

Paragon 221

Chapter 221 - 221: Seal Of Slaughter

The moment Klaus heard the name of the red rune, he knew it wasn't something friendly. He wasn't foolish enough to think anything called "Slaughter" was about rainbows and sunshine. He could tell this was dark, and the Senior's next words confirmed his suspicions.

"Brat, this Seal came from the Pentaface Bead when you activated the Nine Stars Blood Moon Transformation. I hope I don't need to explain what that means—you should know not to take this lightly," the Senior said firmly.

"I figured, Senior, but what exactly does it do? More importantly, what is the Seal of Slaughter?" Klaus asked, curious despite the unsettling vibe inside the soul sea.

The Senior chuckled. "Well, brat, you're one lucky bastard."

"Language, Senior! And why is this thing lucky? From where I'm standing, it looks more like a walking disaster," Klaus replied, feeling a mix of excitement and doubt. The rune was practically seething with bloodlust, which didn't sit well with him.

"It depends on your perspective, but from my view, the Seal of Slaughter fits perfectly with your nature. You're a Paragon, Klaus. One thing about Paragons is that they walk outside the rules. You've never had it easy, and you never will, so getting an advantage is a big deal."

Klaus listened carefully, his skepticism still lingering, but he trusted the Senior's wisdom.

"This Seal," the Senior continued, "is something you'll one day understand as Law. The universe is governed by many laws—time, space, magic, life, death, and more. These Laws dictate how everything works.

The Seal of Slaughter gives you control over one such law, the Law of Slaughter. The stronger you become, the more you'll be able to tap into this power, but it comes with a price. Like all great power, it can consume you if you're not careful."

Klaus nodded, understanding the gravity of it now. "So, it's both a blessing and a curse?"

"I knew nothing good would come from that Bead," Klaus sighed, half-expecting something like this.

"Hey, why are you so down? Do you even understand what the Law of Slaughter is? Or more importantly, what this Seal of Slaughter can really do?" the Senior asked, his tone serious.

Klaus, who had started sulking, raised an eyebrow at the Senior's words. This was unusual. The Senior never took the initiative to explain things unless Klaus specifically asked. For him to bring this up on his own meant there was something truly significant about the seal.

He didn't know much about the Pentaface Bead aside from it being one of the nine Forbidden Relics. The last time he got curious about it, he nearly died, so he has been more cautious around it ever since.

However, the Seal of Slaughter was different. The Senior knew something important, and for once, he was willing to share.

"Tell me, brat, what do you know about Asura? I'm sure you've heard some fairy tales about them. So, tell me," the Senior said, his voice hinting at something deeper.

Klaus frowned. He has indeed heard some stories about that, but as the senior said, it was just a fairytale, a fiction. He didn't expect it to be mentioned here.

"Asura? Yeah, I've heard stories. They're said to be fierce warriors, beings of pure rage and bloodlust. Supposedly, they thrive on battle and destruction. But those are just old legends, right?"

The Senior chuckled. "Old legends, sure. But legends often hold a grain of truth. The Asura were real, and they were more than just warriors—they were the embodiment of slaughter. The Seal of Slaughter taps into that same power. The Asura had mastered the Law of Killing, and this seal grants you a glimpse of that mastery."

Klaus's eyes widened as the full weight of the situation hit him. "So... this seal is connected to the power of the Asura?"

"No," the Senior corrected. "The seal is Asura—the Law of Slaughter, or as it's now called by most, the Law of Killing."

Klaus gulped hard, his throat suddenly dry. He might be a school dropout, but he wasn't clueless. Thanks to Fruity's memories, he now understood the art of killing, the divine essence of slaughter, the insatiable bloodlust, and all kinds of deadly knowledge.

But knowing that something embodying the true essence of slaughter was sitting inside his soul sea? That was something else entirely. He was blown away.

"The Asura are the Law of Slaughter," Klaus whispered to himself. Then, he asked, "So, Senior, does that mean there's no such thing as the Asura race?"

"There was a race," the Senior said, his tone more serious now.

"But as far as I'm concerned, the true Asura race died off many, many years ago. I really shouldn't be saying this because of the karma involved, but with a Forbidden Relic and this Forbidden Law Seal in your possession, I think you'll manage just fine in your next tribulation."

Klaus couldn't help but smile as he caught the teasing tone in the Senior's voice. "You sound amused, Senior."

"Maybe a little," the Senior chuckled. "To answer your question, the Asura race was wiped out eons ago. I won't say who did it—that's a whole other mess—but understand this: the Asura, or the Law of Slaughter, isn't something to be taken lightly. It's forbidden for a reason."

Klaus nodded, already knowing that he had stumbled into something far beyond his current understanding.

"You're still growing, and as you do, some of these things will start to make sense," the Senior continued. "Me saying too much now could actually be bad for you."

Klaus took a deep breath, feeling the weight of the Senior's words settle on him. He had already figured out that nothing about his journey would be simple, but this? This was a whole new level of responsibility and danger. And yet, something about it excited him. If he could master this power, he would truly be unstoppable.

Klaus didn't know where the excitement was coming from, but he craved the power, the bloodlust. He could feel the urge rising in him—a deep desire to sink his teeth into battle, to taste blood.

"Don't get too excited, brat," the Senior's voice suddenly cut through his thoughts, stern but amused. "As always, you're far too weak to start comprehending this Law. To even begin, you need to become a Saint. You'll need a Star Core and the current you doesn't have one."

Klaus's excitement faded a little, but he was still curious. "So, I can't use the Law of Killing yet?"

"Not yet," the Senior confirmed. "However, this seal didn't come without benefits. Just having it in your soul sea will start showing its effects soon."

Klaus perked up. "What kind of effects, Senior?"

The Senior chuckled. "Well, for one, your battle instincts will sharpen. You'll feel more connected to the weapons you use, more in tune with the bloodlust of the battlefield.

The longer the seal stays in your soul sea, the more natural it will become for you to move, fight, and kill. It'll also make you more resilient but don't get too comfortable. These are just minor benefits, teasers compared to what the Law can really do."

Klaus nodded, feeling a mix of anticipation and wariness. "So, it's making me stronger without me even trying?"

"Exactly. But don't get cocky," the Senior warned. "The real test will come when you try to wield the Law itself. For now, take what you can get and keep training. You're not ready for the full power of the Seal of Slaughter yet."

"Thanks, Senior" Klaus said clearly happy about his gain this time. The Seal is something he knew would open so many doors for him even if it's forbidden. His existence is already forbidden meaning he wouldn't be able to move forward with what the universe provides, he has to carve his own path.

"Level up quickly and breakthrough to the grandmaster stage and start forming your Star Core, I have a feeling you will get a surprise on your next breakthrough"

Klaus smiled and then went about looking at the Pentaface bead for a while before leaving the soul sea.

Because he didn't want to wake Miriam up, he freshened up and left to take a stroll around Arcadian City.

Chapter 222 - 222: Getting Stalked By An Assassin [Bonus]

As soon as Klaus left the room, he realized he was in the mansion of Dave Arcadian, the most secure place in all of Arcadian City. Clearly, the Overlord who had brought him there didn't want any danger reaching him.

Klaus was now a hot commodity. A day after he wiped out every Zombie in the Demon's Abode, a video of his conquest was released to the world. Some parts had been edited out, but what remained was enough to set the internet on fire.

While Klaus slept, unaware of the buzz, the world had taken notice. His status on the City, Regional, and Union Charts skyrocketed. He was now ranked 6th on the City Chart and 26th on the Regional Chart.

But the biggest shock came from the Union Chart, where his ranking jump was described as the highest in warrior history. Klaus had leaped from the 900s to 120th place in a single day. The whole world was stunned.

Klaus didn't just prove he belonged on those charts—he made it clear he was a force to be reckoned with. Although he hadn't yet cracked the World Chart, everyone knew it was only a matter of time.

Klaus was now a hotshot. Everyone wanted to get close to him. Of course, not all of them had good intentions—some harbored murderous thoughts toward him. Without even realizing it, he was constantly surrounded by both good and bad people. But did he care? Probably not.

As he walked through the vast building, Klaus used his senses to scan the place. Suddenly, a voice called out to him making him halt his steps.

"Brother Klaus, you're awake!" Just as Klaus was trying to keep a low profile, a voice called out to him.

