said, eyeing the fruits with a mix of curiosity and temptation.

He reached out, plucking a small fruit from the tree and examining it. The vibrant color and sweet scent were irresistible. Fruity took a bite, savoring the taste while still trying to maintain his focus on the sutra. As he chewed, he wondered if indulging in the fruit might somehow help him achieve the inner peace he was seeking.

But who was he kidding? Fruity had already eaten thousands of these fruits over the years, yet he hadn't developed any resistance to their allure. If anything, his insatiable hunger only intensified whenever he saw them.

Far from him, the ancient monks and the Grandmaster Monk observed the scene.

"At this rate, he will never be able to master this technique anytime soon," the Grandmaster Monk said, shaking his bald head.

"Well, that's because he has already attained inner peace. In fact, he achieved it two years ago. He just doesn't realize it yet," one of the ancient monks replied.

"What? How is that possible?" the Grandmaster Monk asked, clearly surprised.

The ancient monk smiled gently. "Inner peace is not always about perfect control or serene focus. Sometimes, it's about understanding and acceptance. Fruity's constant struggle and his reaction to the fruits show that he's already in a state of balance. He just needs to recognize it for himself."

The Grandmaster Monk frowned thoughtfully. "So you're saying he's already where he needs to be, but he doesn't know it?"

"Yes," the ancient monk confirmed. "Sometimes, the journey to inner peace is about realizing that you've already arrived. Fruity's unique approach and his apparent distractions are actually signs that he's achieved what he's been seeking."

The Grandmaster Monk nodded slowly, considering the ancient monk's words. The realization brought a new perspective on Fruity's training, and he decided to let him continue in his own way, trusting that he would come to understand his inner peace in due time.

"Why does it feel like I'm in the state I should be in but don't know it?" Fruity wondered aloud, gazing at the Soul-Calming, Heart-Warming Sutra floating before him.

He sighed and continued to talk to himself, "Okay, Fruity, what will you do if somebody insults you?"

He paused, considering the question. After a moment, he answered, "I'll just brush it off and smile. It's not worth getting upset over."

He nodded to himself as if convinced by his own response.

"See, if I can stay calm and not let little things bother me, maybe that's a sign of inner peace already," he mused, a small smile forming on his lips.

Fruity paused again, contemplating his self-imposed question. "What happens if someone looks at the Ice Princess weirdly?" he asked himself.

He thought for a moment, then answered with a thoughtful tone, "I'd probably step in and defend her. It's not right to let anyone disrespect someone important to me."

"Tsk, who are you kidding, Fruity? You'd probably slap him senseless," Fruity said with a smile, amused by his own response.

He chuckled to himself, then added, "That too, but I'll make sure I maintain inner peace while doing it."

Fruity's smile widened as he pondered his own words. Balancing his actions with a sense of calm and understanding seemed like a practical approach to achieving inner peace.

As he continued to recite the sutra, he felt a growing sense of contentment, realizing that perhaps inner peace was not just about perfect serenity but also about integrating his true self into his actions and reactions.

"Mmmh, this fruit tastes like inner peace," Fruity said, savoring the flavor. Despite having already eaten hundreds of these fruits, he still felt an insatiable craving for more.

After a while, Fruity felt something stirring within his heart. He dropped the fruit he had been holding and resumed reciting the sutra with renewed focus. This time, something within him seemed to connect. He felt his soul aligning more deeply with his surroundings.

A sense of calm washed over him. There were no distractions, no doubts, and no uncertainties. He felt safe, serene, and harmonized with everything around him.

"So, this is what inner peace feels like," Fruity muttered to himself. He continued to concentrate on deepening this connection. However, despite his efforts, he sensed something blocking him. It was as if an invisible barrier prevented him from fully reaching that part of his soul.

"Congratulations, Fruity. You have attained inner peace," a voice suddenly spoke.

Fruity turned to see his Uncle Monk standing before him. His uncle had been the one to guide him to this place. "So, what's next, Uncle?" Fruity asked.

Uncle Monk smiled warmly. "Inner peace is just the beginning. Now, you must learn to maintain it amidst the chaos of the world."

Fruity nodded, eager to understand more. "How do I do that?"

"By practicing mindfulness and self-discipline," Uncle Monk explained. "Inner peace is like a fragile flame. It can be easily extinguished by stress and distractions if not properly nurtured."

Fruity listened carefully. "And how do I overcome these distractions?"

"Start by observing your thoughts without judgment," Uncle Monk advised. "Recognize them as passing clouds and let them drift away. Focus on your breath and the present moment."

Fruity closed his eyes and took a deep breath, trying to follow his uncle's guidance. He let the thoughts come and go, like clouds drifting across the sky.

"Remember," Uncle Monk continued, "inner peace comes from within. External circumstances can influence it, but true peace is a state of mind you cultivate and protect."

"When you are done, I will take you to Hammon City to awaken your Spiritual Qi" The uncle monk left after saying that. Fruity smiled and went about practicing while consuming fruit after fruit.

A week later, he managed to attain all there was to attain and left with his uncle monk to Hammon City to awaken and finally become a cultivator.

Chapter 135 - 135: Hammon City

Hammon City is one of the many cities in the Grand Xhanti Kingdom. It is a human-occupied kingdom, one of the few remaining human Kingdoms in the world of Valeria.

Known for its peaceful atmosphere, Hammon City thrived on trade. Merchants, both rich and poor, came and went daily, keeping the city bustling with activity.

Today was an important day for Fruity and his Uncle Monk. They were on their way to Hammon City for Fruity's awakening ceremony. It was a significant event, marking the moment when one would form a connection with their soul and consciousness.

