

THE LAST PARAGON IN THE APOCALYPSE

Chapter 15: The Way Forward

Klaus was genuinely thankful to Madam Fei for her honesty. In a world where he had seen greed, evil, and backstabbing all too often, finding someone reliable was a rare and welcome change. Although they had just met, Klaus had learned over the years how to see people for who they truly were. Madam Fei, with her straightforwardness and fair dealings, was a breath of fresh air.

Before coming here, Klaus had only estimated his total sales would be somewhere between 30,000 to 50,000 gold coins. He never imagined the monsters he had killed were worth so much more. These gold coins, now the standard currency after the world had changed and continents formed unions, were important.

When the global leaders came together to establish a common currency, it made the old currencies like dollars and euros obsolete overnight. Gold coins became the new measure of wealth, and having such a large amount felt extravagant.

Klaus knew that these coins were essential for securing a better life for himself and his mother. "I really am grateful, Madam Fei. And you can call me Klaus," he said, finally calming down enough to speak.

"To tell you the truth, Klaus," Madam Fei began with a warm smile, "this Tier 3 monster alone could easily fetch you over 150,000 gold coins. But since I lack the experience to fully appraise them right now, I could only offer you 200,000 gold coins for the entire lot. You really surprised me with the Venom Sacs and the Tier 3 monster body."

Klaus couldn't help but grin at her words. "I'll be sure to surprise you even more in the future," he replied, his confidence growing. Madam Fei smiled and gave him the 200,000 gold coins.

"Thank you," Klaus said, then added, "By the way, can you tell me about the housing system in this part of the city?"

Madam Fei raised an eyebrow, clearly a bit surprised by his question, but she answered. "Well, that depends. The housing system in this city isn't exactly easy. To secure a house, the first step is to become a registered member of

the city. And to do that, you'll need a recommendation from someone who already lives here. Each person can only give out one recommendation, so it's pretty limited."

She paused for a moment, making sure Klaus was following along. "But that's just the beginning. You also need to have at least 50 million in your account. This rule is in place to make sure that once you've bought or rented a house, you'll still have enough money to cover other living expenses. They don't want anyone struggling to pay for basic amenities."

Klaus nodded, listening carefully.

Madam Fei continued, "Another requirement is that you have to undergo a background check. The city wants to make sure that anyone moving in doesn't have a criminal record or anything that might cause trouble for the residents. They're very strict about maintaining a safe and peaceful community."

She then added, "You'll also need to have a stable source of income. Whether it's from a job, a business, or some other means, you have to prove that you can consistently afford the cost of living here. The city doesn't want anyone who might end up being a burden on the system."

Finally, Madam Fei mentioned, "And, of course, there's the matter of the housing tax. It's an annual fee that everyone has to pay. It's used to maintain the infrastructure, like roads, parks, and public services. The tax amount depends on the size and location of the house you're buying or renting."

She leaned back, studying Klaus's reaction. "So, you see, it's a bit of a challenge to secure a house here. But if you're determined and meet all the requirements, it's definitely possible."

Klaus absorbed everything Madam Fei had said, but a few questions lingered in his mind. He couldn't shake the memory of something that had happened to him and his mother a few years ago. If what she said was true, then they shouldn't have been forced out of their home when his father went missing.

Back then, they were told that they didn't have enough money in their account and that, since his father was presumed dead, his assets were seized. But Klaus remembered his mother telling him that the bank account was a family account. That meant all three of them—his father, his mother, and himself—should have had access to it.

The more he thought about it, the more something didn't add up. It smelled fishy like they had been tricked or something more sinister was at play. But now wasn't the time to dive into that. There was too much else to focus on.

Just as Klaus was lost in thought, Madam Fei spoke up again, snapping him back to the present. "I know getting a recommendation is tough," she said, "but since you're a warrior, you can easily secure one."

Klaus looked at Madam Fei, a bit surprised, but quickly asked, "Really? How can I get a recommendation?" He didn't mind staying in the slum for himself, but for his mother's sake, he wanted to get them out of there and give her a better life.