"Brother Nathan, how have you been?" Klaus immediately recognized the voice. It was Nathan Arcadian, the last son of Dave Arcadian. Nathan had once tried to recruit him when he had just become an Ascended warrior.

Back then, Klaus was thrilled to be earning so much money for an expedition into a Forbidden Zone. However, the expedition never took place due to some unexpected problems.

Klaus never forgot about Nathan. They met again at the Felin Youth Ball and even exchanged numbers. He didn't have a strong connection with Nathan, but he wasn't the type to act arrogant toward just anyone. So, despite his efforts to slip away and explore the city, he stopped when Nathan called out to him.

"Brother Klaus, how are you doing? My father said you were injured again during the battle at the Demon's Abode," Nathan said, walking closer to Klaus.

"Well, as you can see, I'm fine now," Klaus replied with a smile. Nathan had never done anything to upset him, so Klaus was as friendly as he could be around him. After all, Nathan wasn't just anyone—he was the son of the richest man in the entire Eastern Region of the Northern Union.

Nathan studied Klaus for a moment, his eyes scanning him from head to toe as if checking for any signs of lingering injury. Satisfied, he nodded, his usual easygoing smile returning.

"They said you went up against an entire army of Zombies and even defeated a Zombie Emperor. Is it true?" Of course, Nathan already knew it was true—everyone did. Videos of Klaus's battle and the

aftermath were all over the internet. But Nathan had to ask, partly to make conversation and partly to strengthen their friendship.

"Well, I just did what needed to be done to stop their plan," Klaus replied casually. "Any warrior would've done the same."

Nathan shook his head with a smile. "Still, for a Master stage warrior to take down thousands of Zombie Kings—that's unreal. I really envy you, Brother Klaus. You're both my inspiration and my worst nightmare."

Klaus chuckled at that, amused by Nathan's honesty. "I wouldn't go that far," he said. "I've still got a long way to go."

Nathan's grin widened. "Maybe. But if I were in your shoes, I'd be doing a victory lap right now."

Klaus smirked. "I'll save that for the next battle."

Nathan nodded, appreciating Klaus's humility even after such an incredible feat. Klaus wasn't like the other prodigies and so-called Legacies who thought they were above everyone else. Klaus's achievements were on a level those arrogant bastards couldn't even compare with, yet they still looked down on everyone.

But Klaus? He was different. Easygoing and friendly, approachable to anyone. Nathan really appreciated that, and he couldn't help but wonder if he could maintain that kind of personality if he were in Klaus's shoes.

Of course, he wouldn't. Just months ago, Nathan had looked down on Klaus when his sister made him go to Ross City to recruit him. He knew he would've been just as arrogant as the Legacies. But seeing how Klaus remained reserved and kind, Nathan found his own personality changing without him even realizing it.

"Oh, Brother Klaus, will you be going to the Genius Gathering at Sinji Valley?" Nathan asked. "Every young warrior who passed the Regional Trials across the Northern Union will be there. It's a week-long event."

"Of course, I'll go. If I don't, who will stir up trouble among those legacy bastards?" Klaus grinned, actually looking forward to the gathering. It was just a few months away, and he had a feeling something good would come out of it. Of course, "good" depended on how much trouble he could cause.

"That's great to hear. By the way, my father said if you're not busy, would you join us for dinner this evening?" Nathan finally brought up the real reason he was there. Klaus knew this wasn't just a casual run-in.

"Tell him I'll be there," Klaus replied.

"Good." Nathan smiled. Then, after a pause, he asked, "By the way, are you heading out somewhere?"

"Yeah, just wanted to catch some fresh air and see the sights," Klaus said.

"Well, Arcadian City is huge and beautiful, so have fun." With that, Klaus went on his way, leaving Nathan to watch him disappear into the distance.

Shortly after, Klaus left the Arcadian Mansion and started walking down a busy street. He wanted to stop by some local shops to see if he could get something for his mom and sister. He walked across the neatly paved road, not bothering to put on an air of grace despite his newfound fame.

Instead, he wore a hoodie and sunglasses, making sure his recognizable features were hidden. Nadia had always made sure to update his wardrobe with stylish yet discreet outfits so he could enjoy some peace when he went out.

After walking for a few minutes, Klaus found himself in a new part of the city, filled with painters. He froze as he saw the paintings—almost every canvas hanging in front of the stores featured him.

"This is too embarrassing," he muttered to himself, staring at the art. Paintings of him fighting a lion, battling zombies, and even catching arrows made of snakes hung everywhere for him to see.

But even so, he didn't waste the chance to walk along the pavement and look at the paintings. After fifteen minutes of browsing, he left and headed to the jewelry section.

He couldn't take in what he was seeing any longer. It was just too embarrassing. Looking at an exaggerated version of yourself on a canvas can be quite a headache.

As Klaus walked through a part of the city, he suddenly stopped and sighed.

"You know, some people call this stalking. So instead of hiding, why don't you come out and let's have a nice little chat?" Klaus said, turning to a shadow not far from him.

Chapter 223 - 223: Having Coffee With My Assassin [Bonus]

Klaus stood there, staring at a shadow to his right. If anyone else were around, they might think he was drunk, unable to tell left from right. That is because he was just standing there looking to his right for no reason, however, he knew why he was staring there. He remained fixated on the shadow, waiting for something to happen.

He stood like that for a whole minute, but nothing changed about the shadow. Still, Klaus didn't move.

"Look, I've known you were there for a while. I even gave you time to make a move, but you didn't. So it's best if you come out and we talk. Maybe you'll get a third chance to stab me," Klaus said suddenly, smiling at the shadow.

This time, after half a minute of waiting, the shadow shifted and began to transform. In an instant, a woman appeared. She had short dark hair, dark eyelids, and a refined bone structure. Some might think a woman with short hair couldn't compare to a long-haired beauty, but this lady wore her hair with confidence.

Klaus raised an eyebrow as he looked at her. Given what he knew, he wasn't about to guess her age. Even though she looked like someone in her early twenties, she was a Great Sage. That alone is enough to tell him she wasn't someone young.

"That wasn't hard, was it?" Klaus said, eyeing the lady who held a dagger with an emotionless gaze. She wasn't wearing her mask this time, clearly not in the mood to play games. After all, she was there to kill him.

Klaus, for some reason, didn't know whether to laugh or take the lady seriously. She stood there, looking back at him with emotionless eyes. There wasn't even the slightest hint of coldness; it was as if she had no presence at all.

"Are you going to just stand there, or are we going to have a conversation?" he asked, crossing his arms. He didn't mind staring at her all day; he was confident she wouldn't be able to kill him.

The woman tightened her grip on the dagger but remained silent. Her eyes stayed cold and devoid of emotion.

"Look, you've already had two chances to kill me, and you failed both times. So I think it's safe to say the third time won't be any different. Besides, I don't think you really want to kill me. After all, as an assassin, you shouldn't let your target know who you are. Am I wrong?"

He watched her closely, searching for a reaction. The tension between them hung in the air, thick and palpable.

Suddenly, she spoke. "How did you notice my presence?" Her tone was flat and matter-of-fact, sweet.

"Good question. I don't mind telling you, but before that, can you put that dagger away? If someone walks by and sees you holding it, they might get the wrong idea," Klaus said, pointing at the dagger in her grip.

She hesitated for a moment before dropping the dagger into her shadow, where it vanished from sight.

"Fascinating," Klaus said, mesmerized by how she handled the dagger. He looked back at her and smiled.

"Although this may seem unorthodox, do you want to grab a drink or something? Standing here feels weird. We might as well find a nicer place to talk before we go back to being hunter and prey."

This time, the lady showed a reaction to hearing Klaus's request. She raised an eyebrow, clearly taken aback by his suggestion. "You want to have a drink with me?"

Klaus shrugged. "Why not? It's not every day you get to chat with an assassin. Plus, I find it hard to believe you're just a mindless killer. There's got to be more to you than that. Plus, don't you want to know me more in order to plan your next assassination attempt, not that you will succeed anyway"

She studied him, her expression back to her unreadable state. "You think this is a game?"

"Not a game, just a different approach to the situation," Klaus replied. "Besides, if we're going to continue this dance of hunter and prey, it might help to know each other a little better. I also want to have a drink or something so that helps too"

After a moment of silence, she relented. "Fine."