This bond granted powers beyond ordinary understanding, a process known as awakening one's Talent and Class.

In Valeria, it was tradition for those who turned 16 to undergo the ceremony. Sixteen was the minimum age, but not everyone succeeded on their first try. Some returned at an older age, either for their second or even third attempt after previous failures. The third time was usually their last chance.

Fruity, however, wasn't thinking about the ceremony. His mind wandered as he watched the people on the road. It was only his second time going to Hammon City.

The first time, he was ten years old and had snuck into a caravan the monks were using to transport fruit. Back then, he had been full of excitement and curiosity.

Unfortunately for Fruity, the monks weren't exactly fun company. They barely spoke and had no interest in the world around them. For a young boy like Fruity, their silence had been painfully dull.

But even then, Fruity had managed to overhear bits of conversation from the traders and travelers passing by. He'd learned a little about Hammon City, but one thing in particular had caught his attention: the Ice Princess.

He had heard the name whispered by a few people during his first visit, though he hadn't been able to find out much more. He didn't know who she was, where she came from, or why people seemed to talk about her with such awe. But ever since that day, Fruity had been fascinated by the mysterious Ice Princess. Meeting her had become a secret dream of his.

"Uncle, do you think the Ice Princess will be coming to the awakening?" Fruity asked, his voice full of hope.

His Uncle Monk glanced at him, shaking his head. "Brat, focus on your own awakening first," he said in a gruff tone.

Fruity pouted. "Tsk, how boring."

The road to Hammon City was long, and Fruity's thoughts kept drifting back to the stories he'd overheard as a child. Who was the Ice Princess? Was she real? Would she be attending the awakening ceremony, just like him? His heart raced at the possibility.

As they approached the city gates, Fruity's eyes widened. Hammon City was even more impressive than he remembered. The tall stone walls loomed over them, and the streets were packed with people from all walks of life. Merchants haggled loudly in the marketplace, while travelers hurried to and fro.

The air was filled with the scent of fresh bread, spices, and the faint tinge of sea salt from the distant harbor.

"This place is fire!" Fruity exclaimed, his eyes wide with excitement as he looked around with puppy-like enthusiasm.

"Brat, compose yourself. People are watching," Uncle Monk muttered, feeling a bit embarrassed. He wanted to remind Fruity that he was a monk now and should behave with dignity. But Fruity was too swept up by the beauty of the city to care about appearances or composure.

People around them were staring. It wasn't every day they saw a monk with such dashing hair. Most monks were known for their calm and reserved demeanor, but Fruity stood out with his lively energy. He didn't seem to notice the attention or simply didn't care.

Without warning, Fruity dashed toward a nearby fruit candy stand, causing Uncle Monk to sigh and follow him.

"Uncle, take one!" Fruity said cheerfully, handing over a candy straw. In his other hand, he was clutching ten more.

Uncle Monk's lips twitch. "You can have them. I don't eat like you, glutton," he said, shaking his head.

"Suit yourself, Uncle. For someone so in tune with nature, you sure don't enjoy what nature gives," Fruity teased, biting down on another candy. He might be 16, but his behavior resembled that of a carefree 10-year-old. Not that he cared—he was having fun, and that was all that mattered to him.

They continued through the crowded streets toward the awakening hall. It was a large, imposing building at the heart of the city. As they arrived, they were greeted by the sight of other 16-year-olds, all eager to awaken their talents and begin cultivating their powers.

Fruity looked around, taking in the scene. Young men and women were dressed in elegant clothes, stepping down from fancy carriages. He glanced at his uncle, who was deliberately pretending to look in another direction, ignoring the luxurious display.

But Fruity couldn't hold back his question. "Uncle, why are we poor?"

Without missing a beat, his uncle gave him a light smack on the back of his head. "Who said we're poor?" Uncle Monk replied sternly.

Fruity rubbed the back of his head, confused. "Well... aren't we?"

"Have you ever starved?" his uncle asked, his tone sharp but patient.

"No," Fruity admitted.

"Do you lack clothes?"

"Well..." Fruity hesitated, thinking about his simple monk robe.

"Do you not have a place to sleep?" Uncle Monk continued, raising an eyebrow.

"I mean, yeah, but..." Fruity began but trailed off. He could see where his uncle was going.

"Then we're not poor," Uncle Monk finished firmly. "We have what we need, and that's enough."

Fruity wanted to argue further, but he could feel people's eyes on them, so he decided to let it slide—for now. He'd have a more thorough conversation with his uncle once they returned to the monastery.

His uncle led him to a registration stand where Fruity was handed the number 69. After registering, Uncle Monk guided him to the side where the other youngsters were gathered. "I'll be over there," his uncle said, pointing to a spot in the distance. "Do your best not to cause any trouble. These young ones are here for something important."

Fruity couldn't help but pout at his uncle's words. "Hey, Uncle, does that mean I'm not important enough?" he asked, his voice tinged with mock hurt.

His exaggerated reaction caught the attention of some of the nearby teens. A few smiled, amused by Fruity's childish behavior. Despite being there for a serious occasion, Fruity's light-heartedness was hard to ignore. It added a little warmth to the otherwise tense atmosphere of the awakening ceremony.

"Little brother, are you a monk?" A young girl, slightly taller than Fruity, asked as soon as his uncle left.

"Indeed, I am a certified monk. Inner peace and all," Fruity responded with a playful grin, puffing out his chest in mock pride.

The girl smiled, amused by his lightheartedness. "You don't seem like the quiet, peaceful type," she remarked, raising an eyebrow.

