

Paragon 441

Chapter 441 - 441: Klaus Recruiting Allies

While the world was yet again blown away by Klaus's arrogance, the man in question had just arrived at the gathering place, where hundreds of people were already present.

The moment Klaus appeared, everyone noticed him. Of course, they would. He was simply too unique to go unnoticed.

Ever since his first image had surfaced on the web, nobody seemed able to forget his face. And now, Klaus had become even more handsome, which immediately sparked murmurs among the crowd.

Naturally, Anna and Lily didn't appreciate the looks some of the ladies gave Klaus. But they were too shy to get closer to him. Of course, they were. Hanna, however, wasn't, so she decided to step in on their behalf.

She took Klaus by the arm and walked confidently by his side. This, of course, only added to the jealousy of the two vixens. Before Hanna could realize what had happened, though, she found herself four feet away from Klaus's arm.

She just smiled and kept moving.

The ladies in the crowd noticed Anna and Lily now clinging to Klaus's arms, and their expressions soured. But nobody cared about their hungry eyes—least of all Klaus. After all, he was about to reunite with his best friend.

"Miguel, my friend, it's like whenever we're apart, I can't seem to get a good night's sleep without thinking about you. I know you've missed me too. So, how are you?" Klaus said with a wide smile.

"Tsk..." As usual, Miguel responded with his classic chuckle, making Klaus's smile widen even more.

"Hmm, you've become very strong, Miguel. It seems you really want that revenge, huh?" Klaus said, raising an eyebrow.

The air around Miguel was much stronger than before. Like Danny and Daniel, he was a brute fighter, someone who craved physical strength. And judging by the look of things, he was several times stronger than before.

Miguel didn't respond, so Klaus simply turned to the others.

"How have you been, Scarlet? I can see you're practically glowing now," Klaus said, addressing Scarlet, who was clinging to Kilian.

Scarlet blushed slightly and buried her face in Kilian's shoulder. Klaus just smiled and shifted his attention to the Zhou twins.

"You ladies seem to have grown much stronger too. Well, have you reached the level where you can transmute the earth element into metal yet?" Klaus asked.

Lin nodded with a small smile. She stood on Mark's left while Zing was on his right.

"Awesome. You guys should join me at the Yin-Yang Palace. You'd become much stronger than you think."

"Okay," Zing said without a second thought.

Her answer caught Mark and Klaus's friends completely off guard. None of them had expected that—not in the slightest.

Just a while ago, they hesitated to join Klaus in his wild venture, fearing their ladies would leave them. Yet now, the very women they were worried about didn't even take a moment to consider Klaus's proposal.

They accepted it without hesitation.

"Awesome. What about you, Scarlet? Wanna join the Yin-Yang Palace too?" Klaus asked with a small smile.

"Yes. Since you'll be joining, that means Kilian will also join. Naturally, I wouldn't want to be away from my man," Scarlet said, her face slightly flushed.

"Very insightful, Scarlet, very insightful," Klaus replied, then turned to the others.

"What about you guys?" Klaus asked.

"Since Kay is with you, I'll follow my man. I wouldn't want him running off with another bitch," Linda, Kay's fire-mage girlfriend, said with a grin. The two seemed made for each other.

Whenever they were near, things seemed to heat up quickly.

Klaus then turned to Vida, the slender woman whose demeanour left no doubt she was an assassin. She was Daniel's woman and the little demon who had kept him on his toes the last time they were together.

"I'm with Linda. I wouldn't want this big boy running off with another bitch. God knows heads would come rolling if I caught him," Lynn said with a sly grin.

Klaus smiled, throwing Danny a sympathetic look. 'Looks like my man's going to die tied to a single lady,' he thought.

"Well, my sister is in the Yin-Yang Palace, so while I wouldn't want this one running off either, I'll also join to stay close to her," Yasmin, Danny's old lady, added with a smile.

"Great. You guys are way more open-minded than these old thuds," Klaus said teasingly before turning his attention to Miguel, Omari, and Lucas.

"Well, my mother told me to follow you, so I'll be joining the Yin-Yang Palace with you," Lucas said with a broad smile.

"Your mother seems like a visionary woman. I should meet her someday," Klaus replied, chuckling at Lucas's reasoning. Lucas, the other archer who chose to stick with his team during the trial at Sinji Valley, was showing a clear inclination to follow Klaus.

It was an unusual reason, but Klaus didn't mind. 'If he's hardworking, he'll grow stronger under me,' Klaus thought.

After all, Klaus wasn't going to the academy to play around. His faction would dominate the entire academy, a goal that could only be achieved through battles and relentless challenges.

"Before I give you my answer, what do you plan on doing once you join the Yin-Yang Palace?" Omari asked.

"A lot, actually. Since they're the weakest in the academy, we'll need to do a ton if we want to rise to the top. That means plenty of missions, countless challenges, and, who knows, maybe a bit of mischief along the way," Klaus said with a grin.

"Basically, I plan on heating things up. So, what's it going to be? Are you joining or not?" Klaus asked.

"Sounds like it's going to be fun. I'll join you, Klaus, but know that I still hate you and will challenge you to a duel whenever I feel confident I can beat you," Omari replied with a small smile.

"Maybe in a hundred years. But sure, I'd love to duel you too," Klaus smirked before turning to his best friend.

"I'll decide if you get to duel me right now," Miguel said, his tone sharp and challenging.

"Really? You want to fight now?" Klaus asked, disbelief evident in his voice.

"Yes. I'll only follow someone who can defeat me. And since we've never fought before, I want to see if you can beat me in a simple duel," Miguel explained, his reasons clear and resolute.

"I see. That actually makes sense," Klaus said with a pondering expression.

"Okay, I accept the duel," Klaus declared, then turned toward Danny.

"Can I have your axe for a few seconds?" Danny didn't even think it over; he just retrieved the axe and gave it to Klaus.

Daniel then stood up and walked forward. "Clear their area; a fight is about to take place." His voice boomed, making everyone turn in his direction.

They all began to spread out when they saw the axe on Klaus's shoulder.

Klaus and Miguel moved forward and stood 20 meters apart. Klaus stepped onto the floor and activated the Demon Killing Circle. At once, the 20-meter radius was sealed off.

Chapter 442 - 442: Duel with Miguel

"Are they coming to fight?" a young man asked, watching Klaus and Miguel walk and face each other.

"Why are you asking me? Naturally, when two people holding weapons face each other, they are indeed coming to fight. Jeez, have you become even dumber since the last time we met?" another person replied to the clearly stupid question.

"But why are they coming to fight? Isn't it against the rules?" a young lady asked, looking somewhat scared.

Well, she was scared for Miguel. After all, she was one of the very few women who had been trying to get close to the brute, whose only focus was on training and nothing else.

"Should we say something to them? Maybe they'll calm down and rethink this."

"I don't think they are about to fight seriously."

"Huh... what do you mean?"

"Look at them. It seems this is just a friendly duel," another young lady said, pointing out what seemed obvious to those freaking out.

Right as she said that, Miguel charged at Klaus, his weapon in full swing. Klaus smiled and also charged forward, the axe in his hand raised high.

Boom

Miguel swung his axe, meeting Klaus in a power clash that sent a gust of shockwave, blowing dust everywhere. Miguel was pushed back seven steps, while Klaus moved back only two.

"Awesome."