"Deal," Klaus said, his smile widening. "There's a café just down the street. They serve great coffee. We can talk there." He had already used his senses to pick the perfect spot for a drink with his assassin.

Without saying much, they made their way to the coffee shop and sat down in a corner where the light was dim. Klaus didn't know what her talent was, but with her affinity for shadows, he guessed it had something to do with darkness. So, he chose a darker corner for their conversation.

A waiter soon arrived and served them a hot pot of coffee. Klaus, being Klaus, immediately took a gulp, not even glancing at the assassin who was now observing him with a curious gaze.

She couldn't believe her eyes. She had come to kill him, so how on earth had she ended up sitting across from each other, drinking coffee? It was unbelievable, yet here they were, and she couldn't wrap her mind around it.

"What are you doing?" she finally asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Just enjoying my coffee," Klaus replied, leaning back in his chair. "You should try it. It's pretty good."

"Is this some kind of strategy?" She asked, narrowing her eyes. "You think this will distract me from my mission?"

"Not at all," Klaus said, shaking his head. "But why not enjoy a moment before we dive back into the serious stuff? Life's too short to be all business."

She stared at him, still unsure. "You're very calm for someone who should be on high alert."

Klaus chuckled. "You've had two chances to kill me, and you didn't take them. I think it's safe to say I have a little time before I need to worry."

She frowned, her curiosity growing. "So, what do you think will happen next?"

"I'm hoping we can talk," Klaus replied. "I want to know more about you. Why you do what you do, and maybe, just maybe, we can find some common ground."

She leaned forward, intrigued despite herself. "You really think we can find common ground?"

"Why not?" Klaus said with a grin. "We're both just trying to navigate this crazy world, right? Who knows? You might even find me interesting."

Once again, she raised an eyebrow at Klaus. Interesting. He really was intriguing. Not everyone would be bold—or foolish—enough to break bread with their assassin, yet the white-haired young man was doing just that.

Klaus's behavior struck her as strange. She wanted to believe this wasn't happening, but as she looked into his eyes behind the sunglasses, she knew she wasn't in a dream. This was reality.

"Why are you so relaxed?" She asked, her curiosity piqued. "Don't you understand the danger you're in?"

Klaus leaned back in his chair, a confident smile on his face. "I understand perfectly. But if I spend all my time worrying, I'll miss moments like this. Besides, if you really wanted to kill me, you would have tried it by now."

"So instead of dwelling on the danger I'm in, why don't you tell me who placed their seal on you and turned you into their killing machine?" After gulping down a mouthful of coffee and savoring every flavor, Klaus suddenly asked.

The Assassin lady's hands shook as she was about to reach for her coffee. Her gaze shifted, and she looked at Klaus with wide eyes.

"How... How do you... How do you...?" She tried to form a sentence, but she was so shocked that she didn't know what to say. Her mind went blank, not knowing what to say in response.

Klaus smiled at her reaction. "Why don't we do this another way? I am Klaus Hanson, and you are..."

Chapter 224 - 224: Luna [Bonus]

Klaus, still smiling, stared back at the Lady Assassin, who was looking at him with a mix of emotions playing in her eyes. He had just revealed something she never expected anyone to know. That was a bold move.

When Klaus first realized he was being followed, his instinct had been to kill her. And he could have done it easily. Even though he hadn't unlocked the Darkness Element yet, he was still an Elemental Overlord. He has connections to the elements, just that his control is limited without him first unlocking them.

Klaus didn't feel sympathy, especially not for an Assassin sent by the Dark Order to kill him. His first thought had been to eliminate her and be done with it. But just as he was making plans to kill her, the senior stopped him.

That was the sole reason why he had spent over fifteen minutes browsing through paintings of himself earlier. He was actually talking with the Senior in his soul sea, and from their conversation, he learned that the Assassin had some kind of seal on her.

It didn't take long for Klaus to figure out she was either being controlled or blackmailed into this kind of work. Of course, he wasn't going to trust an Assassin so easily, but he decided to play along.

That's what led them to sit together over coffee, despite the danger surrounding them. Klaus wanted to learn more about her, and if possible, turn her to his side. That would be a great advantage.

"Well, you can tell me your name, or we can just sit here and stare at each other all day," Klaus said, his voice calm but firm. He wasn't about to go soft on an assassin, no matter her state of mind.

"Luna. My name is Luna," she finally said, her voice tense. "And how did you know there's a seal on me? Who are you?" She stared at him, her suspicion clear, but Klaus just smiled.

"Well, Luna, let's not get ahead of ourselves," Klaus replied smoothly. "If we're going to become friends, we can start by putting away the hostility." His eyes flickered to the dagger she had pulled from her shadow and now held tightly in her grip.

"We can start by putting away the dagger... again," he added, still smiling. Luna hesitated, unsure of what to think. She'd been stalking him for three days, ready to end his life, but now here he was, sitting in front of her—calm, composed, and strangely disarming. It didn't make sense. This white-haired young man had said something that made her question everything.

Slowly, she put the dagger away again, her eyes never leaving Klaus. "How do you know there's a seal on me?" she asked, her voice quieter now, almost wary.

Klaus leaned back in his chair, crossing his arms. "Let's just say I've dealt with people like you before. That seal on you—it's not hard to spot if you know what to look for. But that's not really the point, is it?" He tilted his head slightly. "The real question is, why are you letting someone control you?"

Of course, Klaus couldn't tell her the full truth—that he had a mysterious figure inside his soul sea who seemed fascinated by anything dark or dangerous. The senior had been especially interested in the seal when they talked during those brief ten minutes. He was more intrigued by the world Klaus was in and how someone could craft such a powerful seal.

The senior had casually mentioned that he could help Klaus remove it easily, but he held back. First, he wanted to learn more—specifically, who had the power to turn a Great Sage into their obedient assassin.

"Don't worry," Klaus said, his voice calm as he leaned back in his chair, "the person who put the seal on you won't hear anything you say. So feel free to talk when you're ready. I won't judge."

Luna's eyes flickered with doubt, but she could sense no malice from him. Her grip on the chair tightened, torn between the urge to speak and the weight of her silence.

"My mother... she was the one who placed the seal on me," Luna suddenly revealed.

"Wait, what?" Klaus jerked back in his seat, caught completely off guard. Of all the things he expected, hearing that a mother had sealed her own daughter to turn her into an assassin was not one of them.

That was cold—so cold that even Klaus felt a chill run down his spine. In this apocalyptic era, most mothers fought desperately to protect their children. The idea of one doing the opposite, binding her own daughter as a tool for murder, was hard to grasp.

"What kind of mother would place a seal on their own daughter just to turn her into an obedient little assassin?" Klaus muttered, still in disbelief. He shook his head. "That's... beyond cruel."

Luna's eyes darkened, her expression unreadable. "She's not like other mothers," she said quietly, her voice barely above a whisper.

Klaus leaned forward, his voice softer now. "Tell me more. Why would she do that?"

"Me and my twin sister... we awakened a rare kind of Talent and Class. It gave us great control over darkness and shadows," Luna began, her voice steady but distant. "Of course, nobody wants to become a tool for murder. I know I didn't. But when you have a mother like mine, you don't always get what you want."

Klaus listened carefully as she continued. "She placed a seal on both of us and trained us to become her killing weapons."

Klaus raised an eyebrow, intrigued by her words. "So, there's a second you out there?" he asked, leaning forward.

Luna nodded. "Yes. My twin sister. She's still out there, under the same seal, doing my mother's bidding. Just like me."

Klaus leaned back, processing the information. "So, tell me, what's your rank in the organization you work for? I know you're tied to the Dark Order. What's your number? I've dealt with a few of their assassins, so I know they use a grading system."

Luna shook her head slightly. "I'm not with the Dark Order. I work for Assassin Number 7—my mother. Both my sister and I answer directly to her. We're not linked to the Dark Order itself."

Klaus raised an eyebrow again, surprised. "Wait, so your mother—Assassin Number 7—she's running her own operation?"

Luna nodded. "Yes, she operates outside the Dark Order. She has her own agenda, and we follow her orders. Whatever ties she has to the Dark Order, they don't involve us directly."