Fruity shrugged, biting down on another candy straw. "What can I say? I'm a unique monk," he replied with a wink, making the girl chuckle softly.

"I can see that," the young girl said, her eyes drifting to Fruity's striking violet hair. "By the way, I'm Aurelia."

"I'm Fruity," he replied with a casual grin.

"Fruity? That's quite an unusual name," Aurelia remarked, tilting her head slightly as if trying to figure him out.

Fruity shrugged, used to the reaction. "Yeah, I get that a lot. But it suits me, don't you think?" He flashed a playful smile, clearly not bothered by how odd his name might sound to others.

Suddenly, the atmosphere shifted, and a figure appeared in the air. His long beard flowed freely in the wind as he descended slowly from the sky. Fruity and Aurelia turned their gazes toward the figure.

"Everyone, welcome to this year's awakening ceremony," the figure's voice boomed

Chapter 136 - 136: The Awakening Begin

Fruity looked up at the figure descending from the sky, his eyes wide with wonder. "Immortal," he murmured.

Aurelia, however, remained calm and composed. "That is actually a Saint," she said. Unlike Fruity, who spent most of his days eating and playing pranks on the monks, Aurelia seemed to know more about such matters.

Fruity turned to her with curiosity. "What is a Saint?" he asked softly. He had read about immortals in the monastery's texts. The writings spoke of their ability to fly and move through the air, but he had never heard of a Saint before.

"A Saint is a cultivator with control over certain elements," Aurelia explained. "They have the ability to influence these elements in ways that let them defy some natural laws. For example, they can walk on air, fly, or travel long distances in mere seconds."

Fruity's eyes sparkled with excitement. "So, which is more awesome, Saints or Immortals?" he asked with a grin.

Aurelia looked puzzled by the term "awesome" but quickly understood the gist of the question. She tilted her head thoughtfully. "Immortals are generally stronger than Saints. Their abilities are more extensive and their endurance is unmatched. However, both are remarkable in their own ways."

Fruity nodded, still smiling. "So, Immortals are awesome, but Saints are also awesome."

Aurelia nodded in agreement. "In a way, yes. Both have their own special qualities that make them remarkable. It's not just about who is stronger, but also about what they can do and how they use their abilities."

"It's decided, I want to be a Saint," Fruity said looking at the figure whose legs finally touched the ground. Aurelia looks at him curiously and smiles. They focus their attention back to the Saint that just appeared.

"I know you are all here to awaken and become cultivators, so I won't waste anyone's time," the Saint said, forming a hand seal. From behind him, a giant pillar, about 30 meters tall, rose from the ground.

The pillar had ten segments, each marked with intricate symbols. As soon as the pillar appeared, everyone's faces lit up with excitement. It was the Awakening Pillar. They said that if you touch it, strange energy would enter your body, linking your soul with your consciousness and opening the path to the spiritual sea, opening a way for you to cultivate.

"This is the Awakening Pillar," the Saint continued. "As you can see, there are ten segments, which can be viewed as levels, ranging from one to ten. When you touch it, it will connect your consciousness with your soul, awakening your latent talents and class. After that, it will measure your level based on your talent and class."

He paused for a moment, letting his words sink in. "If you rank at level one, it means your talent and skill are mediocre. At most, you might become an Ascended or remain as an Awakened. If you rank at level ten, it means your talent is extraordinary."

The crowd murmured with excitement at the thought of their potential. "Those who rank between levels five and nine will be directly recognized by the King and receive special attention from the kingdom," the Saint added.

Suddenly, a calm and reserved voice broke the murmur. "Uncle, what if someone ranks tenth?" Fruity asked, casually chewing on a piece of candy as if he hadn't just interrupted a Saint.

Everyone turned to look at Fruity, surprised by his nonchalant demeanor. The Saint turned his gaze towards Fruity and replied, "Nobody has ever reached the tenth level, but if someone did, I am sure the Emperor himself would take notice."

Fruity's eyes gleamed with interest. "Does that mean you could meet the Ice Princess if you rank tenth?"

The Saint nodded. "That is possible, yes." For some reason, he felt calm talking to the Kid.

"Good, I guess I'll awaken and rank ten so I can also meet her," Fruity said with an excited smile.

Some of the youngsters around him exchanged confused glances. "

'Who is this strange kid?' they wondered, observing Fruity's childish behavior.

While many were anxious about their potential rank, Fruity seemed completely unfazed. His casual attitude and broad smile seemed out of place at such a serious moment. A few people even felt a pang of irritation, wanting to slap him for his lack of concern. However, most just sighed, recognizing that Fruity's behavior was simply a sign of his immaturity.

The Saint glanced at Fruity for a moment, his expression unreadable, before continuing with his speech. "As I was saying, you will be measured based on your class and talent."

He stepped aside to make way for the elders. "Without further ado, the awakening ceremony may begin."

"Matin Gent, you are first." And the elder called out. A young man with striking blue hair walked confidently to the pillar, his shoulders held high. He approached the pillar and paused, turning around to face the onlookers before turning back to the pillar.

"Tsk, show off," Fruity muttered under his breath, feeling an inexplicable urge to slap Matin. However, recalling his teachings, he took a deep breath and whispered, "Inner Peace."

Aurelia watched Fruity with a soft smile. She found his reactions endearing and couldn't help but think that Fruity was too charming to be just a monk. In her mind, he seemed more like a prince from a grand kingdom.

If only Aurelia knew that Fruity was actually a prince. But who's asking?

