

Paragon 491

Chapter 491 - 491: Clashing with a Tier 9 Tiger (1)

Loewe looked at Klaus with eyes filled with injustice.

"My friends and I will help you kill this tiger, and in return, you will become my dear sister's beast companion. All you have to do is say yes," Klaus said, looking back at the bird lady with a smug expression.

"I don't expect you to form the contract now. You can wait until after the battle to decide. But trust me, going back on your word is not something I would recommend."

After saying what needed to be said, Klaus turned to his friends.

"Alright, guys, this is a rare opportunity for you to fight a Tier 9 beast. Now, I don't expect you to have the upper hand; I only want you to use this chance to get accustomed to the aura of a Tier 9-stage expert.

Of course, this loser has just broken through, so his aura is rather weak, but even I wouldn't underestimate him. You shouldn't either."

As soon as Klaus finished speaking, he moved. He was in front of the tiger in the blink of an eye.

BOOM!

A punch landed on the tiger, sending it flying backwards.

This caught everyone by surprise, but seeing Klaus overpower the tiger snapped them back to their senses—everyone, including Loewe, who was taken aback by how powerful Klaus was.

"You dare, human!" Ko roared, charging forward with its claws swinging. But just as it closed in on Klaus, a lightning arrow exploded in its face, halting its advance.

Hanna quickly moved into position, firing a series of arrows. To her, this was a rare chance to gauge how far she had progressed.

The same was true for everyone, including Klaus. His current limit was Peak Tier 8, but he wanted to test himself against a Tier 9 beast and see how powerful he had truly become.

Anna quickly assumed her role of controlling the battlefield. She hated the idea of ceding control to her sister, but deep down, she knew Klaus was right.

However, since Lucy wasn't there today, this was her chance to show Klaus what she could do.

"Hanna, you and Kay should focus solely on distracting the tiger. We don't want its attention fixed on one person, so keep moving as you shoot at it."

"Danny, Daniel, Mark, and Kilian, go assist Klaus. Make sure you only attack when it's caught off guard. We don't want you four dying just yet."

"Lily, make sure nothing happens to them. I'll ensure you all don't run out of stamina anytime soon."

""Okay""

They all accepted their roles and sprang into action. Lily moved like a flash, ensuring nothing snuck up on her teammates.

Since the tiger was stronger than them, her primary role was to whisk them away from danger when it arose. But that didn't mean she wouldn't attack if the opportunity presented itself.

Loewe observed their coordinated efforts before her attention drifted back to Klaus and Ko, locked in a fierce battle. Klaus was fighting with his bare fists.

What a crazy individual.

Yet, he used those bare fists to pound Ko's body as they exchanged blow after blow. The tiger, recognizing the gravity of the situation, was dead serious.

"Loewe, make sure he doesn't escape and attack as soon as you see an opening," Anna instructed before returning to her own task.

In an instant, the battlefield became watery. To her friends, it was normal, but to the tiger, it felt its strength drained when the water appeared.

Anna withdrew it the next second, knowing it could backfire, given they were fighting a lightning-based monster.

Still, it served its purpose. The cut on Klaus healed almost instantly. Anna resolved to use that ability only when a teammate was injured. For now, she focused on ensuring the others' defences were resolved.

Loewe joined the fray, ensuring Klaus wasn't fighting alone. As Anna had instructed, her primary role was to prevent Ko from escaping while taking opportunities to attack from the side.

Anna wanted to give Klaus every chance to dominate the battle.

Boom!

A powerful explosion shook the battlefield as Klaus and Ko were forced apart.

"Eat this"

Daniel roared, pouring all his strength into his hammer. He landed a devastating strike on Ko's back, the impact sending both of them flying. Daniel even lost his grip on the hammer as he was hurled backwards.

Daniel seized the momentary stumble in Ko's steps despite the chaos to deliver a follow-up attack. Though brief, the strike weakened Ko slightly, washing away a portion of its Vitality and stamina.

Whoosh

Suddenly, Ko's claws turned yellow as lightning danced around them.

"Die, human." Ko unleashed a series of strikes, sending arcs of lightning toward Daniel, who was the closest to him. Fortunately, Lily was there to pull him out of harm's way.

"Thanks, Lily. I thought I was dead for a second there," Daniel said, wiping sweat from his forehead. He had been frozen in place when the attacks came at him.