Klaus rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Interesting. So, she's got her own game going... but why use you and your sister as pawns in all of this?"

Luna's face hardened. "Because she can."

Klaus listened carefully to her answers but noticed something odd. Even though she was talking about how her mother had practically enslaved her and her sister, there was no hint of killing intent when she spoke about her. This intrigued him, so he quickly contacted the senior through their mental link.

'Senior, why does she seem so calm yet angry, but shows no killing intent toward her mother?' he asked.

'That's because showing any form of murderous intent toward her mother would bring her unimaginable pain,' the senior explained. 'If I'm not mistaken, she's been through so much torment that even the thought of finding ways to kill her mother has stopped crossing her mind.'

'That's cold,' Klaus thought, once again feeling something unsettling—something he didn't know humans were capable of. A mother torturing her daughters for power. It was wild, and he didn't want to dwell on it.

'Brat, do you really want to remove the seal?' the senior offered. 'I can teach you a way to change it and take control over her. That would be much more convenient.'

'No, Senior, you heard her,' Klaus responded firmly. 'She clearly doesn't want to be a killing machine, but she doesn't have a choice. If I turned her into my slave, I'd be worse than her mother. I'll try to reason with her. Worst-case scenario? I remove the seal, she tries to kill me, and like always, I will murder her before she could succeed'

Chapter 225 - 225: Striking a Deal with My Assassin

Klaus studied Luna's reactions for a while before continuing his questions. At first, he thought she was part of the Dark Order, but it turned out she was only a proxy for Assassin Number 7—her mother. This meant she wasn't useful if his goal was to infiltrate the organization at a deeper level.

He needed someone with more influence, but since she didn't have strong ties to the Dark Order, she was practically useless to him—yet, at the moment, she was still his best asset.

Klaus, being only a Level 8 Master, had no business getting tangled with Sovereigns or even Transcendents. From what he'd learned from Cynthia Ross, Assassins Number 49 through 11 were all Great Sages, just like Luna.

He knew he couldn't underestimate them. Luna had nearly killed him back in the Demon's Abode, and he understood that if there had been more than one of her, he would've been injured or worse, died.

He thanked his lucky stars that the twins didn't come after her. A Great Sage who's an assassin is no joke, and Klaus knew that well.

However, his real concern wasn't with the Tier 3 level of the Dark Order's assassin hierarchy. His worry lay with Assassins Number 10 through 1, the Sovereigns. Klaus had killed a Tier 8 Zombie before, a creature comparable to a human Sovereign, but he had help.

If not for the Blood Moon Transformation, he wouldn't have been able to deal with even the Tier 7 Blood Princes. He knew that for sure.

So, he wasn't foolish enough to go looking for trouble with Sovereigns, let alone fall into the grasp of a Transcendent, the leader of the Dark Order.

Right now, it was all speculation. Nobody knew how powerful the leader of the organization was or if there was even just one Transcendent. There could be more. Klaus wanted to tread carefully.

With some preparation, he knew he could eventually take down a Sovereign, but he didn't want to rush things. He planned to start small and work his way up.

That's where Luna came in. Her mother was Assassin Number 7 in the Northern Union. If he could get to her, he would be one step closer to achieving his goal of eradicating the Dark Order from the face of the earth. His hatred for them ran deep.

"What can you tell me about the Dark Order, or more specifically, your mother?" Klaus asked. He didn't need to mention that he could help with the seal.

Luna understood that for someone to notice something her mother had described as unnoticeable, he must have a way to remove it. So, she didn't hold back anymore when he asked the question.

"Well, she is a great but ruthless assassin. My sister and I are two of her little students in her School of Assassins. In the Dark Order, she's known as the Mother of Death. I don't know if you've heard of her, but she came close to killing a War God just a few weeks ago.

But that wasn't her greatest achievement. She has assassinated countless high-ranking officials, infiltrated many places, and has no sympathy for anyone. And I know you're wondering about this: yes, she was the one responsible for ensuring you were dead."

"That's cold," Klaus said, raising an eyebrow.

Luna looked at him with her usual expressionless face. "It's true. She treats people like pawns in her game. To her, emotions are a weakness. I've seen her kill without hesitation, even those who were once her allies. She doesn't have any weakness, not even us, her children."

Klaus crossed his arms, pondering her words. "It sounds like she has a firm grip on you and your sister. Have you tried to escape her control?"

Luna sighed. "Multiple times but it was for nothing. She has eyes everywhere. Even if we ran, she would find us. She has connections in every dark corner of the world. The seal keeps us tied to her, ensuring we can't betray her."

"That is for sure," Klaus said, not needing to be told twice.

"So, let's say I could hypothetically remove your seal. What would you do next, the moment it's gone?" Klaus asked.

"I will find Nuna, my sister," Luna replied. For a moment, her emotions flared. Klaus noticed it but chose to keep his expression neutral.

'I guess under all that hard exterior, there's still a lady in there somewhere,' he thought. Of course, he wasn't about to get sentimental. After all, she had tried to kill him.

"I'm not saying I will help you. I wouldn't just help you out of the goodness of my heart." Klaus said not bothering to sound more calming.

"I know you can't harbor any ill thoughts toward your mother because of the seal, but would you be okay becoming my pawn in the game of darkness?"

Klaus paused before adding, "And yes, the game of darkness is the codename I gave to my operation to take down the Dark Order." He smiled evilly

"Don't even think about it—yes, I will kill everyone, your mother included. So, do you want me to remove the seal, knowing you'll be leading me to your mother's death?"

Luna, maintaining her straight expression, tapped the table twice. Klaus smiled, knowing that although she couldn't say it or even think it outright, she had to find a way to communicate her desire somehow. God knows she and her sister had tried many times to come up with a plan.

"Good. But I'll make myself very clear now. I am here, smiling and having a nice conversation with you. But know this: if you ever try to kill me again after I remove the seal, then no matter where you run, I, Klaus, will hunt you down. And let me tell you, when I'm done with you, your mother will look like an angel of mercy in your eyes," Klaus said coldly.

Luna's body shuddered as she looked into his eyes. Klaus removed his shades, revealing his red eye of malevolence just for that moment. The look she saw sent chills down her spine. Clearly, the saying that you have to make a pact with the devil to kill an angel was true.

Klaus's new look made her start reevaluating whether to get into business with this white-haired youth or return to being her mother's pawn.

Klaus wasn't worried about her running to her mother and revealing their arrangement. His main concern was her trying to kill him after he helped her. After all the suffering she endured from her mother, trusting others would be the last thing on her mind.

Looking at her expression now, Klaus realized he had made a strong impact. She would think twice before doing anything foolish.

"I will be busy for a while. So, let's say in a month, come find me in Ross City. You can use this time to search for your sister and bring her with you. Of course, I won't have to tell you to behave as you usually do to avoid drawing suspicion. But know this: I will help you and your sister, and in return, I will need your help to reach your mother.

After that, you will be free to live your life. I won't use you as my murder weapon, nor will I ask you to work for me. All I need is a way to get to your mother, and the rest will depend on me. Am I clear on that?" Klaus asked.

"Yes," Luna nodded, clearly no longer underestimating Klaus.

"Good. I'll leave a mark on how to reach me later in Ross City. I will leave first, and oh, the lady and the gentleman at table five are spying on us. You know what to do," Klaus said before standing up and leaving the coffee shop.

Luna sat there for a minute before getting up to leave. The two people Klaus mentioned also stood up after finishing their coffee and began to follow her. They walked behind her until suddenly, they stopped.

They looked down and were about to jump when something dragged them into the shadows, making them disappear instantly.

"She is dangerous. Very dangerous," Klaus said with a smile from 2 kilometers away before moving on, ready to explore Arcadian City to his heart's content.

Chapter 226 - 226: Dinner With The Arcadia Great Family

"Where have you been?" Miriam asked as soon as Klaus got back from his stroll across the vast Arcadian City. She had woken up hours ago, but Klaus wasn't there.

"I went out for some sightseeing," Klaus replied, jumping onto the bed. He had been out the whole day, returning only as night began to fall.

Arcadian City was massive—much larger than Ross City—so even though he had only explored a small portion of it after his coffee with Luna the Assassin, he still felt like he had traveled many kilometers.