Matin gently placed his hand on the pillar. At first, nothing happened. Then, after a few seconds, the pillar began to hum and light up. The first segment glowed blue, brightening steadily. The second segment followed, lighting up green. The third segment shone yellow, and then the fourth segment illuminated in violet.

But after the fourth segment, the pillar's light stopped.

"Impressive," some of the parents and guardians remarked. "Matin Gent awakened with Level 4 talent. This is impressive; his future looks bright."

Matin Gent, who had just achieved Level 4, was pleased but not as elated as he had hoped. He had not reached the fifth level, so he wouldn't receive special recognition from the King. The realization slightly dimmed his happiness.

"Stacy Hendrik," the elder called out. A slender young lady with attractive features stepped forward. Unlike Matin, she placed her hand on the pillar immediately, and it lit up in response. Just like Matin, she too stopped at Level Four.

With a smile, she walked down the stairs, satisfied with her result. As more names were called, Fruity watched with increasing curiosity. To his surprise, none of the other candidates reached Level Five. Most fell between Levels Three and Four, with only a few managing Level Two, a rare occurrence.

"Aurelia Jenkis," the elder announced.

Fruity's attention snapped to the young lady beside him. Aurelia, with her long silver hair, hourglass figure, and graceful legs, walked confidently toward the pillar. She gave Fruity a warm smile before she approached the Pillar.

"I'll cheer for you, Aurelia!" Fruity shouted.

Aurelia glanced back at him, her smile widening as she appreciated his support. She reached the pillar and placed her hand on it. The pillar responded immediately, beginning to light up in a dazzling display.

Chapter 137 - 137: Fruity's Awakening

Aurelia walked gracefully to the Pillar and gently placed her hands on it. The Pillar hummed, and then the colors began to light up.

The blue segment lit up almost instantly, followed by the green. The third level glowed yellow, and everyone held their breath, waiting for the next level. Just as they hoped, the fourth level lit up, shining violet.

Then, in an instant, the fifth level also glowed pink. The crowd gasped, their eyes wide with excitement, watching the soft pink light radiating from the Pillar.

"Look! The sixth level is lighting up!" a young lady suddenly shouted. All eyes turned to the Pillar, where the sixth level shone bright red.

As soon as it did, the crowd erupted in cheers. Though they were all there for their own awakening, they couldn't help but celebrate someone reaching such a high level. Fruity was the loudest, his cheers echoing above everyone else's, filled with joy for his friend.

Aurelia stood before the glowing Pillar, her face calm but her eyes sparkling, clearly, she was happy with her gains.

The light stopped at level six. It was the most incredible thing they had seen so far, even though not everyone had finished their turn yet. Aurelia's achievement was already the best.

"Aurelia, you are awesome!" Fruity shouted, jumping up with excitement.

Aurelia smiled from the altar, pleased with herself. Before she could join Fruity, an elder approached and guided her away, probably to take down some information about her results.

The testing continued, but none of the others could match Aurelia's performance. No one reached beyond level four after her. A little later, a young woman managed to impress the crowd by hitting level five, earning some recognition.

Fruity, who had long since finished his candy, stood eagerly waiting for his turn. He was curious about how he would perform. He fidgeted in place, excited and nervous at the same time. After a short wait, Aurelia returned and stood beside him.

"That was amazing, Aurelia," Fruity said, placing a hand on her shoulder without a second thought.

"Really?" Aurelia asked, her face turning slightly pink. Fruity, innocent as ever, didn't notice that his hand on her shoulder was making her blush.

"Of course! You were great! Look, you're even glowing on your cheeks," Fruity added, completely unaware of her growing embarrassment.

Aurelia, feeling shy, turned her face away. Her cheeks grew warmer, and she hoped the Violet-Haired Monk wouldn't notice her blushing.

Fruity, still oblivious, wondered why she had turned away. He wanted to ask her more questions about what it felt like to reach level six. But just then, he heard his name being called.

"Fruity!" The elder's voice echoed across the room, though there was a slight hesitation in the way he said it. The name felt a bit odd, and the elder couldn't help but think, Who would name their child Fruity? It seemed like an unusual choice.

Still, Fruity didn't mind. He smiled widely and walked forward with confidence. His heart raced, but he didn't let the strange looks from the crowd bother him. He had been waiting for this moment.

As he approached the altar, he glanced at Aurelia one more time. She gave him an encouraging nod, and his nerves calmed down a little.

"Let's show them what monks are capable of," Fruity thought to himself, determination in his eyes. He pressed his hand firmly against the pillar.

The moment he made contact, the pillar hummed with energy. Suddenly, the first three levels lit up in rapid succession, stunning everyone around.

Gasps filled the room as the lights flared to life. Fruity, with his hand still on the pillar, felt something strange happen. His mind went blank, his vision became blurry, and then he felt it—a deep, unfamiliar sensation coursing through him.

His consciousness expanded as if a switch had been flipped inside him. He sensed something powerful awakening within. The world around him darkened further until he felt as though his entire being had been pulled out of his body like he was no longer standing there but somewhere else entirely.

He opened his eyes, startled. He found himself in a place that was the very embodiment of darkness and pain—a desolate, cold space where not a shred of light existed. It was eerie and oppressive like all hope had been stripped away.

But as his eyes adjusted, Fruity noticed something odd beneath him. He was standing on a large stone tablet.

Suddenly, the tablet began to glow. At first, it was faint, but it grew brighter until it shimmered with a soft golden light. Then, like foam dissolving in water, the tablet disintegrated and transformed into a radiant orb of golden energy. The orb shot toward him and merged with his forehead, filling him with warmth and a sense of power he had never felt before.