The current him wasn't qualified to fight a Tier 9 existence. The only reason he was on the battlefield—the only reason any of them were on the battlefield—was because of Klaus.

They trusted him that much.

"Moon Slash." Klaus switched to his sword and unleashed a powerful arc of fire, which Ko easily deflected with a kick. The attack left only a slight burn on his thick hide.

'That is one tough skin,' Klaus thought as he leapt to evade another attack from Ko.

"Lightning Bolt!" Loewe unleashed a piercing bolt of lightning that pushed Ko back a few meters. It had been caught off guard while defending against Klaus's attacks.

Klaus circled around Ko, who was under the assault of Loewe, Hanna, and Kay. They were the farthest away from him, so their attacks came without worrying about defence.

Klaus was handling that. Meanwhile, Danny, Daniel, Mark, and Kilian used the distractions created between attacks to land heavy strikes on Ko.

Kilian was utilizing his clone skills to their fullest potential. At the moment, he was jumping between clones, ensuring that the one destroyed was never the one he inhabited.

The skill was an impressive movement technique that could be used in dangerous ways if the user's mind was strong enough.

Mark, on the other hand, was employing his spear enhancement skill, delivering heavy attacks on the tiger. He wasn't flashy—none of them were. A single mistake, and they were done for.

However, Mark's speed was impressive. While Ko was inherently faster than him, the constant barrage of attacks left Ko distracted, allowing Mark to overwhelm him. His wind arcs were managing to inflict some damage.

The two brutes, Daniel and Danny, were perhaps the ones Ko wanted to kill first. They were like annoying flies, always darting in to bite and then bolting away.

Whenever Klaus, Loewe, Hanna, or Kay landed an attack, the brutes capitalized on the ensuing chaos to deliver a heavy strike before retreating. They were proving to be a very frustrating pair to deal with.

'Looks like they're adapting. This is good. Let me keep it like this for a few more minutes before getting serious. This tiger is no joke,' Klaus thought as he unleashed another powerful Moon Slash.

Chapter 492 - 492: Clashing with a Tier 9 Tiger (2)

"Wind Sphere Slash!" Lily shouted as she unleashed ten wind spheres. They silently zip through the air and struck Ko squarely, pushing him back yet again. In the next second, she was meters away.

She was employing a hit-and-run tactic to land her attacks effectively.

Klaus was impressed with how Lily was handling the fight. Since she wasn't confident in her ability to defend herself against Ko's attacks, she focused on pulling her friends to safety whenever Ko targeted them.

Her role was to ensure her friends were protected from all sides, and so far, she was doing an impeccable job.

However, the one keeping everyone in fighting shape was Anna. She wasn't trying to take the spotlight in the battle raging; instead, she focused solely on healing her comrades.

Her water element possessed a remarkably powerful healing aspect, allowing her to cast the healing spells in her arsenal easily.

It was draining her, but that didn't mean she wasn't excelling. Klaus knew Anna was perfect for support, and because of that, he was determined to help her become the best support there was.

"Relax, buddy, this battle is not for you," Klaus said, rubbing the dragon tattoo on his arm. The dragon was itching to come out and play, but Klaus wasn't ready to use it yet.

He knew that if he landed an Asura Crazy Sword strike, there was an 80% chance they would win.

However, doing so would drain him and take a toll on his body. He wasn't willing to go that far yet, so he relied on the strength in their numbers.

Of course, unleashing the dragon would give them a 90% chance of victory, but it would rob his friends of the opportunity to temper their warrior spirits.

"I promise I'll let you out when the time comes. For now, relax," Klaus said while dodging an attack from Ko.

"Danny, fall back and protect Anna! That bastard is trying to target her," Klaus yelled, noticing Ko shifting his attacks toward Anna.

"Kay, Hanna, focus on his legs! If we bring him down, it'll give us the chance to torture him before finishing him off. I'd like to dissect him and see what beasts look like on the inside," Klaus shouted.

Hearing his barbaric instructions, Ko shuddered, and then—boom—his aura exploded, pushing everyone back.

"Die, you peasants!" he roared as his claws glowed yellow, and he lunged at Daniel, the slowest in the group.

"Sky Piercing Bow Art: Lightning Bolt Piercer!"

Hanna's voice rang out as a piercing bolt of lightning struck Ko, exploding on impact and sending him flying back several meters.