However, he did see some cool sights and even managed to buy some things for his mom and sister, so overall, he had fun. Of course, he didn't want to risk drawing anyone's attention; that would ruin his whole outing, so he kept a low profile and refrained from entering places that required ID.

Hearing his explanation, Miriam raised an eyebrow. She knew Klaus didn't like going out, as he usually spent time with his mom, training, or hunting. It was rare to see him outside.

Having now packed her things and settled down at Klaus's home, she started to know more about him.

"I hope you didn't go chasing ladies out there in the name of sightseeing," Miriam said with a slight blush.

"Cross my heart, Grandma, I only went out to catch some fresh air," Klaus said with a grin.

"Hey, who are you calling Grandma?" Miriam shot him a glance upon hearing him call her that. Well, she was over 60, so it was only natural to be called that.

Klaus smiled at her pout, enjoying her reactions. It seemed she had lightened up a bit after catching some sleep. Of course, he knew he was one of the few fortunate enough to witness such expressions from the mighty War Goddess.

To the outside world, she would always remain the emotionless, ruthless, and bloodthirsty War Goddess who regarded no one. Her arrogance was even higher than Klaus's. But now, in the room with both of them sleeping on the same bed, Klaus was blessed to see her true self—the one she tucked away before taking on her War Goddess persona.

"By the way, I've been invited to dinner with the Arcadian Family. Wanna be my plus one?" Klaus asked.

"Ask nicely as I might consider," the War Goddess replied with a teasing smile. Well, she shouldn't have done that. Who was Klaus if not someone who thrived on shamelessness?

She had fallen into his trap, and Klaus was more than happy to indulge her.

"My sweet, elegant, and poised War Goddess, would you perhaps, out of pity, accompany this nobody, slum kid, to dinner? He would be very happy if your elegant self would join him and help him look cool among all these wealthy people.

He doesn't ask for much—just hold his hand, and if he gets tired, you can hug him to release his stress. He also promises to be on his best behavior," Klaus said with a straight face.

Klaus's playful words hung in the air, and he watched as a mix of surprise and amusement danced across Miriam's face. She fought to suppress a smile, but her efforts were in vain. She burst into laughter making Klaus raise an eyebrow.

'Sweet laughter' he said inwardly.

"Are you really asking me to hold your hand like a child?" she teased, raising an eyebrow. Of course, the hugging part was there, but she knew Klaus meant nothing good looking for a hug. Her chest area is rather heavy for any man to ignore.

"Only if that child happens to be a very lucky slum kid in the presence of a magnificent War Goddess," Klaus replied, maintaining his serious expression.

Miriam rolled her eyes but couldn't hide her grin. "You're impossible, you know that?"

"Impossible but charming," Klaus shot back with a wink. "Besides, who wouldn't want to show off their date to the Arcadian Family? Think of the prestige!"

"Prestige? Is that what you think I am? A trophy to flaunt?" She crossed her arms, feigning indignation, but her playful tone betrayed her. "And who is your date?" She just couldn't believe this white-haired kid.

"Of course! You're my secret weapon. Who could resist the allure of the War Goddess at their side?" Klaus laughed, "Plus having you by my side will make them less intimidating. You might not know, but rich people intimidate me"

Miriam shook her head, a smile breaking through her teasing facade. "Alright, fine! I'll accompany you, but only because you asked nicely. Just remember, I'm not here to babysit you."

"Deal!" Klaus exclaimed, pumping his fist in victory. "And I promise to behave...mostly."

"Mostly?" Miriam raised an eyebrow. She seems to be showing so many emotions after pouring her heart out to Klaus.

"Okay, okay! I promise to behave," Klaus said, holding his hands up in mock surrender. Miriam looked at him for a moment before entering the bathroom. Of course, Klaus wanted to ask if he should join her, but for once, he held back and decided to call his mom instead.

A while later, they were fully dressed and left their room. A maid was waiting outside and immediately took them to the main mansion where dinner would be held.

"Brother Klaus! Glad you could make it!" Nathan said as soon as Klaus and Miriam entered the vast dining hall.

"War Goddess," he said, stopping and bowing slightly when he noticed Miriam by Klaus's side.

Klaus wanted to respond for her knowing Miriam's demeanor. However, before he could make any move, Miriam nodded slightly accepting the bow with a neutral expression on her face.

Her gesture took both Klaus and Nathan aback, but neither of them dared to say anything. Who would even consider it? That woman could scare an entire army with her cold stare.

"Brother Nathan, I hope we weren't late," Klaus said, trying to break the tension.

"Not at all! Dinner is just about to start," Nathan replied, a friendly smile on his face. "Everyone is excited to see you both. The Arcadian Family is eager to meet the legendary War Goddess."

Klaus exchanged a glance with Miriam, who seemed unfazed by the attention.

But then again, why did they want to meet the War Goddess? Wasn't he the one they had invited? Klaus couldn't help but smile at the thought as they made their way toward the dinner table, where he could already see some people seated.

There were four young men on one side of the table. From the looks of it, they were all older than Nathan, which meant they were his brothers. Then just to the right of the head chair, another man was seated.

A single glance was enough for Klaus to realize he was someone of great importance. He is a Sage, but Klaus knew better than to underestimate him. He gave a slight nod, which the Sage also acknowledged with a nod.

On the other side of the table sat a lady who needed no introduction for Klaus to recognize her as Nathan's mother. She had a graceful, motherly aura that made Klaus sigh inwardly.

His own mother had the same presence. It's clear she is a good person... well, Klaus is biased when it comes to mothers.

He wouldn't forgive Luna's mother even if she begged him. He had declared that he would kill her, and that was final. No mother should treat her children like slaves.

Klaus nodded toward the woman, and his gaze shifted to the young lady sitting beside her. The moment his eyes landed on her, he felt a jolt in his soul for a split second.

She had striking yellow-like eyes that made Klaus instantly avert his gaze when their eyes met. Despite her beauty, there was something in her gaze that could stir deep feelings within anyone.

"Careful, brat. That young lady is one terrifying Soul Master. You would do well not to antagonize her, especially with your bead currently indispose," The senior voice warned in his mind.

Klaus gulped

"Brother Klaus, this is my big sister, Lulu," Nathan said, introducing her.

Chapter 227 - 227: Lulu Arcadia

"Nice to meet you, Lulu," Klaus said, keeping his tone light and calm. However, in the back of his mind, he was wary of the young lady before him. Matters of the soul are something he knew could be very dangerous.

"Big Brother Klaus, do you know Big Sister is an Inner Disciple at Celestial Mountain Academy?" Nathan, of course, had to continue the conversation.

Klaus, hearing how he suddenly started addressing him, didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

'When did I turn from Brother Klaus to Big Brother Klaus?' he thought inwardly, but on the outside, he maintained a small smile.

"Oh, that is great! I guess after dinner, I'll indulge Sister Lulu in telling me more about the Academy," Klaus said with a smile.

"Of course," Lulu replied, returning the smile.

She is a Saint, a peak Saint to be precise, and from the look of things, she had a very strong foundation. Klaus, however, didn't want to pry, so he kept his golden eyes focused, not bothering to look any further. Things could change if she decided to do anything funny; after all, he still had the Eye of Malevolence.

He wasn't exactly defenseless.

"Lulu, it looks like your prayer has been answered; Klaus is finally here!" Just when their stare-off was starting to feel awkward, a voice spoke from one corner of the room. From that direction, Dave Arcadia walked toward the head chair.

"Dad," Lulu said, hiding her face in her palm.

Klaus raised an eyebrow upon hearing that. So it's an Aoi Hiroshi situation again. Back during the Regional Trial, when they were invited to the Hiroshi Mansion, he learned that it was Aoi Hiroshi who wanted to meet him, which led to the event being organized.

Now, hearing Dave Arcadia speak, he couldn't help but smile. It seemed his charm was more intense than he thought.

"War Goddess, Klaus, glad you both could make it," Dave Arcadian said as he took his seat. Miriam nodded slightly in acknowledgment of his presence. Dave nodded back before turning to his daughter.

"Lulu, you wouldn't continue to hide your face for the rest of the night, would you? Your idol is here; don't you want to look at him? I know for a fact he isn't ugly, so you'll be missing out if you keep hiding your face." Dave Arcadian teased his daughter again making his other children smile at the scene.