Back in the real world, Fruity's hand remained pressed against the pillar. As his body stood there, the light at level four blinked into existence. The onlookers, who had been watching in awe, were shocked to see the light climbing higher. Without hesitation, the fifth level lit up, casting a bright glow around the room.

But it didn't stop there. To everyone's astonishment, the sixth level was also illuminated, glowing red and casting a fiery hue across the entire space. The air grew tense with excitement and disbelief as people exchanged shocked glances.

Then, just when the crowd thought they had seen it all, another miracle occurred. A brilliant white light flared into existence, signaling that the seventh level had been unlocked. The entire place was bathed in the blinding radiance of the seventh light, something no one had ever witnessed before.

The audience fell into stunned silence. They could hardly believe what they were seeing. Reaching the seventh level was unheard of, even among the most powerful individuals. Murmurs rippled through the crowd, as they tried to process what was happening.

Fruity, still unaware of the chaos he was causing outside, stood in the dark, desolate space. But now, something had changed. The golden orb that merged with his forehead seemed to unlock something deep within him.

A surge of energy coursed through Fruity's veins, making him feel invincible. It was like he had tapped into something far away—something unfamiliar, yet strangely familiar at the same time.

Out of nowhere, a blinding light descended from above, merging with Fruity's body. At that moment, the eight levels of the testing pillar outside lit up. As if that wasn't enough, the ninth level lit up too.

Everyone stood frozen, jaws dropped. Even his Uncle Monk, usually calm and composed, stared in disbelief. The Saint who had welcomed them earlier stood motionless, eyes fixed on the pillar now glowing with golden light.

Suddenly, the sky began to darken. Thick clouds swirled overhead as the rumble of thunder echoed through the heavens. The tension grew, and everyone looked up in fear, sensing something extraordinary about to happen.

All over Hammon City, people stopped in their tracks, staring at the sky. Even those far from the testing grounds turned their gaze toward the dark clouds forming above them.

Then, the pillar began to hum, its vibrations growing stronger with each passing second. Suddenly, the tenth and final level of the pillar lit up, glowing in a brilliant violet-gold hue.

As soon as it did, a beam of light shot from the top of the pillar, piercing the sky. The entire area was bathed in its radiance, casting a golden glow across the city.

Gasps and whispers filled the air. No one had ever seen the tenth level light up before. It was an achievement beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

"What... is this?" someone murmured from the crowd, eyes wide with amazement.

Fruity, still standing in the strange place, felt the power within him growing stronger by the second. He could barely comprehend what was happening, but his body hummed with newfound energy. He felt connected to the very fabric of the world around him, as though he had become one with the universe.

Suddenly, the space cracked and seven figures walked through. Immediately they appeared, Everyone watching bowed.

Chapter 138 - 138: Ten Thousand Lightning Valley

"Sovereigns," Aurelia whispered, her eyes wide as she looked up at the seven figures that appeared through the crack in space. Each figure radiated an aura of grace and strength, their presence overwhelming and commanding.

The moment they appeared, everyone in the crowd bowed deeply. Even the Saint, who usually stood tall and composed, lowered himself in respect.

"Greetings to the Seven Elders of Ten Thousand Lightning Valley. What brings you here today?" he asked, his voice steady but filled with underlying tension. Of course, he knew why they had come, but out of formality, he had to ask.

The Seven Elders didn't respond. Instead, their eyes shifted toward Fruity, who still had his hand resting on the pillar. Their expressions remained unreadable, but the intensity of their gaze spoke volumes.

At that very moment, the dark clouds above parted, and the light from the pillar began to fade. As the glow dimmed, Fruity opened his eyes, his appearance subtly different. His features had become more refined, and there was a newfound charm in his expression, almost as if he had undergone a transformation.

For a brief moment, Fruity stood still, looking more mature and serious than ever before. But just as quickly, his familiar cheerful grin returned. "Aurelia, I was awesome, right?" he asked with a beaming smile, his carefree tone returning.

Aurelia's heart skipped a beat. She forced a smile, trying to keep her composure.

"You were awesome, Fruity," she replied, though her voice trembled slightly. Deep inside, she felt something strange stirring within her, an emotion she couldn't quite place.

'Is this what my sister called butterflies in the stomach?' she wondered, her thoughts swirling. She glanced at Fruity again.

All around, people were staring at Fruity in disbelief, their expressions filled with confusion and curiosity. Even the Seven Elders, who rarely showed emotion, seemed intrigued by the young monk's casual demeanor.

Suddenly, one of the elders, a man with a long white beard and eyes like lightning, spoke up. "Little Monk, what is your name?"

"Fruity," he replied cheerfully, without a hint of hesitation.

The elder blinked, then nodded slowly. "Well, Fruity, do you want to join the Ten Thousand Lightning Valley?" he asked, his tone serious.

Without missing a beat, Fruity replied, "Nope."

The elder looked taken aback, his eyes widening. "What?" he exclaimed, clearly shocked by the unexpected answer. "Do you understand the offer you've just refused?" His voice grew firmer, the weight of his words hanging in the air.

Fruity shrugged, completely unfazed. "I don't know, and I don't care," he said with a carefree grin. "I'm a monk. I prefer to stay a monk. You know, inner peace and all that." He smiled again as if this was the most natural decision in the world, completely oblivious to the strange looks now plastered on the faces of the elders and everyone else around him.

The elder, clearly unsettled by Fruity's nonchalance, furrowed his brow. "You're turning down a chance to join one of the greatest powers in the world, and you're not even interested?"