Klaus smiled, feeling the vibrations from the clash coursing through his arms. Miguel had a similar expression, feeling the impact in his arms as well.

"Again!" Miguel shouted, coming at Klaus with another swing.

"You bet!" Klaus charged forward, swinging the axe to meet Miguel's in another thunderous boom. Then they began exchanging blows, neither activating any abilities for the moment.

Within five minutes, Klaus and Miguel had exchanged hundreds of blows. Klaus smiled through it all while Miguel began to understand something unsettling:

He was nowhere near Klaus's level.

Unlike Klaus, who had maintained his strength as if untouched from the start, Miguel was losing his edge. With each swing, his strength waned further.

There was no chance for recovery. Klaus had ensured that. Though this wasn't a death match, Klaus had used the Demon Killing Circle strategically—to prevent either of them from recovering strength or stamina.

Now that Klaus had six cores formed, his powers had transcended common sense. He could sustain the Demon Killing Circle indefinitely and exert more precise control over the battlefield using his mind and soul alone.

Clearly, the skill was far more useful than Yuying had initially explained, and Klaus realized he was only beginning to scratch the surface of its potential.

Ten minutes later, Miguel was drenched in sweat, nearing his limit. Klaus, however, showed no pity and refused to underestimate him. Instead, he relentlessly rained down attacks, showing him there was indeed a huge gap between them.

Of course, nobody could tell just how wide that gap was since they weren't using active skills. But even from the results on the battlefield, everyone gathered could see that Klaus was monstrous.

He wasn't the only one receiving praise. Miguel was also getting some. The shockwave hitting them said it all.

None of them would have been able to withstand those brute attacks. Miguel was undoubtedly powerful, but even so, he could only endure 15 minutes of pure brute combat before he tapped out.

"Good fight, Miguel, but if you want to match my strength, focus on tempering your body more. Of course, since you'll be joining my circle, you won't have to worry much; I'll build you into a juggernaut," Klaus said with a smile.

"Okay, Klaus, I will listen to you," Miguel replied before walking away to sit and recover. Scarlet quickly cast some healing spells that sped up the recovery process.

Klaus, on the other hand, walked back to his friends, handed the weapon over to Danny, and then turned in a certain direction, waving with a huge smile.

Everyone turned their attention to the direction he was waving, and, behold, the three legacies stared back at Klaus.

Everyone immediately understood the situation, so they didn't say anything and instead began discussing the just-ended duel between Klaus and Miguel.

However, 200 meters away, Ella, Ethan, and Max clenched their fists, their eyes burning with killing intent.

They had heard everything Klaus said to their families, and for that, they couldn't hold back their anger. Of course, since they had accepted that they were no match for Klaus, they could only swallow their pride and wait until they reached the academy.

Meanwhile, several meters away inside the large academy building, Instructor Constance and three others stood by the window, observing the disciples gathered below them.

"That Klaus is much more monstrous than I thought," one of them, named Ben, said, having just witnessed the duel between Klaus and Miguel.

"Well, he isn't known as the strongest of the younger generation for nothing," Instructor Constance commented, her gaze shifting to the data they had gathered so far on Klaus.

"I guess this year's batch will be much more fun than the previous generation," Instructor Tanvi said with a small smile.

"I guess so," the last instructor, Jane, replied, smiling faintly.

"Then should we get things started? I doubt the other unions will want to be the last to arrive at the academy," Instructor Tanvi asked.

"No need to rush it. We're the closest to the academy but also the ones with the most dangerous flying paths. We'll leave on schedule; otherwise, we'll have more fights on our hands than we'd like," Instructor Constance said, stepping away from the window.

"We'll need to be extra vigilant this time. We all know things could have gone much better last time, but I want everyone to be at their best since monster attacks are random. Let's get these kids to the academy safely," Instructor Constance instructed.

"Alright, Leader," they all responded in unison before walking away.

From Union City to the academy, they would have to fly over a Forbidden Zone known as the territory of powerful Flying monsters. Their leader is a Tier 8 Monster called Razor Klaus Diamond Hawk.

Occasionally, monsters tend to get active when flying over the forbidden zone. Since that is the only path with relatively less danger, the academy deployed three Great Sages and one Sovereign to each union to escort the 16,000 disciples who passed the Union Trial.

Naturally, as with most things, there's a competitive edge to it. Those tasked with escorting the disciples would earn additional Celestial Points based on how quickly they completed the journey.

However, all the groups would be departing simultaneously.

Despite this, they could only prepare as much as possible for the monsters lurking in the path and the threat of unexpected attacks.

Three hours later, all the disciples had gathered and were waiting for the instructors. During this time, Klaus used the opportunity to instruct his friends and allies on how to handle the legacies.

He also warned them that things might get chaotic when they arrived at the academy. Of course, he kept his plans for the legacies to himself.

When Miguel pressed him for details, Klaus laughed and said nothing.

An hour later, Instructor Constance and the other three instructors finally appeared.

Chapter 443 - 443: Taking Off

Immediately after Instructor Constance appeared, the entire area fell silent. All attention shifted to her.

"Welcome, everyone. We will soon begin our journey to the academy. But before we leave, I have a few things to say," she announced, stepping forward. Behind her are the other three instructors.

"First, these three instructors will be your guardians throughout this journey. The path to the academy holds certain dangers, but fear not. With them by your side, you will all arrive safely."

She paused, her sharp gaze sweeping over the crowd. "That said, be prepared for anything."

The disciples exchanged uneasy glances but remained silent, realizing there was little they could do but listen.

"Second," Constance continued, her tone firm, "once you reach the academy, all forms of communication with the outside world will be cut off."

"If you have any goodbyes to your loved ones, now is your last chance. You may contact them until we cross the academy's borders. After that, there will be no reception."

"Third, forget about your current wealth and status. In the academy, there is only one currency: Celestial Points. You will buy, sell, and trade using them. No matter how rich you are now, your money will be worthless when you enter the academy."

"Likewise, your status outside means nothing. Once you're in the academy, only strength is recognized. Don't slack in your training if you want influence, respect, or power there. Earn your place through your abilities."

The disciples remained silent. None wanted to say anything because they knew they would become fodder when they stepped into the academy.

This was especially true for those who didn't have any big brothers in the academy yet.

But nobody cared about that. Since they all wanted to grow stronger, they could only resolve themselves and prepare for whatever awaited them.

"Fourth, when you arrive at the academy, the other disciples will want to challenge you to a duel. I advise you to accept these challenges because, while nobody will tell you this, the only way to gain power in the academy is by challenging others.

A ranking will be determined based on the points you earned during the Union trial. However, you must challenge others and accept duels to climb this ranking.

But not every challenge must be accepted. Of course, you can't always decline challenges, as the more you decline, the more points you lose.

That said, you have to be ready for anything. You'll learn more when you get there."

"Fifth," Instructor Constance said, "there are strict rules in the academy, and breaking them comes with severe consequences. While strength determines your standing, discipline ensures your survival.

"The first rule is simple: no killing fellow disciples. Duels are meant to push your limits, not to end lives. Anyone violating this rule will be expelled immediately, regardless of rank or potential.

"The second rule is respect. While strength earns you recognition, it does not grant you the right to abuse others. The academy does not tolerate bullying or exploitation. Any such behavior will be dealt with harshly."

"Lastly, always follow the instructors' orders. We are here to guide and protect you, but disobedience can lead to unnecessary risks. Trust us; you'll get through your time at the academy alive."