"I hate you, Dad," Lulu said, still covering her face.

"I love you too, dear," Dave replied before turning to the man on his right.

"Klaus, this is Hank Arcadian. He's my brother and the Chief of Operations for the entire city and the region at large. You didn't see him last time during the invasion because he was away on business and couldn't make it back in time," Dave explained.

"Nice to meet you," Klaus said to Hank.

"Likewise. Thank you for helping defend the city and its people. On behalf of the people of Arcadian, I want to extend our apologies for the negligence that nearly cost you your life," Hank said, his expression sincere.

"It's nothing. Accidents happen, and I'm sorry to hear the assassin got to three other soldiers before reaching the weapon. I hope they rest in peace," Klaus said as politely as possible, making everyone, except the War Goddess, nod in agreement.

"By the way, how's the rebuilding of the defenses going? Is there anything I can do to help?" Klaus asked.

"Everything's underway, and thanks for offering, but we have it under control for now," Dave responded. Klaus nodded in acknowledgment.

"Anyway, you've already met Nathan and Lulu. This beautiful lady is my wife and the mother of my children, Rose Arcadia," Dave said, and Klaus nodded in response.

"These are Kaden, Smith, Andrew, and Tate. They're my other children and the ones who manage the city's day-to-day activities." Klaus nodded toward them. He had caught glimpses of them during the invasion, but back then, he wasn't aware they were Dave's children.

They were among the few who stayed until the final battle. Kaden and Smith are Sages, while Andrew and Tate are Saints, but they remained on the battlefield until it was over.

"Glad to see you all are doing well," Klaus said making sure they knew he noticed their presence on the battlefield.

Andrew and Tate were injured during the final phase of the battle, so when he and his uncle unleashed that last attack, they didn't join the few who ganged up on the disoriented zombies. But Klaus noticed everything.

His Universal Enigma passive skill made it so he remember everything he sees.

As expected, they all smiled. Klaus realized he had become some kind of idol to many after the invasion, so he knew how important it was not to let people down. Even a small gesture like this could go a long way.

"I would've been there, too, if I wasn't away at the academy," Lulu suddenly said, drawing everyone's attention.

"We know, baby. We know you're the genius who can command weapons with unprecedented might," Dave teased with a mocking smile. Upon hearing that she could command weapons, Klaus's mood shifted. The War Goddess noticed this and smiled slightly.

"Oh, so you're a Spirit Master?" Klaus already knew as the senior had warned him about her, but he played along since she didn't know he was aware.

"Yes," Lulu said with a small smile.

"What kind of weapons?" Klaus asked, clearly intrigued. Around the table, everyone was listening with smiles.

"Mostly projectile weapons—like needles, knives, light spears, and swords," Lulu said casually, trying not to make a big deal of it.

"Don't be fooled by her casual tone, Brother Klaus. Sister Lulu can command dozens, even hundreds, of swords with deadly precision," Nathan chimed in, revealing her strength with a grin, ruining her attempt at modesty.

Klaus chuckled at Nathan's enthusiasm but kept his eyes on Lulu, intrigued by her abilities. "That's quite impressive, Lulu," he said, his tone genuinely admiring.

"Being able to command so many weapons at once takes not only skill but immense mental strength."

Lulu looked down shyly, brushing off the compliment. "It's nothing compared to what you've done, Brother Klaus. You saved the city."

Klaus waved his hand dismissively. "It was a team effort. Honestly, I wouldn't have made it without the help of everyone who fought alongside me," he said, though deep down, his curiosity about Lulu was growing.

"I'll be staying here for a few more days. If you're not busy, I'd like to pick up some pointers from Sister Lulu," Klaus suddenly added, making Lulu smile—if only for a brief moment.

"Oh? I did not know you are also a Spirit Master," she said, a hint of surprise in her voice.

"I dabble," Klaus replied with a casual smile.

Lulu raised an eyebrow, clearly intrigued by his response. "Dabble? You don't strike me as the type to 'dabble' in anything."

Klaus chuckled softly. "I've had some experience, but I wouldn't call myself a spirit master. That's why I'd like to learn from someone more experienced. Besides, it'll give us some alone time to talk, since you've been expecting me for a while." Of course, Klaus wouldn't let the moment pass without slipping in a bit of playful flirting.

As expected, Lulu blushed, her cheeks turning a soft shade of pink. The rest of the table couldn't help but smile at her predicament

"Alright, let's not let the food get cold. Time to dig in," Dave said, breaking the moment with a chuckle.

With that, everyone began eating. Klaus, however, wasn't one to hold back when it came to good food. While the others ate slowly and with the elegance one might expect from a family of wealth and power, Klaus was in his own world. He devoured his meal with gusto, clearly enjoying every bite.

Hank, Dave, his wife, and their children exchanged amused glances as they watched Klaus eat with such enthusiasm.

Even the cold, emotionless War Goddess shared a rare, small smile as she observed the white-haired brat tearing through his meal like there was no tomorrow. Klaus, despite his battles and status, had a simple, down-to-earth side that couldn't be hidden, and it was very refreshing.

After a while, when they were all done eating and had dessert. Klaus and the War Goddess left back to their room for the night. The next day, Klaus met with Lulu to train as a spirit master.

Chapter 228 - 228: Training with Lulu (1)

"You woke up early," Miriam said, looking at Klaus sitting on the bed. Klaus smiled back at her. He had woken up quite early and decided to chat with the senior. Since he couldn't use the Bead for now, as it was suspended in the golden energy he had yet to absorb, he could only ask about the things he wanted to know.

Having memories of one's past is indeed valuable, and Klaus was eager to learn more. The senior answered his questions to the best of his ability, though the karma involved in understanding some of these things was too much for Klaus to bear at the moment.

"So, what are your plans now that we won't be going back to Ross City for a few more days?" Miriam asked her tone hinting that she was teasing him about his plans to train with Lulu.

"You can always go back first if you want," Klaus replied, refusing to give her the satisfaction.

"Get dressed. I want to see how much you can learn as a Spirit Master," Miriam said, pushing him off the bed. Klaus just smiled and got up to get dressed.

He really needed this training. Ever since he awakened as a warrior, he hadn't had the chance to train with anyone before, so this was a big deal for him.

He wanted to see how well he could fare against Lulu, even after the senior had told him he wasn't her match. Unlike Klaus, who had only just started training as a Spirit Master, Lulu had been at it for years, so naturally, she was much better than him.

Her mental strength was stronger, and her control was superior to his. Klaus had already lost a duel to Aoi Hiroshi, making him realize how much was lacking when the sword was put in question. Now, he wanted to measure his progress against Lulu who was stronger than him at the moment.

"You're coming too?" Klaus asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Of course. Why, are you scared I'll spoil your game?" Miriam responded with a teasing smile. Klaus knew she would go back to her emotionless self the moment they stepped out of the room. Still, seeing her like this made him smile slightly.

"Just don't get jealous," Klaus said before running out of the room. Miriam smiled and followed him. Shortly after, they arrived at the training ground where Lulu was already doing some light stretches.

"You couldn't sleep, huh?" Klaus, being Klaus, couldn't resist teasing her. As expected, she blushed lightly.

"By the way, how are we going to do this? And for the record, I only use Needles, and currently, I can only control 64 Viper Piercing Needles," Klaus said as he took out his needle set. The 64 needles immediately flew into the air, making Klaus grit his teeth slightly.

"Impressive. How long have you been practicing?" she asked, though she genuinely looked impressed.

"A couple of weeks," Klaus replied.

Lulu raised an eyebrow, clearly impressed. "A couple of weeks and you can already control 64 needles? That's remarkable," she said, though her tone carried a hint of playful doubt. "But you do know that control isn't just about numbers, right? It's about precision."

Klaus chuckled. "I'll leave precision to you, Lulu. I'm more of a 'let's see how many I can throw at once' kind of guy."

Lulu smiled as she brought out her own needles. They were five-inch-long needles, an inch longer than Klaus's Viper Piercing Needles.

With a simple thought, 250 of her needles flew from their case, floating effortlessly in the air before her. Klaus's eyes widened in shock, making a few of his own needles fall to the ground from the distraction.

"250?!" he muttered under his breath, disbelief creeping into his voice. She looked calm and composed, unlike him, who was already struggling to control just 64.