Fruity nodded, still smiling. "Exactly! I like being a monk. Simple life, simple goals. It's peaceful. Besides," he added with a wink, "all that lightning stuff seems like a lot of noise."

The crowd, which had been holding its breath, suddenly erupted into whispers. No one could believe what they had just heard. To reject an offer from the Ten Thousand Lightning Valley? It was unthinkable!

Did he just call the infamous Ten Thousand Lightning Valley a bunch of noisemakers? That was bold. Everyone could feel the anger simmering in the elders.

"Little one, you should reconsider your decision. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," one of the elders said, trying to keep his voice calm, though barely managing to hide his frustration.

"I've already thought about it, Grandpa," Fruity replied with a calm smile. "I want to stay a monk. This way, I won't have to live up to anyone's expectations. I like my peaceful life and enjoy playing with my Uncle Monks. They are the best," he added, glancing in his uncle's direction.

Although his uncle taught him about inner peace, letting go of pride, and not seeking recognition, Fruity's words warmed his heart. A small, rare smile appeared on his lips. This mischievous little monk had finally shown some appreciation for all the years of trouble he had put them through.

"That will be all, Grandpas," Fruity continued. "But if you need to fill a quota, I can recommend some great candidates. They'd fit right into your Valley."

What the seven elders didn't realize was that Fruity had already been warned not to join the Valley by his Grandmaster Monk.

Hammon City is one of the five cities in the Lanky Kingdom. The Lanky Kingdom is one of the seven kingdoms in the Evergreen Empire. However, outside of these kingdoms and beyond the Empire itself, there exists another great power. They are not a kingdom, but their influence spreads far and wide.

This power isn't just confined to the first Human Empire—they are everywhere. This group is called the Ten Thousand Lightning Valley, and they are known for seeking out talented individuals to train and add to their growing army of cultivators.

People generally avoid antagonizing them because they aren't subject to any king or emperor's authority. They are their own independent force, and opposing them is like challenging an empire itself.

No one wants to get on their bad side. However, that doesn't mean you have to say yes to everything they offer. Fruity's decision to reject their invitation was well within his rights. Still, the elders were reluctant to leave him be. After all, for the first time in thousands of years, someone had activated all ten levels of the Awakening Pillar.

That was unheard of, and the Seven Elders were eager to recruit him, hoping it would earn them a favor. Unfortunately for them, Fruity wasn't your typical candidate.

"There are consequences for rejecting the Valley, brat," the elder said, his tone growing darker and more menacing. His aura began to leak, and the youngsters nearby shivered as a chilling sensation swept over them, making it feel as if death was creeping closer.

"Consequences? Tomato, tomato," Fruity replied with a calm but mocking tone. "I don't know about that, old man. But let me give you a little advice—it's in your best interest not to push this any further. Trust me, there are things no one wants to see. I may seem weak right now, but turning down your offer today is the best thing that could ever happen to you."

His usual playful demeanor vanished as he narrowed his eyes at the Sovereign Elders, beings far stronger than him. Fruity was like an ant standing before Titans, but even so, he didn't back down. His

gaze locked with the elders, and for some reason, the elders felt a deep unease—as if death had just written their names on its list.

Still, the elders are no ordinary people. They are Sovereigns, beings of immense power. A mere awakening from some brat wasn't going to scare them.

One of them narrowed his eyes and was about to crush this child with just a little pressure. But just as he was about to exert his strength, the temperature around them dropped dangerously.

Suddenly, the sky cracked open, and from the split in the heavens, a woman appeared. She looked like she had stepped straight out of a painting, her beauty both mesmerizing and terrifying. Fruity's stern expression softened, and his eyes widened in surprise and delight as he laid eyes on the lady.

Chapter 139 - 139: The Ice Princess Appeared

From the crack in space, a breathtaking woman stepped out. Her alabaster skin seemed to glow, and her long blue hair cascaded down her back like a waterfall. Her slender legs and hourglass figure were highlighted by a stunning whitish-blue gown, with a thin layer of white fabric elegantly draped around her neck.

Her blue eyes were captivating, and her lips—full and inviting—seemed to silently command attention. Even her chest area, which was perfectly proportioned, added to her overall grace and allure. Fruity, who was usually calm and composed, suddenly felt his heart racing uncontrollably, something he hadn't experienced before.

'She's beautiful,' he thought, but on the outside, he kept his expression neutral, showing no hint of what was going through his mind.

"I believe 'no' means 'no,' Elders. Don't you agree?" the woman said as she descended gracefully from the heavens. Her voice was as icy as it was calming, an enchanting blend of authority and serenity.

The moment her feet touched the ground, the earth beneath her froze, spreading out into a stunning carpet of ice. She cast a calm glance over at Fruity, who met her gaze with a neutral expression.

It was finally happening. The Ice Princess he had dreamed of since he was ten was standing right in front of him.

"Ice Princess, with all due respect, this is a matter for the Ten Thousand Lightning Valley. I must ask you not to interfere," one of the elders said, trying to maintain his authority.

"Interfere? I'm not interfering. I'm simply here, just like all of you," she replied with an icy, yet composed, tone. She then turned her attention to Fruity.

"Little brother, what is your name?" she asked.

"Fruity," he answered, offering a small smile.

"Fruity? What a delightful name," the Ice Princess said, her smile warming her otherwise frosty demeanor.

"Tell me, Little Brother Fruity, do you want to join the Ice Palace?" the Ice Princess asked.

Fruity hesitated for a moment, turning to glance at his Uncle Monk. Although his uncle didn't say a word, Fruity could read his silent approval.