Instructor Constance scanned the faces of the disciples with a small smile.

"You are all here because you have potential, but potential alone won't carry you far. Follow the rules, train hard, and seize every opportunity. If you do, you may leave the academy as true powerhouses."

"That said, get ready to move."

As soon as she finished speaking, a rather large plane—very large, in fact—descended and landed in a vast field not far from their location.

"That will be our transportation. There are rooms inside for everyone, so two people will share a room for the next 12 hours of our journey.

Pick your partner and get ready to board the plane."

Everyone began searching for their partner for the next 12 hours. Of course, those with their lovers didn't have to look far. Someone like Kilian, Danny, Daniel, and Kay were already set for boarding.

However, the problem was Mark and Klaus, who had multiple lovers.

Klaus scanned the faces of his two vixens, Lily and Anna and smiled.

Clearly, he didn't want to choose between them, especially since they couldn't rotate rooms. With that in mind, Klaus immediately devised a plan to suit them.

"Big Sis, wanna share a room with me?" Klaus said. He wasn't about to pick one and let go of the other. It was either both of them shared the room with him, or neither of them did.

Anna and Lily exchanged glances and smiled.

"Good choice," they muttered, making Klaus want to smack the back of their heads. Those two vixens were getting bolder by the second.

But while Klaus resolved his situation easily, Mark found himself in a tighter spot. In the end, however, Mark chose to follow Klaus's approach. He decided to share a room with Lucas while Lin and Zing shared a room together.

It was unfortunate for Mark, but it was just 12 hours—he would survive.

Ten minutes later, everyone had picked their partners. Those who wanted to call their loved ones for one final goodbye had started doing so, while others, eager to know more about their partners, had begun chatting.

Twenty minutes later, the plane's doors opened, and everyone started boarding. Klaus and his friends stayed back, letting the crowd enter first.

Klaus turned to his friends and newfound allies.

"You all heard the lady. We'll have to battle constantly to rank up. Though we don't yet know the benefits of the ranking, we must dominate the charts and show the world that the Northern Union is no joke.

"That aside, if someone challenges you and you can't win, just decline. I doubt the punishment will be that severe. However, if you can beat them, then crush them and make sure you instill fear in their hearts.

"That will be all. You can go now." Miguel and the others nodded and started moving inside.

Klaus gave Anna and Lily a hug and a kiss before they left. Soon, only Klaus and his sister Hanna were left outside.

"Big sis, I know you're different now, and I know you have many questions, but don't worry. I'll answer them all later. For now, though, I want you to show the world you're my sister. No matter your ranking or potential, I want you to be right beneath me," Klaus said with a smile.

"What happened to be above you?" Hanna asked with a teasing smile.

"You'd have to beat me for that. But I doubt you could scratch my skin even if there were 10,000 of you. Good luck trying, though," Klaus teased her back.

"Shameless." Hanna reached for his arm, and in the next moment, they both moved inside the plane.

They were assigned Room Nine. Inside were two beds and a small fridge filled with fruits and drinks.

Clearly, the academy was already showering them with luxury. They settled in, and soon, the plane took off.

Thus, the Northern Union batch of disciples and Klaus were on their way to the academy.

Chapter 444 - 444: The Vow

Somewhere in the Southern Union, inside one of the rooms in the large plane taking the disciples to the academy, a young man and a young lady could be seen sipping on their drinks. The lady has long dark hair and beautiful features.

This young lady is Madison Blake, one of the top rankers from the Southern Union. The young man is another top ranker, Mason Cole.

One doesn't need a brain to know they are dating. However, while those dating should be inside each other's embrace at the moment, they both held an anticipated look on their faces.

"Finally, we will be meeting that arrogant bastard who thinks he is above everyone," Mason muttered, clenching his fist.

"Relax, Mason, we will get our chance to shut him up. But first, we have to prepare for the others from the other unions," Madison said, sipping her drink.

Just like the legacies in the Northern Union, Madison is a legacy. However, Mason isn't. But because of his potential, he was practically a part of the legacies.

They are all prideful and want to get back at Klaus because he dragged the legacies through the mud in the Northern Union.

Yes, Klaus only targeted the legacies in the Northern Union, but because of how disrespectful he has been, the other legacies seem to have taken offence to this.

Of course, not all of them are bothered, but the prideful ones are offended and want to get back at him at all costs.

Madison and Mason have been anticipating this moment for a very long time, and soon, they will come face-to-face with Klaus.

Of course, it would depend on their strength.

But it wasn't just them who wanted a piece of Klaus; inside most rooms, dozens, if not hundreds, wanted a piece of him.

In their eyes, they all must defeat Klaus to prove something. As for what that is, nobody truly knows.

Almost all legacies on Earth want a piece of him. The clans want a piece of him, and even most of the great families. Of course, the question still remains: do they have the strength to do anything to him?

That answer, of course, would soon be revealed. After all, many prodigies haven't shown themselves as Klaus did, so who knows if he will meet some hidden dragons and crouching tigers.

"Lil bro, do you think mom will be alright?" Hanna asked, sitting quietly on her side of the bed while Klaus was busy drinking his third pour of a certain fruit juice while biting into an apple.

"Don't worry, she'll be fine. Miriam, Ohema, and Nadia are there with her; she'll be more than okay," Klaus replied. But Hanna didn't seem convinced by his response.

"Come here," Klaus said, extending his arm. He could tell the young lady had difficulty letting go for a few months.

Hanna moved and sat beside him. Klaus smiled and took out his phone, dialling his mom's number. The phone rang only once, and his mom's face appeared on the screen.

"Hello, Mom," Klaus smiled, looking at her cry-soaked eyes and staring at them through the phone.

"Hello, Mom," Hanna also said, looking slightly better now. Klaus's mom tried to speak, but her tears started falling.

"Jeez, Mom, we'll be gone for only a few months. No need to be overly dramatic. Crying won't stop us from leaving—Ouch!"

Before Klaus could finish his shameless sentence, Hanna smacked his head before taking the phone.

"That's my baby girl," their mom said.

This display brought a smile to her face. Hanna and Klaus smiled back, seeing she seemed to have calmed down a bit.

"Have you guys left already?" their mom asked.

"Yup... We're in the air now."

"I see." The mom nodded. Miriam and Ohema could be seen beside her. Of course, Klaus wanted to tease them, but Hanna didn't allow him.

"Big Sis was just missing you, so I had to call and say another goodbye." Klaus missed her, too, but he's a guy.

Guys don't cry over things like this.

"At least I have one child who isn't a lunatic," Klaus's mom laughed. Ohema and Miriam also shared their sentiments.

"Mom, you don't have to worry too much about us. We will be fine. Just take care of yourself. In a few months, we will come visit you."

"Okay, my baby girl. I will take care of myself. But promise me you will also take care of yourself and your brother. Although he's acting tough, I know he's a softy inside. Take care of him for me, alright?"

"I will, Mom. I'll make sure he doesn't do anything reckless this time," Hanna promised with a smile.

"That's my girl. You guys should get some rest. I know you'll have a big day coming up soon." She hung up the call with a confident look in her eyes. But the next second, she was shedding tears.

This continued for a while before she calmed down. Then she got busy doing everyone's hair in the house. When she was done, she redid it and continued every day until Klaus and her sister returned.

The woman is just too attached to her children.