'That's wild,' he thought, his mind racing.

'How is she making it look so easy?'

Lulu caught his expression and gave a small, knowing smile. "Control, Klaus. It's not about how many you can summon; it's about how well you can handle them."

Klaus gritted his teeth, the 64 needles already having a huge impact on his mental capacity. He knew she was right, but it didn't make the situation any less frustrating.

Seeing her command such a vast number of needles with ease made him realize just how much further he had to go. Still, he wasn't about to back down.

Even so, Klaus knew that in any competition they entered, he would lose—and lose badly at that. Miriam, sitting a few meters away, smiled as she watched the expression on his face.

'Finally, something somebody is better at than him,' she thought, amused. She couldn't have asked for a better morning.

"No need to feel weak. I've been practicing for almost two years now, so it's only natural that I've developed the mental fortitude to handle this many needles," Lulu said, her needles swirling around her effortlessly.

"You controlling 64 after just a couple of weeks is already a big deal."

Klaus let out a small laugh. "Still, I need to do better if I want to have a shot at mastering this Spirit Master thing."

"Then you'd better hurry and get into the Academy. There are many avenues there that can help you train your mind to handle multiple tasks," Lulu advised.

"I will," Klaus replied, nodding in agreement.

"Alright," Lulu continued, "let's test your control. Show me how well you can manage those needles."

She pressed a small button on the floor. From the ceiling, several small balls descended, projected into the air. They began to move. They were a mix of colors, their paths seemingly random.

"Use your needles to destroy all the green balls. Let's start at 1.2x speed," Lulu said, pressing another button. The balls began moving, weaving through the air with increasing speed.

Klaus took a deep breath and concentrated, his 64 needles hovering in the air, ready to move. This was a test of precision, and he knew that brute strength alone wouldn't help him here. He focused on the green balls, watching their erratic movements closely.

"Here goes nothing," he muttered under his breath as he sent his needles darting through the air toward the targets.

The needles moved swiftly, popping the green balls almost instantly. Klaus didn't even seem stressed as he skillfully maneuvered the needles through the air. In just over a minute, all the green balls were destroyed, leaving nothing but silence in their wake.

"Impressive," Lulu stated as she glanced at the score. The screen showed that Klaus had popped 720 green balls, along with 12 red and 10 yellow, in 1 minute and 24 seconds.

"My first trial, I popped 720 green, 54 red, and 32 yellow in 4 minutes and 45 seconds," Lulu said, clearly impressed. "You're something else, Klaus."

Klaus grinned, his golden eyes gleaming with pride. Although he doesn't show it, hearing she was far behind his score lightens his mood a bit

"Guess I'm not as bad as I thought."

Lulu smiled back, but there was a hint of challenge in her eyes. "You've got talent, no doubt, but don't get too comfortable. The next levels aren't as easy."

The pace doubled, and Klaus went back to work.

The balls were much faster now.

He hadn't really used the needles individually before; he always kept them in the Void Piercing Needle form. Because of this, he hadn't mastered taking out multiple targets at once with them.

If he had been using the Void Piercing Needle form, the green balls would have been destroyed in under 20 seconds. Still, he was doing well, popping the balls effortlessly. It was mentally exhausting, but he was managing.

A little over two minutes later, he had finished. All the green balls were popped, along with 20 red and 16 yellow ones. Although he wasn't used to fighting with isolated needles, after just two trials, he could feel his mind growing stronger.

Lulu was genuinely impressed. But when Klaus asked her to try it out, he witnessed just how terrifying a Spirit Master could be.

Chapter 229 - 229: Training with Lulu (2)

720 green balls popped in less than five seconds. The screen displayed Lulu's score, leaving Klaus staring at it in awe. He had asked her to take the test, and now he wished he hadn't.

Despite limiting herself to controlling only 64 needles, just like Klaus, she managed to destroy all the green balls without even scratching the red or yellow ones—and she did it all in under five seconds. That was wild, and Klaus just stood there, staring at the screen with a bewildered expression.

"Brat, you don't have to feel bad. That young lady has an extremely strong mind and far more experience than you," the senior said, trying to comfort him.

Even the War Goddess was impressed by Lulu's display. Spirit Masters are incredibly dangerous on the battlefield. To them, anything they can lift with their minds is a weapon. Even the weapons their enemies are holding become potential weapons.

The ability to control virtually any weapon with just their mind is overpowered. Klaus, who had used his Needle to kill thousands of Zombies, knew exactly how lethal it could be. So watching Lulu destroy hundreds of balls in less than five seconds made him truly grasp how terrifying a Spirit Master could be.

"You're impressive, Lulu," he said. Klaus wasn't jealous; he was just too shocked. But that shock only fueled his determination to improve. If he wanted the upper hand in combat, he had to do more and be better.

He has Star Qi, which is far more powerful than Spiritual Qi, and combining that with his ability to wield flying weapons in battle would make him a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield.

Of course, Klaus first had to become better at controlling the weapons, and that required him to train his mind.

"You're impressive too, Klaus. I can see you're already making progress. So for today, focus on building your mental fortitude at double speed and see if you can add more needles to your control," Lulu said, and Klaus nodded in agreement.

He really wanted to increase the number of needles he could control while maintaining precise control. The next time he entered combat, he wanted to have the upper hand, no exceptions.

With that, Klaus returned to popping more balls. He aimed for a perfect record: popping all 720 green balls without touching any of the red or yellow ones and doing it in under a minute. That was the target he set for himself on his first day.

Klaus might not show it, but he was competitive. He knew he wouldn't surpass Lulu anytime soon, but that didn't mean he would fall far behind. No, he wanted to make great progress, so he set ambitious goals for himself.

Thirty minutes later, he managed to add two more needles to his original 64, bringing the total to 66. However, he didn't use them just yet. He focused on mastering the 64 first, improving his mental capacity to handle them before adding more.

Two hours later, he had developed enough mental strength to control 70 needles. Using the original 64, he finally managed to pop all 720 green balls without touching any of the red or yellow ones. However, it took him 2 minutes and 20 seconds to complete the task.

But he wasn't satisfied with that, so he went back to it. Using the 64 needles, he kept training, and two more hours later, he finally achieved his target. By the time the last needle popped the 720th ball in 58 seconds, he was exhausted.

However, having achieved his goal, Klaus was visibly happy. Lulu also looked impressed by his hard work.

She had been pressuring her father for weeks to let Klaus come to Arcadian City after she heard he had woken up after the assassination attempt.

Just like Lucy and the others who were already at the academy, they were allowed to come home to get their affairs in order because once they went back, it would be a year before they could return home. So, she wanted to meet him before leaving.

She had been trying to meet him before she headed back again—and now she had.

She would have plenty to talk about with her friends once she returned to the academy. Klaus had become every young warrior's idol or nightmare; he was not only popular in the cities but equally renowned in the academy.

It was rare for someone so young to achieve so many heaven-defying feats. She genuinely looked impressed watching Klaus train for the past four hours nonstop.

It became clear to her that the young man who appeared on the City, Regional, and Union Warrior Ranking Charts was no weak or an overhyped warrior. He was the real deal.

"I guess that's all my brain can take for today," Klaus said, gulping down a chilled water.

"You impressed me, Brother Klaus," Lulu said.

"You can just call me Klaus. I should be the one impressed by your superior control. Thank you for the pointers," Klaus replied with a small smile.

"No need to be modest, Klaus. I know that in just a few more weeks of training, you'll surpass me. You're a genius, and I really want you to come to the academy soon so you can show everyone what you're made of," Lulu said, genuinely pleased.

"I'll do my best to pass the Union Trial and the World Trial so I can join. I hope by then we can train together some more," Klaus said.

"We still have a few more days; we can train as much as you want," Lulu replied.

"Then I'll make sure to wear you out over the next few days," Klaus said before bidding her goodbye. He left with Miriam back to their room. After they left, Dave Arcadian appeared in the training room.

"What do you think? Is he up to your standards?" he asked with a small smile.

"He exceeded my expectations. What took me months to achieve, he accomplished in just hours. This young man is a genius," Lulu said.

