

THE LAST PARAGON IN THE APOCALYPSE

Chapter 3: The Awakening (1)

The next day, Klaus and his mother went about their usual routines. Klaus headed to the academy for his janitorial job, while his mother went off to do hers. His birthday was just nine days away, and he was working extra hard to save up enough money to buy Celestial Water—a rare drug that stimulates the mutant gene and awakens a person's innate talent.

What Klaus didn't know was that his mother had already managed to get her hands on the drug, but she didn't want to worry him about how she did it. So, she kept up the act, pretending to be working just as hard.

Fast forward to April 12th, Klaus's birthday. He woke up feeling gloomy, like he was carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. His mother wasn't around, but she had left a note for him.

"Happy birthday, buddy! You don't have to go to work today; I've got a surprise for you." Klaus smiled as he read the note, holding it in his hands.

"She really is the best. It's just too bad I couldn't save enough to buy the drug to awaken. I guess I'll just have to keep saving. According to those researchers, I've got about half a month after I turn 16 to still have a chance at awakening my innate talent."

Klaus sighed as he thought about it. He'd overheard and even snuck glances at lectures about how the awakening worked. It was something he desperately wanted, but knew was still out of reach. But today was his birthday, so even though he felt foggy and weighed down, he knew he had to put on a happy face for his mom.

Several hours after Klaus woke up, his mother returned, holding a small bag with a cake inside. "Happy birthday, Klaus! I know this isn't much, but we'll have to manage for now. Once I secure that job, things will be much more lively around here," she said with a warm, motherly smile.

"This is more than enough, Mom," Klaus replied, smiling back. He closed his eyes for a moment, made a wish, and then blew out the small candle. It was a simple celebration, but it filled the room with a sense of warmth and togetherness.

They sat down at their small, worn-out table and shared the cake. It was a quiet moment, but one filled with love. They talked about little things—memories from when Klaus was younger, hopes for the future, and the challenges they'd faced together.

As they finished the last bites of cake, Klaus noticed his mother had a strange look on her face, like she was holding something back. "Mom, is everything okay?" he asked, concerned.

His mother took a deep breath and then reached into her pocket. "I have something for you, Klaus. It's not just any birthday gift... it's something I know you've been dreaming of."

Klaus watched as she pulled out a small vial from her pocket. The liquid inside shimmered with a faint, otherworldly glow. His heart skipped a beat. "Is that...?"

"Yes, it's the Celestial Water," she said, tears welling up in her eyes. "I know how much this means to you. I wanted to give you the chance to awaken your talent."

Klaus was speechless. He'd been working so hard, trying to save up for this, and here it was, in his mother's hands. "Mom... how did you...?" His voice cracked as he spoke, overwhelmed by emotion.

His mother shook her head, her eyes shining with love. "Don't worry about that, Klaus. All that matters is that you have it now. You deserve this."

Klaus couldn't hold back the tears any longer. He rushed to his mother, wrapping his arms around her tightly. "Thank you, Mom. Thank you so much... I don't know what to say..."

His mother held him close, her own tears falling freely now. "You don't have to say anything, Klaus. Just know that I'm proud of you. No matter what happens, you've made me proud."

They stood there, holding each other, both crying tears of joy and relief. In that moment, the weight of their struggles seemed to lift, if only for a little while. They knew they still had a long way to go, but for now, they had each other, and that was enough.

"Go on, take it and awaken your talent before I change my mind and sell it to someone else," his mother teased, breaking the emotional atmosphere. Klaus chuckled, wiping his eyes, and gently took the vial from her hands.

He stepped outside, the evening air cool against his skin, and headed toward the small building behind their house. It was a quiet space where he'd often tried to meditate, though he never really got the hang of it. Tonight, though, it felt different. Tonight was his moment.

"The man from my dreams, if you're listening right now, this is my break or die moment. Don't make me lose face," Klaus whispered to himself, half-joking, but with a seriousness underlying his words.