Meanwhile, Klaus, who received his phone back from Hanna, bit into an apple and started chewing. Unlike most who try to remain elegant, Klaus was all about the food.

Hanna gave him a sidelong glance but didn't say anything. Unlike Klaus, who didn't care about elegance, she did and wouldn't indulge in something like this.

"What are you doing?" The next second, however, Klaus shoved an apple in her face and placed his head on her lap.

"Eat up, Big Sis. These apples are different, and as poor people, we can't really let go of the chance to eat when offered," Klaus laughed.

"Unbelievable." Hanna couldn't believe her eyes. Who was he calling poor? He had the richest person on earth in his bed every single night.

"Go ahead, eat up," Klaus pushed her hand, and Hanna, who didn't want to resist much, decided to take a bite. Of course, as soon as she did, she felt a rush of energy enter her body, filling her up.

"Wow, this is actually good." Hanna started eating just like Klaus.

"Told you." Klaus smiled and also began devouring the apple. They continued for a while until they were full. The next second, Klaus fell asleep.

Hanna looked at his sleeping face and smiled. "A big softy indeed," she muttered, brushing her hand through his hair.

'I owe him everything. Without him, I would have long been dead by now,' Hanna thought inwardly and sighed.

'Thank you for smiling at me that day, lil bro. Without that smile, I wouldn't have had the will to approach you.'

She looked at his sleeping face, and a determined look appeared.

'I am going to get stronger, brother. Very strong. No matter the danger, I will face them with you. I will become your strength and your most loyal sister. I will brave the darkness with you and be your shining star when you need one,' she vowed.

She continued brushing her hand through his hair for an hour before falling back on the bed and dozing off.

A few seconds after she fell asleep, a star tattoo appeared on her forehead for a few seconds before vanishing.

Somewhere far away, a star that looked like it was dying suddenly shuddered and glowed nine times before dimming. Then, rings started to form around it.

Chapter 445 - 445: Make Sure You Don't Chicken Out

Celestial Mountain Academy is situated on the tallest mountain on Earth, Mount Everest.

It's one of the tallest peaks, and before the apocalypse, no human dared to climb it. Of course, a few mountaineers actually managed to reach its summit.

Some attempted and died. Others gave up halfway, and some used unconventional methods to try to get there. There were even reports of people skydiving onto the top of the mountain.

It was a daring feat that sparked trends, encouraging many to attempt it. Of course, this also resulted in numerous deaths, but humans tend to find joy in challenging the impossible.

Humans are curious creatures. Even if something is dangerous, someone always wants to test whether it truly is.

The more they risked their lives, the more they seemed to gain the courage to risk them further. It was human nature.

Long story short, many died trying to climb that mountain. It was, to say the least, very strange.

Perhaps that's why, when humans gained the ability to evolve beyond their naturally weak selves, one of the first things they did was explore that mountain.

Reports say that many strange and bizarre things about the mountain were discovered before the apocalypse. However, most people didn't pay much attention to them back then.

There have been reports of humming sounds, unnatural weather patterns, and unexpected discoveries, such as strange carvings on some stones around the mountain.

At one point, a video showing a strange liquid river was discovered. However, the person who recorded it died before he could return with a full report. Despite this, the short video trended online because it captured parts of the river.

Since there wasn't much additional information, most people dismissed it as a conspiracy theory. But everything changed when the Overlords explored the mountain.

They uncovered many astonishing things that immediately prompted them to construct structures around the area.

Initially, they planned to turn it into a tourist attraction. However, after uncovering some truly mind-boggling secrets, they decided against it.

Instead, they built an elite academy around the site, and since then, it has been used as a training ground for Earth's most promising young warriors.

Earth's strongest fighting force is now based on this mountain.

Decades after the academy's establishment, it has produced thousands of elite fighters who would bring hope and triumph to the world when released onto the battlefield.

The mountain is divided into three segments. The first is the Outer Section, where first-year students reside after entering the academy.

They will be nurtured as Outer Disciples until they become Saints and manage to pass the Inner Disciple exams. After that, they will ascend the Stairway to Heaven.

If successful, they move to the Inner Sections, where the nurturing becomes even more intense.

There, one must rise through the ranks: from Sage to Great Sage and, ultimately, to Sovereign before earning a chance to climb even further to the final segment, known as Celestial Peak.

It is said that since the academy's founding, only a handful have managed to ascend to the third segment.

Of course, by "a handful," they mean 66 individuals—each one an elite of the academy and its pride. All of them are Sovereigns or higher. However, this part is rarely the focus of most disciples.

The real excitement lies in the second segment. In the second segment, where the Inner Disciples reside, thousands of students are currently happy.

The reason was simple: the fresh Outer Disciples batch was coming. This meant that the Inner Disciples would soon have a new pool of recruits to choose from as their subordinates.

The academy had eight factions, each boasting thousands of members. However, due to the competitive nature of these factions, most went out of their way to recruit new Outer Disciples to strengthen their ranks.

This was one of the many reasons why they all looked so pleased. By selecting a strong group of subordinates, their chances of earning more Celestial Points and resources would also increase.

It was all about the grind, and to be the best, one needed to have the best under them.

Currently, inside a rather luxurious apartment, a silver-haired young lady sat with a smile on her face.

Seated around her were two other women, each possessing a striking beauty that could mesmerize anyone.

"Sister Lucy, Klaus is finally coming to the academy, right?" Asha asked. She was one of the first women Klaus had noticed after his awakening.

Back then, she and her elder sister, Nia, had wanted to recruit Klaus into the academy. However, one thing led to another, and they became friends instead.

At first, it was just friendship, but as the days passed, both Asha and Nia became increasingly infatuated with him.

But time hadn't been on their side back then, as they had to rush back to the academy, and ever since, they hadn't seen Klaus. Of course, they could use phones in the inner section, but not for calls, as that would be too distracting.

So, they could only watch the news and marvel at all the amazing things Klaus had been doing.

They weren't like Lucy, who could talk to him anytime because of the Paragon Mark on her.

"Yes, he's coming, which means trouble is also coming," Lucy said with a loving smile.

"I can't wait to meet him again. I've missed him dearly," Asha said, her cheeks tinged with a small blush. She turned to her sister, Nia. "What about you, big sis? Don't you miss him too?"

Nia's cheeks turned red. "Maybe."

"Maybe?" Asha raised an eyebrow. "Stop fooling yourself, sister. I know how you secretly stare at Klaus's photo every night before you go to sleep," she teased.

"Oh, really?" Lucy smiled, amused at the revelation that the innocent and shy Nia was actually that bold in private.

Nia, unable to find a place to hide her embarrassment, buried her face in her sister's chest.

"She's such a shy one. I just hope she can be more assertive once Klaus gets here," Lucy said, then looked at Asha.

"And you, make sure you don't chicken out when you see him. I know you're waiting for Anna and Lily, but you've only known Klaus for a month, tops. You might be confident now, but who's to say you won't freeze up when the time comes?"

"I know, big sister Lucy. I'll do my best to stay confident—unlike this old shy baby," Asha teased, nudging Nia playfully.

"Well, that's to be expected of someone with her talent. Assassin talent tends to make one much shyer around the opposite sex," Lucy said with a knowing smile. "That said, I'm sure once Klaus is done with her, she'll straighten up."

Nia, peeking at Lucy from the corner of her eye, quickly turned away, blushing deeply.