"Yes, I would like to join," Fruity said with a bright smile. 'One step closer to getting closer to you,' he thought inwardly.

"Well, that settles it. Fruity is now a potential candidate for the Ice Palace. I trust the Valley won't try to steal such a promising candidate," the Ice Princess declared, her gaze fixed on the seven elders.

The elders clenched their fists in frustration. This situation was unprecedented for them. Their usual method was to show up, make an offer, and then take their chosen candidate. They had never faced a scenario like this before and were unsure how to counter it. Finally, one of them spoke up.

"The Ice Palace is known to only accept Ice Elementalists. He isn't even an Ice wielder. How can he join the Ice Palace?"

The Ice Princess glanced at Fruity and smirked at the elder. "He can always inherit the Ice element if he joins. There's no need to worry about that," she said, her tone dismissive.

"Big Sister, there's no need to worry," Fruity suddenly interjected, addressing the Ice Princess as "Big Sister." The Ice Princess looked at him, curiosity flickering in her eyes. She wanted to ask what he meant, but before she could speak, Fruity extended his hand, and a block of ice materialized in his palm.

Everyone stared at him in astonishment. But just as the Ice Princess was about to make a subtle remark to the elders, the ice in Fruity's hand began to darken. Immediately it appeared, be it the ice princess, the seven elders, the saint, or Fruity's Uncle, everyone stared in shock.

"The Annihilation Ice," the Ice Princess said, her eyes widening with surprise as she looked at the darkened ice in Fruity's hand.

"Big Sister, is this impressive?" Fruity asked a hint of pride in his voice, however, he didn't understand where their surprise was coming from.

"Put that away!" the Ice Princess said sharply, making Fruity panic. He quickly withdrew the ice he had conjured.

At that moment, space cracked open, and the seven Elders vanished into the rift. The Ice Princess seemed poised to take action, but just as she moved, she halted. Turning back to Fruity, she said, "Little brother, do you have time to talk? Your uncle and friend can join us."

In an instant, Fruity, Aurelia, and Uncle Monk disappeared from their location and reappeared in a room that resembled an inn. They quickly gathered around a table.

"Little sister," the Ice Princess began, addressing Aurelia rather than addressing Fruity's immediate concerns, "do you want to join the Ice Palace?"

Aurelia nodded enthusiastically.

"Excellent! Not only have I found someone with Annihilation Ice, but also someone with a rare ice constitution. This is wonderful," the Ice Princess exclaimed with a broad smile.

"Big sister, why are we here?" Fruity asked, confused by the sudden shift from the awakening tower to this new setting.

"Little brother," the Ice Princess replied coldly, "would you believe me if I told you that everyone wants to kill you?"

"What?" Fruity, his uncle, and Aurelia exclaimed in shock.

The room fell silent after the Ice Princess's shocking statement. Fruity's eyes widened, and he looked at Aurelia and Uncle Monk, searching for any sign that this might be a joke.

Aurelia's face was pale, and she looked troubled. Uncle Monk's brow furrowed as he stared at the Ice Princess, trying to understand the situation.

"Why would everyone want to kill me?" Fruity finally managed to ask, his voice trembling.

"You, Fruity, have just awakened an Ice that shouldn't exist," the Ice Princess said. "Annihilation Ice is a forbidden ice constitution. It appeared only once many eons ago. I don't know much about it, but from what I've read in the Palace scriptures, Annihilation Ice is one of the Seven forbidden ice constitutions in the world."

She paused, letting her words sink in. "When I say 'forbidden,' it doesn't mean no one can awaken it. It's rare, but people have awakened it before. However, they didn't live long enough to use it. They were killed before they could grow stronger. So when I say you are in danger, I mean it.

People will want to kill you."

Fruity's heart pounded in his chest. "You're saying I'm a target?"

The Ice Princess nodded. "Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. You shouldn't even trust me. I might be one of those people who could harm you."

Fruity felt a mix of fear and confusion. He glanced at Aurelia and Uncle Monk, hoping for some reassurance. Aurelia looked as if she was trying to process the gravity of the situation. Uncle Monk's face was serious, reflecting the concern he felt for Fruity.

"Is there any way to protect myself?" Fruity asked, trying to find a way out of this predicament.

The Ice Princess leaned forward, her eyes sharp. "There are ways, but they require powerful allies and knowledge. I can help you, but you must be cautious and trust no one easily."

Fruity took a deep breath, trying to steady himself. "What should I do next?"

"For now, go back with your uncle and try your best to grow stronger and faster. I have already taken care of the Seven Elders and wiped everyone who witnessed your awakening memory. Nobody will remember you. No one aside Me, your uncle, and Aurelia here"

"Big sister, please wipe my memory" The Ice Princess wasn't even done speaking when Aurelia spoke making Fruity frown.

Chapter 140 - 140: Our peaceful days are over

"Aurelia, what do you mean by 'wipe your memory'? You will forget about me?" Fruity asked, looking at the young lady beside him.

Aurelia gave him a complicated smile and replied, "I know, Fruity. But I can't be the reason people come after you. If I know about your ice, it only makes it more dangerous for you."

"But you will forget about me. You're my only friend," Fruity said, his voice tinged with sadness.

"And you are my only friend too," Aurelia said, tears welling up in her eyes. "But I can't let my presence put you in danger. I have to let go of the small memories we have. I can't risk your life for my own unwillingness to forget."

The Ice Princess spoke up, "Aurelia is right, Fruity. She needs to forget. But don't worry. I will take her to the Ice Palace. Once you're strong enough, you can come search for her. For now, you should return to the monastery.

It's the best place for you to hide and grow stronger."