"Well, well, well. I guess only Klaus could make my little girl look genuinely flustered," Dave said. He had been watching their training on a screen the entire time so he knew what she was saying was true, but again hearing her daughter who doesn't regard anyone as a worthy opponent praise Klaus like that, he was taken aback.

"Dad, I mean it. Klaus is a monster. I wonder how those arrogant bastards back in the academy are going to feel when he steps in there," she said with a smile.

On the other side, Klaus, who had just reached his room, was so tired that he fell onto the bed. Miriam looked at him for a while before moving to remove his sweaty shirt. "You should learn to take care of your hygiene, Mr. You're not the only one in the room."

"Thank you for your concern, my dear, but a little massage would do wonders," Klaus said in a tired voice.

"Keep dreaming," Miriam replied.

"I know you're not romantic at all. I guess I'll have to ask Lulu to help me next time," Klaus said in a teasing tone. He was too exhausted to look at Miriam and read her expressions, so when he felt her touch on his back, he was taken aback.

"Don't say a word, or I'll stop," Miriam warned.

Klaus smiled before using his Spirit eye to look at her expression. Watching the pink cheeks as she massaged his back, he knew the mighty War Goddess had fallen for the white-haired Paragon. Slowly he drifted into sleep under her careful touches.

Chapter 230 - 230: Claiming His Reward

Klaus woke up the next day with renewed vigor. The night had been one of the best yet, thanks to Miriam using her spiritual qi to enhance the massage, making it far more effective than a regular one. Klaus had had a hectic week, and though he hadn't shown it, the War Goddess could see the fatigue in his eyes.

While he drifted into sleep, she had spent a great deal of time massaging his muscles to the best of her ability. But while Klaus was enjoying it in his sleep, Miriam couldn't quite believe herself.

The emotionless War Goddess, now a mere massage artist—that was just unbelievable. She definitely didn't want anyone to hear about it or, worse, see her doing it. Klaus had somehow managed to make her lower her standards, something she never thought possible.

But again, as she glanced at his handsome face, peacefully asleep on the bed during the massage, all her conflicted thoughts melted away, replaced with something softer, something happier. She hadn't wanted to be reduced to this state, but she wasn't mad. Somehow, the white-haired brat had done it.

When Klaus woke up, he noticed Miriam still asleep beside him, lying closer than usual. He smiled, sat up on the bed, and entered his usual meditative state, waiting for her to wake. An hour later, she stirred.

"Well, good morning, my little Massage Goddess. From how I feel, I can tell you really worked your magic on me," Klaus said, his tone playful but grateful.

Miriam, still half-asleep, groaned softly. "Don't push your luck. That was a one-time thing," she mumbled, turning her face into the pillow to hide her slight blush.

Klaus chuckled. "You say that now, but I think you enjoyed it just as much as I did."

"Keep talking, and you will start feeling pain instead," Miriam warned, though the warmth in her voice betrayed her.

Klaus stretched, feeling his muscles completely refreshed. "You're incredible, you know that?"

Miriam finally sat up, running a hand through her hair as she glanced at him. "You just don't know when to stop, do you?"

"Nope," Klaus said, smiling. "And I'm not apologizing either."

"You..." Miriam started, wanting to smack Klaus on the head, but her hands were caught in his firm grip before she could act. She tried to pull them back, but before she could muster her strength, Klaus pulled her into his embrace.

Once again, the overpowered War Goddess of the Eastern Region lost all her strength to wiggle out of his arms. She couldn't believe how easily her defenses crumbled in his presence. Klaus just smirked, watching her relax in his arms like a child, helpless against the overwhelming calm he brought her.

"You look surprisingly beautiful this early in the morning for a grandma," Klaus teased, running his fingers gently across her back. Miriam's body tensed for a second, then melted under his touch. Her brain went blank, words failing her, despite his obvious teasing.

"Once again, thank you for the massage," Klaus continued, grinning. "But now that you're mine, I suppose I'll be getting one every evening before bed."

"Keep dreaming," Miriam forced out, her voice unsteady. "And who says I'm yours?"

"Playing hard to get, huh? Why don't you try breaking free from my arms?" Klaus said in a sarcastic tone.

"Can't do it, can you? Admit it, Miriam—you have no resistance against me. And although you're practically older than the universe, I don't think you really know what this means. So, why don't I spell it out?"

Klaus leaned in closer, his voice dropping to a soft murmur. "Miriam, War Goddess of the Eastern Region, you've fallen into my trap. But I think you already knew that, didn't you?"

Miriam's heart raced as she tried to formulate a response. She was the War Goddess—unshakable, undefeated—yet in his arms, she felt like a completely different person.

A warmth filled her chest, and for the first time in ages, she didn't want to fight back. Instead, she just let the moment wash over her, still not willing to admit defeat, but also not entirely rejecting the strange, comforting hold Klaus had over her.

Without even realizing it, Miriam remained in Klaus's embrace, oblivious to the fact that he had already released his grip. She had indeed fallen for him, and the realization left her stunned.

How had this happened? All she had wanted was a bloodthirsty, battle-crazed brother, yet she found herself wanting something entirely different now. It was both strange and comforting.

Thinking back, Miriam had always known deep down that this day would come. When she accepted his invitation to stay at his house, a part of her had sensed that this wasn't just a sibling bond forming.

Now, nestled in his arms, she realized she didn't really want the brotherly relationship she'd been telling herself she wanted. She wanted more—something deeper.

"Miriam dear, do you remember our bet during the City Selection Trials?" Klaus's voice broke through her thoughts.

"Yes, what about it?" Miriam asked, her curiosity piqued.

"I'm here to claim my reward since I haven't collected it yet," Klaus said, a playful glint in his eyes.

"What reward do you want?" she asked, already knowing where this was headed but playing along anyway.

"You know... this." Klaus leaned in, and before she could react, their lips met in a light kiss. The moment their lips touched, Miriam's entire world flipped upside down—her soul felt like it left her body, her mind went blank, and her body turned to jelly.

It wasn't a long kiss, but Klaus held it just long enough to make sure she felt it, to make sure she knew this was no ordinary claim of a bet.

When he finally pulled back, he gazed into her eyes, satisfaction written all over his face. He knew she wouldn't be able to retreat back into her emotionless shell anytime soon. The deep blush spreading across her cheeks was proof of that.

"Oh," Klaus began, ready to tease her again, but before he could finish, Miriam leaned in herself. This time, their lips met in a deeper, more passionate kiss. Klaus didn't need to be told twice. She had accepted it—she wanted more.

Without hesitation, he slid his hands down to her hips, gently lifting her onto his lap as their kiss intensified. For several heated minutes, they remained locked in each other's arms, lips entwined in a fierce exchange. When they finally broke apart, Klaus leaned back, still grinning as he looked at the flustered expression on her face.

Klaus chuckled softly, watching Miriam's blush deepen, her breath still uneven.

"Once again, Young Master Klaus for the win," he teased, his tone light but playful. Miriam couldn't deny it anymore—she had fallen, and there was no turning back now.

Her mind flashed back to something Klaus's mother had told her not long ago: "You really shouldn't fight it. From the moment that brat set his sights on you, you'd already fallen." Klaus's mother was like the perfect wingman, working behind the scenes even more than Klaus himself.

One could say she was even more shameless than her son, and it was probably true. Ever since she ascended, she had changed, and now, all she wanted was to ensure her son's happiness—so if being shameless was the way to make that happen, she was all in.

Klaus held Miriam's hips in his arms, pulling her onto his lap, his gaze locking with hers. He couldn't help but sneak a few glances at the "mountains" on her chest, a grin spreading across his face.

'Finally, those mountains are mine, he thought with a lovestruck grin.

He was ready to lean in, hoping to finally bury his face between those soft curves while the moment was still ripe, but before he could, Miriam shifted when she felt something... unexpected.

"Klaus, what is that thing touching my thigh?" she asked but then froze the moment her hand brushed it.

Without even blinking, she vanished from the bed, her cheeks flushed in shades of pink as she darted into the bathroom, locking the door behind her.

Left on the bed, Klaus couldn't stop grinning despite his failed attempt to fulfill his dreams of snuggling into her chest. He lay there smiling like a lovestruck idiot.

An hour passed and Miriam never left the bathroom, however, Klaus never bothered her. He simply dressed up and left to go train with Lulu still smiling like a happy cat.