"Ah, well, she's not the only one. Those two are just as flustered," Lucy remarked, shaking her head.

Asha smiled knowingly and asked, "You're talking about the sword user and the spirit master, right?"

Chapter 446 - 446: The Damsels and Foes (1)

The two Lucy was talking about are Aoi Hiroshi and Lulu Arcadia. They are inner disciples like Lucy, Nia, and Asha.

Back when Klaus and his friends went to Hiroshi City for the regional trial—because Arcadian City wasn't suitable for the trial—Klaus met Aoi at their estate after she forced her father to organize a dinner for the elites in the region.

At that time, she wanted to meet the rising star of the Northern Union. The dinner was just a smokescreen to get what she wanted.

She met him, and like any lady who has ever encountered Klaus, she bested him in a duel of pure swordsmanship...Lol.

Back then, Klaus was only skilled at cutting things with a sword; he wasn't well-versed in the intricacies of mastering a swordplay style unique to himself.

So, he lost. However, Aoi, who didn't want him to lose face, let him win in a rather spectacular way.

Long story short, Klaus held her like a princess who had tripped on her sword, humiliated her little brother, flirted with her big sisters, and, well, Aoi fell in love with him.

But she had to leave and return to the academy, so she never truly had the chance to take the next step with him.

Now, sitting in a hot bath after a morning of sword practice, she couldn't help but look at a picture of a certain white-haired bastard and smile.

"He's finally coming, huh? I wonder how I'm going to face him," she muttered, a small red tint on her cheeks.

"At least he promised me he'd join my faction. That will give me more time to process things," she added before sliding into the water.

Since she was the first to invite Klaus to join her faction, she might just get her wish. Klaus wasn't planning on joining any faction filled with arrogant heirs and heiresses—that would be no fun.

By joining one of the weaker factions, breaking the top factions would be far more entertaining. And Klaus was all about the fun now that he was surrounded by people rather than monsters and zombies.

While Aoi was relaxing in her bath in a certain apartment, Lulu had also just finished her morning training. She had been battling simulations in Oracle, and after removing her helmet, she stretched with a satisfied sigh.

Thanks to the technique Klaus had given her, she had become significantly more powerful.

When Klaus nearly died for the second time—this time at the hands of the mutated Zombie Queen, the Blood Queen—he was saved at the last minute by the leader of the Overlords and brought to Arcadian City.

After waking up, he met Lulu at a dinner hosted by her family.

At that time, Klaus was beginning to explore the Spirit Master nature of his Weapons Overlord class. Lulu made him fall even more in love with the Spirit Master aspect of himself.

Back then, he witnessed her immense power and was deeply impressed. But in the end, it was Lulu who fell for him.

Like so many others, their meeting was brief. But now, Klaus was coming to the academy. She had even promised to wait for him in a message she deleted immediately after sending it.

Unluckily for her, Klaus saw the message before it disappeared. Of course, Klaus, being Klaus, didn't reply, leaving her second-guessing herself at that moment.

"I hope he didn't actually see that embarrassing message," she muttered, glancing at the clock on the wall. It was a quarter past 6 a.m., which meant Klaus would arrive at the academy in less than an hour.

"Dear lord, how am I going to face him? Knowing him, he'd tease me endlessly if he did see that message." She closed her eyes, her cheeks flushing red.

"I even attached an image to it. Jeez, was I that desperate or just plain stupid?"

Just like Aoi, she slipped into a warm bath, burying her blushing face in the steamy water, trying to drown her embarrassment away.

But while damsels were blushing, foes were also plotting and scheming. This was especially true for a group of eight individuals currently meeting inside the apartment that belonged to Hunter Duncan.

The name said it all. Hunter was an heir from the Duncan Legacy family, the same family that had declared war against Klaus.

Naturally, Hunter hated Klaus and was doing everything he could to make life in the academy difficult for him.

Of course, he wasn't alone in this enterprise. With him was his sister, Kate Duncan, who hated two things in this life. First was Klaus Hanson; for decimating her guards, she had lent her younger siblings, Ella, Ethan, and Max, to discipline him.

It ended badly for her.

But aside from hating Klaus, she hated anyone close to him. This hatred evolved from being dragged through the mud by Lucy Ross, Klaus's first woman during their time in the Union Trials.

Because of this, she wanted nothing more than to see Klaus come crashing down at her feet. She wanted that more than anything.

The other six with them were people who equally hated Klaus. Three were from the great clans, and three were also some of the powerful people in the inner areas of the academy.

Zaid Nabil is the third son of the clan leader of the Nabil Great Clan. He is very powerful and quite arrogant. Naturally, he and Klaus were bound to become enemies at some point since they disowned his woman and kept threatening her.

Miriam is from the Nabil Great Clan, but after the incident with her sister, they disowned her. However, that was when she was just a weak, scared little girl. She wasn't that anymore, and because of that, they started to pressure her to return to the family.

Naturally, Miriam wouldn't be able to endure much longer, and Klaus would be pulled into it. But that is a matter for another day.

Kim Jiwon is also from the Jiwon Great Clan and a devoted hater of Klaus.

Richy Mason is from the Mason Great Clan. Naturally, his anger and hatred toward Klaus are much more potent.

The reason is simple: he had Lucy in sight for many years, yet he hadn't won her heart. And now, a no-background slum kid swooped in and took what belonged to him. Naturally, he was going to have an issue.

Amelia Grace is the Sky Phoenix Sanctuary's leader, the academy's third-strongest faction. She is a peak Great Sage, almost on the verge of becoming a Sovereign.

She is a very powerful fire mage and a hater of Lucy, who is widely known as the Queen of Woods/Vines.

Seojin Choi is also the leader of the Celestial Wind Pavilion, the second-ranked faction in the academy, known for their great control over the wind. Most of their members are wind users.

For him, he doesn't hate Klaus or Lucy; he just wants to suck up to the Legacies and the Clans. He is an opportunist who can be bought with money.

The last is Sofia Gabriela, the Fire Dragon. Her moniker matches her faction and her affinity.

She is one terrifying lady with an affinity for the fire element and also the Fire Dragon Hall leader, the academy's number one faction.

But what makes her a terrifying lady is her class. She has a fearsome class called Fire Dragon Arcane Mage.

Chapter 447 - 447: The Damsels and Foes (2)

Sofia is a very powerful fire mage who has recently broken through to the Sovereign stage. But just like the others, she hated Klaus, mainly because she hated Lucy for gaining more fame than her despite being two stages lower.

Lucy has also become a Sage recently, but she hasn't told Klaus yet. She was saving it as a surprise for when he got there.

However, Sofia hated Lucy mainly because of the fame she gained despite being two realms below her.

Lucy had risen through the ranks of the Inner Disciples' Saint list, becoming number 3 in just 5 months. Then, when she was getting ready to become a Sage, she challenged some people on the Sage list and defeated them.

This made her one of the very few to accomplish such a feat. A Saint, stepping on the Sage list. Only a few people had ever done that.

This made Sofia very angry to see someone shining more than her. Thus, she made it her mission to bring Lucy down, and since she couldn't challenge Lucy directly because she was realms higher than her, she could at least make Lucy challenge her by making life more difficult for her boyfriend.

"So only the three of you came, huh?" Hunter Duncan said, addressing the faction leaders.

Choi nodded. "Indeed, I reached out to Jake Tyson, but he said he wouldn't join us without 50 million Celestial Points. He also said that with 25 million, he will fulfill a single request from us."