Fruity looked troubled. "But how can you help me? You don't even know me."

The Ice Princess nodded, understanding his concern. "I know it's hard to trust me, but I will do my best. I can cover your tracks and protect you for now. I can't promise everything will be perfect, but I will try my hardest to help you."

Fruity felt a mix of frustration and gratitude. He knew the Ice Princess was trying to help, but the uncertainty of his situation weighed heavily on him. He glanced at Aurelia, who gave him a final, tearful smile.

"Thank you," Fruity said quietly. "I appreciate everything you're doing."

Aurelia nodded, her expression resolute despite her tears. "Stay safe, Fruity. And remember, you are not alone. We will find a way to be together again."

The Ice Princess and Aurelia vanished from the room, leaving only Fruity and his uncle behind. Fruity looked at his uncle and sighed deeply. His peaceful days were clearly over. "Let's go, Uncle," he said. Together, they left and headed back to the monastery.

Far from Hammon City, the Ice Princess stood atop an ice mountain, gazing at a girl before her. Suddenly, an icy mist swirled around Aurelia. When the mist cleared, a completely different person stood in her place. She looked almost identical to the Ice Princess but had silver hair and a natural charm that made her seem more in tune with nature.

"Sister, do you think he will be alright?" the Ice Princess asked, her voice tinged with concern.

The woman, now looking like a more mature version of Aurelia, responded calmly. "He will be fine. You and I both know he's not as simple as he seemed. He just needs a few years to grow, and everything will be fine."

She noticed the worried look on her sister's face and added with a gentle smile, "You know you can't tell him everything right now. He has to figure things out on his own."

The Ice Princess nodded slowly. "I know, sister. It's just that when I saw him, he was so happy and full of life. Now, he looks like the weight of the world is pressing down on him."

Aurelia, now in her mature form, reassured her. "Don't worry, Tasha. He will be fine. For now, we need to ensure that no one discovers him. After all, he hasn't just awakened Annihilation Ice. He has also awakened Chaos Ice and Devouring Ice.

The world is about to become chaotic, and we need to be prepared."

"What?" The Ice Princess exclaimed, but her shout was cut off by the sudden shattering of space. The two women vanished into the void.

Back at the monastery, Fruity stood before six imposing figures, each radiating a terrifying presence. The room was thick with tension.

"So you're saying he has awakened Annihilation Ice?" one of the ancient monks asked. Uncle Monk nodded in response.

"Good. This is good," the ancient monk said with a smile, and the others followed suit, their expressions showing approval. Fruity was taken aback by their reaction.

"Grandpa, why is this good? People will literally come after me. They will try to kill me just for possessing this ice. How can this be good for me?" Fruity asked, his voice filled with confusion and fear.

The ancient monks exchanged glances before one of them spoke. "What you have awakened is incredibly rare and powerful. While it does put you at great risk, it also marks you as someone of immense potential. The power within you could turn the tide of many conflicts and bring great change. It is a double-edged sword, but it is a significant strength."

Fruity struggled to see the positive side of the situation. "But how can I protect myself from those who will want to harm me?"

The ancient monk nodded thoughtfully. "That is why we are here. We will help you train and prepare. Your journey will be difficult, but with our guidance, you can learn to control and harness your powers."

Fruity studied the monks for a while as if trying to gauge whether he could trust them. After a moment, he sighed and extended his hand. Dark ice, red ice, and dark gold ice materialized in the air, shimmering with a powerful aura.

The monks' eyes widened in shock as they saw the three types of ice. Their jaws dropped in disbelief.

"Annihilation Ice, Chaos Ice, and Devouring Ice," one of the ancient monks said, his voice trembling.

Fruity looked at them, confused. "Grandpa Monk, what are these types of ice?"

The ancient monk took a deep breath to steady himself. "Each of these ice types is incredibly rare and dangerous. They represent different aspects of the Ice element."

He pointed to the dark ice. "This is Annihilation Ice. It can erase anything it touches, reducing it to nothingness. It is one of the most feared types of ice because of its destructive nature."

Next, he gestured to the red ice. "This is Chaos Ice. It causes instability and disorder. It can disrupt the balance of elements and create chaos wherever it is used."

Finally, he indicated the dark gold ice. "This is Devouring Ice. It consumes and absorbs other energies, growing stronger with each thing it devours. It is nearly impossible to stop once it starts feeding."

Fruity listened carefully, absorbing the information. "So, each type of ice has its own unique power. Why are they so dangerous?"

The ancient monk nodded. "These ice types are dangerous because they can cause great harm if not controlled properly. They have the potential to change the world in significant ways, which is why they are so feared and sought after."

"I see," Fruity said. "So, they are afraid I might become too powerful in the future and can't be stopped." Grandpa Monk nodded in agreement.

"I understand," Fruity continued, his voice calm but carrying a note of resignation. "I will train and become stronger." His usual lively demeanor was gone, replaced by a more mature and somber attitude.

Grandpa Monk looked at him with a heavy heart. He turned to Fruity's Uncle Monk. "Take him to the Soul Temple and let him select any skill or technique he wants. After that, take him to the Immortal Cave."

He then addressed Fruity directly. "Use whatever resources you need to grow stronger. Your life is in your own hands now. As for us old fossils, we will stay here and stand guard."

Fruity nodded, accepting the responsibility. He left with his Uncle Monk, heading toward the Soul Temple. There was nothing he could do now but train and grow stronger.

Once they were gone, one of the ancient monks turned to the Grandmaster Monk. "Activate the formation and get everyone ready. Our peaceful days are over."