Madam Fei nodded. "There are two ways," she began. "First, you can apply for a warrior badge from the Hundred Hands Bank. They're a powerful organization that looks for young, talented warriors to groom. Applying is free, but they'll ask you to work for them for a few years in exchange."

Klaus immediately shook his head, dismissing the idea. The thought of being tied down and working for some organization didn't sit well with him. He had his own plans, and being bound by a contract wasn't part of them.

Madam Fei noticed Klaus's reaction and smoothly transitioned to the second option. "The second option is to open a bank account at the Royal Gold Reserve Bank and deposit at least 60 million gold coins. This will earn you a Copper Badge, and with that badge, you won't need a recommendation. You can easily buy a house in the city."

Klaus's face brightened a bit as he considered this option. "That sounds better. But how many recommendations can I get with a Copper Badge?" he asked with a smile. He needed two recommendations, so it was important to know.

Madam Fei nodded. "A Copper Badge can give out one recommendation. However, if you manage to deposit about 120 million gold coins, you'll receive a Bronze Badge, which allows you to secure recommendations for two people. A Silver Badge, requiring 240 million gold coins, lets you secure three people, and so on."

Klaus nodded, feeling more at ease with the second option. It was much better than being tied down by a contract that could have all sorts of hidden downsides. "Thank you, Madam Fei," he said, genuinely appreciative of her advice.

He then asked, "Another question—if I manage to bring back more goods, how confident are you that you can buy them all?"

Madam Fei smiled reassuringly. "You don't have to worry about payment. As long as there are wares, I'll be able to pay you."

Klaus nodded, satisfied with her response. Seeing a clear path ahead, he knew what had to be done. He has to get stronger so he can hunt more monsters and then secure a good home for himself and his mother.

Securing 120 million gold coins seemed like a far-off dream, but Klaus knew that with his rising strength, he'd be able to hunt stronger monsters that would bring in more money. For now, he had to make do with what little he had to ensure they didn't starve like they used to. But once he secured those funds, he could move to the city and finally give his mother the comfortable life she deserved.

"Nice doing business with you, Madam Fei. Next time, I'll be sure to bring back better goods," Klaus said, extending his hand for a handshake.

Madam Fei smiled and shook his hand. "I'll be looking forward to your next sale. Just take care of yourself out there. Remember, there are more than just monsters in those forests."

Klaus nodded in agreement and left her store, planning to buy some food before heading home. As he walked away, Madam Fei stood for a moment, deep in thought. After a while, she shook her head and muttered to herself, "This kid is something special. I'll wait and see what he brings next time before making any decisions."

Klaus walked through the bustling streets, his mind occupied with thoughts of the future. But he wasn't scared, if anything, he was more prepared for the task ahead.

As he reached the market, the smell of freshly baked bread and cooked meats filled the air. The vibrant colors of fruits and vegetables on display caught his eye, and he couldn't help but feel a sense of relief that he could finally afford to buy enough food. No more scraping by on scraps or worrying about where their next meal would come from.

He picked up a few essentials—bread, some fresh vegetables, and a small portion of meat. It wasn't much, but it was more than they'd had in a long time. As he paid the vendor, Klaus couldn't help but smile. This was just the beginning.

With the foodstuff in hand, Klaus made his way back home. The sun was beginning to set, casting a warm, golden glow over the city. The slum where he lived wasn't much, but it was home—for now. Soon, he would be able to get his mother out of there, into a place where she could live in peace and comfort.

When he arrived at their small, worn-down house, he pushed open the door and was greeted by the familiar scent of home.

"I'm back, Mom," Klaus called out as he set the groceries on the table.

His mother turned and smiled at him, her eyes filled with a mixture of pride and relief. "Welcome home, Klaus. How was your day?"

"It was good," he replied with a grin. "I made a decent sale today" Klaus began narrating his day to his mother.