"Tsk." Hunter chuckled. "Annoying bastard. I will be sure to remind him of this one day."

Jake Tyson is the leader of the Thunder Blaze Sect, the 4th-ranked faction in the academy. Just like Choi, he is also an opportunist but a rather greedy one.

His price is higher than they could currently afford; thus, he wasn't part of them.

"What about the others?" Hunter asked again.

"Vida Stronghold didn't give any reply, and Jason Bond said unless the young miss accepts his proposal, he won't join us."

Kate Duncan's expression immediately turned cold upon hearing that.

She is a beauty. That much is true. And because of her beauty, many boys want to get in her pants. One of these fellas is the leader of the Earth Shadow Guild, the 7th-ranked faction.

Of course, she has rejected him continuously, but it seems that now, needing his help, Jason seems to have grown some wings.

"I will kill him," Kate muttered, clenching her fist.

"Relax, sister. When this is all over, and Klaus is in the ground, we will visit him next," Hunter said, comforting his sister. Kate calmed down a bit but was still angry.

"As for Vida Stronghold, although she is the leader of the 6th-ranking faction, we can't underestimate her. She is much stronger than you think. So, we just have to take her silence as her way of rejecting us.

We can only swallow our pride and make do with what we have. After all, the other legacies and great families are coming on board. We aren't lacking here."

Vida is a body cultivator and a very tall, beautiful, and powerful one at that. Many call her the War Hammer, mainly due to her powerful punches.

She is a great sage and a powerful one. So, despite her being the leader of the 6th-ranking faction, none of them dare to underestimate her. After all, bones will break when she and her faction of brutes get angry.

"As for the Aqua Spirit Sect, those triplets wouldn't budge even if we offered them the world. So, we can only forget about them and move on. For the Yin-Yang faction, since their leader is stuck at the peak of the Sage stage, we should forget about them.

They hold no value anyway." Hunter then turned his attention to those gathered in the room.

"You all know why you are here, so let's not waste time. What preparations have you made, and what help do you need?" Hunter asked.

Kim was the first to speak. "I have received word from my family that Klaus will soon know what it means to offend a clan. They have also sent additional help that will aid in the long run. That said, my subordinates in the outer area will also play their part well, considering I have compensated them generously.

But I will need your word that you won't back down on our deal. Although we are all in this together, I also have my ambitions. Know that backing out will be very dangerous for you."

Hunter nodded. He had a deal with the one he was counting on to contribute the most to their unholy enterprise.

"What about you, Zaid?" Hunter asked.

"I have things ready for when he is here. My family has also said I should do my best to destroy him, and knowing me, I have things under control. But once Klaus is dealt with, this alliance is over. I hate legacies," Zaid didn't even polish his words.

Hunter could only give him a smile that said a lot. But now that they were allies, he could only swallow his words.

"I don't think you have to worry about me. My subordinates will handle him in the outer region. Once he's dealt with, I'll finally have my way with his women. That is all I want," Richy said, casting a lustful smile at Kate Duncan.

'Honey bastard,' Kate and her brother Hunter said in unison. But it wasn't just them. Sofia and Amelia held the same expression.

Hunter turned to Sofia next. "My faction will be sure to reject him, and if he joins any other faction, we will make sure to recruit more people so his faction will suffer from fewer numbers.

After all, the more the numbers, the more points and resources we earn."

"My faction has the same plan," Amelia said, nodding at Sofia's plan.

"I guess my faction will follow the same trend. I will make sure to deprive Klaus and his faction of members, making them weaker prey for future hunting," Choi added, his voice making Hunter and Kate nod.

"Then it is settled. Let's all carry out this plan, and I promise, all your requests will be fulfilled when this is set and done," Hunter promised. Soon, the meeting was over, and they all headed back to their factions.

"Brother, do you think this will be enough? You saw what he did to the guard. Although I hate to admit it, Klaus is very powerful," Kate said.

"Don't worry, Klaus is only powerful on the outside because of how weak the outside is. Here, he will meet true geniuses and monsters. Whether he is powerful or not wouldn't change anything," Hunter said confidently.

"Okay, brother. Just make sure once this is over, I will be the one to slap that bitch silly."

"Don't worry, you know me. I will make it happen," Hunter gave his sister a small smile before entering his room.

A few moments later, Kate followed him inside.

Exactly five minutes before 7 a.m., the sound of a plane heading toward the academy could be heard.

Soon, more sounds could be heard, and then large planes could be seen from the distance. Finally, the new batch of disciples and Klaus has arrived at the academy.

Chapter 448 - 448: First Impression

The first plane to land was from the Ice Union, or, as most call it, the Glacial Union. They are a race of pseudo-humans who one day emerged from beneath the icy lands of Antarctica.

It was a pivotal moment for humanity, considering we had been living on Earth for centuries. Yet, nobody had detected an entirely different race of humans—or possibly aliens—hidden beneath the ice.

Their arrival was monumental and sparked a war.

They wanted to claim the Earth, but humanity wouldn't allow it. The battle lasted just seven days, but thousands perished. Ultimately, the Overlords intervened, and what followed occurred behind closed doors.

After that incident, the Ice Union integrated with humanity, eventually working alongside humans. Over time, the two sides moved past their hostilities and began forming families.

Naturally, the Ice Union initially felt superior due to their societal structure and upbringing. But that was then. Over time, they became more humble as they witnessed the might and ingenuity of humans.

The plane landed, and 2,000 disciples began disembarking. They touched down at the base of the mountain, several times larger than the biggest airports in the world.

As soon as they landed, they started moving toward a particular space that required no introduction—it was unmistakably a gathering place for the first years.

Everyone began looking around, marveling at the advanced technologies running the place. There were towering buildings, impressive architecture, and, most notably, air cleaner and denser than anything outside.

Blue hair.

That was the defining feature of most Iceborns.

Nearly all of them had blue hair, pale skin like ice, and an otherworldly beauty. The men and women alike were strikingly handsome and elegant. Among them, a few stood out—the prodigies of the Ice Union.

But the Iceborns had to wait. The plane from the Southern Union landed next. Like the Ice Union, the Southern disciples disembarked and moved to the gathering ground.

Naturally, members of each union stuck together. Even though they harbored grudges or rivalries with some of their own, the others around them were strangers, making unity within their groups the easiest option.

Of course, a few knew one or two people from other unions, but they held back for now. Maintaining decorum and observing the hierarchy was the priority until everyone arrived.

The Eastern Union was the third to arrive. As soon as their plane landed, its disciples joined the gathering.

By this point, 6,000 disciples filled the massive area. Yet, this wasn't even half of the total population expected to arrive at the academy.

Western Union also landed shortly afterward, and everyone followed the unspoken rule of finding their section and standing.

Naturally, the lads from the Western Union started to exude their superiority over all others. They are known as the strongest Union because the leader of the Overlords hails from there.

Most of them are arrogant, riding on the fame of their Overlord, and they seem to think they are above others. But then, there is another union that shares a similar mindset.

It's the union presided over by the Fire Queenie, Nari.

The Equatorial Union landed next, and the place grew much livelier when they appeared. Before the apocalypse, they were known as Africans, but now that they are under a unified rule, the Equatorial Union was formed.

Naturally, they are the union with the highest population but face the greatest dangers. Before the apocalypse, Africans weren't as advanced in technology, so the initial phase of the apocalypse hit them the hardest.