He sat down in the middle of the small room, the vial of Celestial Water resting in his hands. The liquid inside glowed faintly, pulsing with a mysterious energy. Klaus took a deep breath, trying to calm his racing heart. This was it—the moment he had been waiting for.

He uncorked the vial and hesitated for a split second before drinking it down. The liquid was cool as it slid down his throat, and he expected to feel something—anything—immediately. The Celestial Water was supposed to be a powerful drug that stimulated the mutant gene, awakening a person's innate talent.

It was said that once taken, the body would be flooded with energy, and visions of one's true power would fill their mind.

But as Klaus sat there, waiting, nothing happened. He waited a little longer, expecting some kind of reaction, but there was still nothing. No surge of energy, no visions, no sign that anything had changed.

Klaus's heart sank. He opened his eyes, staring at his hands as if he could will something to happen. But the room remained silent, and his body felt exactly the same as before.

"What's going on?" he muttered to himself, panic beginning to creep in. He had heard so many stories of people taking the drug and immediately feeling its effects. Why wasn't it working?

He tried to stay calm, reminding himself that maybe it took time. Maybe he needed to meditate or focus harder. He closed his eyes again and tried to clear his mind, but the anxiety gnawing at him made it impossible.

Minutes passed, and still, nothing happened. Klaus opened his eyes again, the reality of the situation settling in. The drug wasn't working. It was supposed to awaken his talent, but there was no sign of anything being awakened.

He sat there, staring at the floor, feeling the weight of disappointment pressing down on him. He had been so hopeful, so ready for this moment. And now, it seemed like that hope had been for nothing.

Just as Klaus was sinking into disappointment, an explosion of energy erupted within his body. It was like a bomb going off inside him, and he gasped, his eyes widening in shock. The force of it nearly knocked him over, but he managed to stay seated, gripping the floor as if it were the only thing keeping him grounded.

His body started to tremble, uncontrollably, as the energy surged through him. It was overwhelming, like nothing he had ever felt before. He could feel it coursing through his veins, spreading out to every part of his body.

Then, strange things began to happen. Sparks of lightning crackled around his hands, bright and fierce, before disappearing as quickly as they appeared. His breath caught as he saw flames flicker across his arms, licking his skin without burning him.

Suddenly, the air around him grew icy cold, and he could see frost forming on the ground beneath him. But just as quickly, the frost melted away as water droplets began to form in the air, swirling around him like a small storm.

The ground beneath him trembled, and he could feel the earth shifting as if it was responding to the energy inside him. Shadows seemed to grow darker around him, stretching and twisting unnaturally, while at the same time, a gentle breeze stirred, ruffling his hair and carrying whispers of power with it.

A strange, glowing light began to emanate from his skin, pulsing with each beat of his heart. It was a soft, warm light, but it felt alive as if it were connected to the very essence of his being.

Klaus was overwhelmed by the sensations, his mind racing as he tried to comprehend what was happening. He could feel the elements swirling around him—lightning, fire, ice, water, earth, darkness, wind, and light—all reacting to the energy inside him as if they were all part of him now.

His breath came in ragged gasps as he tried to control the power that was surging through him. He had never felt anything like this before. It was terrifying and exhilarating all at once.

For a moment, Klaus felt like he was going to lose control, like the energy would consume him entirely. But then, as suddenly as it had started, the explosion of energy began to calm. The elements around him started to settle, the lightning fading, the flames dying down, the shadows retreating.

Klaus was left sitting in the middle of the room, his body still tingling with the remnants of the power that had just surged through him. He took a deep breath, trying to steady himself, his mind reeling from the experience.

Suddenly, another wave of energy erupted inside Klaus's stomach, sending powerful shocks rippling through his entire body. The intensity of it was beyond anything he had ever experienced, and before he could even react, a sharp, searing pain shot through his brain, like a spear piercing through his skull. The pain was so overwhelming that it blacked out his senses almost instantly.

His body remained seated, but his consciousness slipped away, fading into darkness.

For a moment, there was nothing—no pain, no sound, no sensation at all. It was as if he had died. Or maybe... something else had happened