But thinking about it now, that struggle gave them a reason to fight, and as it stands, if the Overlords were excluded, the Equatorial Union would reign supreme based on their strength.

Most of their people are heavy-weapon fighters, and the monsters and beasts they battle are also heavy hitters.

However, nobody has time to debate who is the strongest. The warrior tournament will decide who holds that title in a year and a half.

The Austral Union was the next to land, followed by the Aqua Union.

Like the Ice People, they appeared from beneath the sea and claimed a significant portion of it as their territory.

Thankfully, they arrived with a warm reception, and no battles broke out. Humanity had grown to accept the existence of things beyond their understanding, so when the Water-Borns appeared, they were welcomed.

The Water-Borns settled into their designated space, adding to the twelve thousand present disciples. Despite their overwhelming numbers, a significant portion of the area remained unoccupied. In fact, even if their numbers were doubled, they still wouldn't fill the place.

However, murmurs began to spread among the crowd. These murmurs, naturally, concerned the Northern Union.

They were expected to arrive first, considering their proximity to the academy. Yet, five minutes after the other seven unions had arrived, the Northern Union was still nowhere to be seen.

This delay sparked concern among the gathered disciples. But that concern didn't last long, as the Northern Union finally arrived ten minutes after the last plane had landed.

When they appeared, it became clear why they had been delayed.

Their plane was stained with various hues of blood, marked with both minor and major injuries.

It was evident they had endured a harrowing battle on their journey. And indeed, they had. They were attacked while passing through the forbidden zone of the Razor Klaus Diamond Hawk.

Of course, the weapons retrofitted into the plane played a huge role in taking out most of those monsters, but it wasn't enough.

Thanks to the instructors among them, they managed to pass through without going down. It was a short battle but highly impactful.

Now that the Northern Union disciples had started to disembark the plane, everyone could tell by the grim looks on their faces that, for the first time in their lives, they had witnessed how dangerous the monsters they would soon be hunting truly were.

Since Eden Jacobs died, 1,997 disciples carried grim expressions as they disembarked from the plane. Well, except for one, who had spent the past 12-plus hours sleeping like a baby.

As everyone disembarked the plane, in room 9, Klaus was fast asleep, hugging his sister like a pillow.

"Wake up, brother. We've arrived," Hanna said.

She, too, had witnessed the dangers on the way and looked afraid. Thankfully, she was with Klaus. Despite knowing they could have died at any moment, she hadn't panicked much.

With her little brother around, nothing could happen to her. That was how much she trusted Klaus. Of course, something had changed when she woke up, but she was holding back for now.

Klaus opened his eyes and looked at Hanna with a small smile. She helped him up, and soon, they started moving out.

By now, everyone else had already alighted. When Klaus finally appeared at the door, all eyes turned toward him.

Naturally, 99.999% of them had been waiting for him, but the crowd grew silent when they saw the looks on the Northern Union disciples' faces.

Then, a sleepy yet strikingly handsome face emerged, and everyone's eyes widened—including those of Instructor Constance, who had fought tooth and nail with the monsters just a few hours earlier.

One might say that Klaus's appearance was a rather unusual first impression.

Chapter 449 - 449: Boiling From Within

Hanna held Klaus's hand as they moved through the plane. However, the moment they appeared at the entrance, Hanna froze.

Klaus, who was wiping his eyes, also stopped and adjusted his vision. In front of them, thousands of eyes stared at them, each filled with countless intentions.

He yawned.

Klaus gave them a small smile and then started moving.

Normally, he would become arrogant at that very moment and say something shameless, but since he had promised his mother he wouldn't do anything, he moved toward the Northern Union.

Hanna was glued to his back. In her eyes, everyone should vanish, leaving only her brother and their friends. That would have made things much easier for her.

But peace can only last for a moment.

Murmurs began to spread.

"Is that the Klaus who's been making waves all around?" a young lady asked. In her eyes, one could tell she thought herself to be above everyone else.

"Yes, young miss, that is Klaus Hanson," a maid replied. Naturally, the maid had to be the one to speak, as the young lady was from the Vargas Dynasty, the legacy of the Southern Union.

Her name was Paula Vargas.

"And who is that girl beside him?" Paula asked.

"That is Hanna Kendrick, his sister, and also the second-ranked from the Union trial in the Northern Region," the maid replied.

"I understand. This will make things much easier," Paula commented, her eyes bloodshot as she looked toward Klaus and Hanna.

In another section, Madison and Mason also stood, watching Klaus move toward the Northern Union disciples, their eyes screaming violence.

"So that's him, huh? Aside from his good looks, I don't sense any danger from him," Mason commented, looking in Klaus's direction with eyes full of disdain.

Madison had the same expression.

Naturally, she was looking more toward Hanna, Anna, and Lily. She hated them for obvious reasons, but she hated Klaus much more.

"We'll make him and his friends pay soon," she muttered.

"Do we need to talk to Big Brother first before we make a move, or should we challenge him immediately after the ranking is revealed?" Mason asked.

"We do it right since many others will make the same move. We aren't the only ones who want a piece of him.

But let's hold back for now. Since we all know he'll be the top ranker, we can destroy his friends first and then focus on him," Madison decided.

Mason nodded. Since Klaus dared to cause trouble for himself, his friends would naturally pay.

But of course, while there are haters, there are also admirers. The ladies who saw Klaus's good looks up close this time all started to drool.

"Seeing him physically even makes me want to offer my body and soul to him," a young lady said.

"Me too. I wouldn't mind giving him my body, even if it's just for one night," another added.

"You bitch, don't you already have a boyfriend?"

"What's there to shout about? Just look at him. He's like the true definition of every lady's dream man. I wouldn't mind cheating on my man with him," the young lady smiled.

"That is indeed true. He's just too eye-catching."

The ladies continued their hungry comments, spreading throughout the place. This, of course, didn't sit well with the guys.

"I hope he drops dead in the morning," one angry boyfriend commented, hearing his woman drooling over Klaus.

"I know, right? If he could choke on his food and die, wouldn't that be great?" another added.

Klaus's presence was like a danger to all relationships. The dude was just too good-looking. One shouldn't be that handsome.

However, while everyone looked disdainful and angry, Klaus smiled at his friends, who looked at him with unbelievable expressions.

"I can't believe you slept through everything," Lily said, shaking her head.

"I had a good pillow," Klaus replied with a small smile.

Of course, Anna and Lily knew who this pillow was. They just gave Hanna an apologetic look. Clearly, she had chosen a shameless bastard as her brother; she could only have a heart for his antics.

"So, what happened?" Klaus asked.

"We were attacked by a bunch of flying monsters led by a Tier 8 Pseudo-beast. Had it not been for Instructor Constance and the other instructors, we would have died," Anna answered.

It was their first time seeing a monster that somehow spoke human words. Naturally, all beasts could speak human language, but since it was their first time seeing one, they all looked panicked.

'Tsk, wait until you meet a true beast that can turn into a human form and wield human weapon,' Klaus said inwardly, amused.

"You guys must have been terrified." Klaus decided to play the caring boyfriend card, holding Anna and Lily's hands.

"You have no idea. These monsters are much more terrifying than the ones we faced in the Northern Union," Lily said. Klaus could feel her body shiver slightly.

"Don't worry, my love. We'll get back at them in the future," Klaus reassured her, then shifted his focus to Miguel and his team.

"You guys look like you just came back from hell," Klaus smiled, observing the panicked faces looking back at him.

"Not everybody is crazy like you, Klaus," Miguel decided to use the chance to lighten the mood.

"That's true, but still, relax a bit. In a few months, we'll be fighting monsters like that, so calm your tits down. Things will get much grimmer soon," he said teasingly.

He had faced thousands of these monsters in his past life, so he wasn't worried. While that wouldn't count as his achievement, he had faced them and knew how they thought and fought.

Naturally, he was an expert in beasts and monsters. His past life in the Tormented world had taught him a lot. He battled many monsters and beast demons.

Klaus tried his best to calm his friends down, ensuring they all kept a clear mind for what would happen next.

Naturally, at this moment, those who couldn't hold back their anger and desires would try to challenge Klaus to a duel. It was only natural, considering he was their strongest opponent right now.

All of them would want to use him to gain fame and relevance, while most just wanted to humiliate him.

But that was after the ranking was revealed. Even so, some wanted to get this over with at that very moment.

They had long endured their pent-up hatred from the white-haired bastard who seemed to have taken over the entire world overnight.

However, before their anger could take over their thinking abilities, a powerful presence descended on the place, silencing everyone.

From the mountain, a man who seemed to be in his 50s with a powerful aura around him descended through the air, landing on a platform that had been slightly elevated to ensure everyone could see him.

From his aura, one could tell the man was a transcendent, powerful one. He scanned everyone's face and smiled.

"Welcome, everyone, to the most prestigious warrior academy in the world."

Chapter 450 - 450: The Impossible Rules

The moment the man appeared, everyone quieted down and turned toward him. His presence immediately commanded respect, considering his aura was that of a Transcendent.

Of course, aside from Klaus, none of them picked up on his cultivation base. All they could see was a powerful person who must be respected. Naturally, they were all giving him that respect.

His gaze scanned everyone around. When his eyes passed over Klaus, he paused for a split second before moving on.

<He's a Spirit Master, isn't he, Senior?> Klaus asked, noticing how intense the gaze was.

[Yes, brat. That is one powerful Spirit Master you shouldn't mess with. But you don't have to worry—your soul is pretty safe from attacks.]

Klaus sighed and focused his attention on the instructor.

"My name is Victor Kael. I am the head instructor of the Outer Section of the Celestial Mountain Academy. This means, without the Dean around, I am the highest authority here," the man introduced himself.

Everyone started murmuring.

The reason? He was very famous. In fact, aside from the Overlords, he was one of the few widely known on Earth and regarded as humanity's strongest defender.

Victor Kael was, as most warriors called him, the Eclipse Warden.

It is said that when he is on the battlefield, neither allies nor enemies can get near him. This is because of his signature soul technique called Eclipse Dominion.

It's a domain-type skill that, when activated, submerges the entire 12-kilometer radius around him into a state of lifelessness. Aside from him, nobody else can fight within the domain—unless their soul is strong enough to withstand its effects.

As for his backstory, he was once a mercenary before the apocalypse, but he changed his heart when his team was devoured by a monster a few weeks into the chaos.

Now, he is one of the most powerful instructors in the academy, and soon, his legend will again turn the world upside down.

"I know many of you have questions that will be answered. But before that, let me take a moment to say a few words before we get you all settled in.

"First, I'd like to emphasize the rules because they are the most important thing you must follow. Your guardian instructors have already gone over most of them, but there is one crucial rule that will not be tolerated under any circumstances:

"No killing of fellow disciples while you're here. If you have any grudges, you can settle them in the arenas. Of course, even there, killing is not allowed. Well, permanent killing is not allowed.

"Unless both parties agree to a death match. In that case, you may kill each other in a special Arena designed for that. But only after both of you agree to fight to the death. Aside from that, there is absolutely no killing among disciples.

"Second, you are not privileged to enter the Inner Section. That area is off-limits to Outer Disciples. However, exceptions can be made if you prove yourself worthy.

"Now, pay close attention to these exceptions..."

Everyone wanted to know how they could enter the section where all the excitement happened.

In the Inner Section of the academy, there were Saints, Sages, Great Sages, and Sovereigns. In fact, there were hundreds of Sovereigns there.

The reason was simple: once someone became a Saint and passed the Inner Disciple exams, they would move to the Inner Section.

From there, unless they ascended to Sovereign rank and managed to catch the eye of the Overlords, they wouldn't be able to enter the Celestial Section—the academy's core area.

Because of this, there were hundreds of Sovereigns stuck in the Inner Section, unable to advance further without recognition from an Overlord.

But that was part of what made the Inner Section so exciting. With warriors at different stages of cultivation, battles and challenges were constantly taking place. Everyone was eager to climb the rankings of Saint, Sage, Great Sage, and Sovereign.

Naturally, even those outside the Inner Section couldn't help but wish for a glimpse of the action every now and then.

The outer section only has Grandmasters and Saints who haven't managed to pass the Inner Disciple trial yet.

"First, if you want to enter and look around the inner section, you can pay 100,000 Celestial Points, which, I have to tell you, are not easy to obtain. Of course, if you somehow manage to pay for that, you can enter for a day.

"The second option is to challenge an Inner Disciple."

Everyone gasped upon hearing the second option. But it didn't stop there.

"You can challenge an Inner Disciple, and if they accept, you will have to win, which will grant you 48 hours of access to the inner section. But bear in mind, if you lose, you will have to pay 50,000 Celestial Points.

Hearing the added condition, everyone groaned and turned to the next option.

"The third and last option is to climb the Stairway to Heaven and enter. If you succeed, you can stay for a week and even receive Inner Disciple treatment. However, you will have to leave once the week is up.

"After that, you can enter anytime you want, as long as you take the Stairway to Heaven again."

Everyone shook their heads, hearing the third and seemingly impossible option. Climbing the Stairway to Heaven—who was he kidding?

Hundreds, if not thousands, were stuck in the outer section, mainly because they couldn't climb the Stairway.

'If they don't want us to enter, they should just say so without adding impossible exceptions to it,' everyone thought.

"I know you're all thinking none of the options are possible. The answer is yes, they are difficult, but since most of you would want to complain, these options have been implemented.

Whether you succeed in any of them will depend on your power.

"And don't even think about playing smart.

"Most of you are considering the second option by challenging your brothers and sisters in the inner section.

While you can do that and hope it works in your favour, know this: the moment you win against an Inner Disciple, they will drop 30 steps in their ranking.

"And let me tell you, ranking is everything here.

"If you want to get the best resources, the best missions, and the most faction points, then ranking high is the way forward.

"None of your brothers or sisters would want to lose. Aside from dropping 30 steps in the rankings, they would also have to pay 1,000,000 Celestial Points and wouldn't be able to rechallenge anyone for 60 days.

"So before you think about playing smart, know there's no way it will work out.

"If you want to enter the inner section, you can work hard, become a Saint, and pass the Inner Disciple trial."

Everyone sighed, knowing they were grounded for now. The rules were too strict, and no one in their right mind would want to be subjected to such cruel conditions.

Head Instructor Victor looked at the humble faces of everyone gathered and smiled.

"Since we're on the subject of ranking, why don't we display the rankings for everyone here to witness? Your ranking will determine the amount of resources you receive each month."

A large projection appeared right after he said that, showing everyone's names based on their ranking.