Before he could hit the ground, Loewe unleashed her attack.

"Lightning Bolt Explosion!"

Her lightning attack detonated on Ko's face, blinding him momentarily.

"World Breaking Axe: Giant Axe Form!"

A giant axe materialized in the air, towering nearly 10 meters high, its immense size casting a shadow over the battlefield.

Danny unleashed his attack with a thunderous force, and the colossal weapon descended like a falling mountain. The tiger-like beast had no time to dodge.

"Damn you humans!" Ko cursed, but the axe slammed into him, carving a massive crater into the ground.

"Danny, move behind Anna and recover your stamina," Klaus commanded as he approached the tiger, now battered and bleeding from devastating attacks.

"All of you should just die!" Ko roared, standing back up and lunging toward Danny once more. This time, Klaus intercepted him with a powerful strike, forcing him back.

"You may be a Tier 9 beast, but in my eyes, you're just a wannabe. Now, watch how you die," Klaus said coldly, his voice laced with confidence as he unleashed his sword intent. The air grew heavy with a palpable aura of death and slaughter.

"Quick Slash!"

Hundreds of sword arcs materialized, cutting through the air like a storm of blades as Klaus executed one of the most powerful techniques in his arsenal.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The attacks landed, sending Ko staggering back yet again. But the beast still stood, refusing to yield.

"Infinity Moon Slash!"

A blazing arc of energy erupted from Klaus's sword, a fiery crescent that struck Ko squarely. The impact detonated with a deafening explosion, creating a shockwave that forced Klaus's companions to retreat several steps.

"You guys should unleash your attacks and fall back; I'll handle him from here if none of you manage to land the killing blow", Klaus instructed, his sharp gaze fixed on the resilient beast.

He could sense Ko wasn't going down easily, but Klaus had more surprises in store—one of them being his friends.

"One Flame Transcendence Sword Art." Kilian was the first to activate his technique.

"First Form. Void Cutter" Kilian unleashed the first form of the technique Klaus had given him.

A deep red sword light slashed from his blade and vanished. In the next instant, it reappeared in front of Ko, carving a deep wound into his right leg. The attack managed to injure him—but at a cost.

Kilian panted heavily as he retreated. At the moment, he could use only the first form of the technique once, and that was all.

He would first need to become a Saint to use it more than once.

"Wind Sword Art: Wind Infinity Sword Arcs!"

Lily unleashed her attack, and like a swarm of bees, countless wind arcs coated in sword qi flashed out from her single swing and rained down on Ko like a storm.

Ko activated his defence, causing his fur to glow yellow. However, the relentless wind arcs overwhelmed it, sending him flying back.

At that precise moment, Anna coordinated with Daniel to launch their attack.

"Absolute Freezing Point!"

The ground where Ko landed turned watery, sinking his body up to his neck before freezing solid. The ice was unyielding, and the pale hue of Anna's face revealed she had poured everything into it.

Perhaps Klaus should have mentioned that he needed the experience points. However, nobody had expected Daniel to have mastered the technique Klaus had given him to such an extent.

"Mountain Descent Hammer Art: Giant Hammer Falling!"

A hammer, massive and towering—larger than two buses—materialized in the air. Like a falling mountain, it descended on Ko's head, leaving him a split second too late to shatter the ice and escape.

In truth, even Klaus might have succumbed to such an attack.

It all transpired within a fleeting moment, but thanks to the swift teamwork between Anna and Daniel, Ko's head was reduced to a pulp under the hammer's colossal weight.

Daniel staggered, collapsing onto his back and gasping for breath.

Anna also collapsed, but Lily caught her before she could hit the ground. The two had demonstrated incredible mastery and teamwork, but it had come at a great cost.

Of course, that wasn't the main point. Klaus's friends were stunned. In fact, they couldn't believe their eyes. They had just killed a Tier 9 beast—a being comparable to a Transcendent human.

It was a team effort, with Klaus and Loewe on their side, but the fact that they had managed to kill it was beyond anyone's expectations.

In truth, they had all assumed Klaus would be the one to finish off Ko. But in the end, Daniel had taken the victory. And with that single kill, he leapt to the third stage of the Star Core Formation.

"Very well, the brute is dead. Now, are you going to renege on your word, or should I kill you?" Klaus asked, turning his gaze toward Loewe.

Daniel had stolen his kill, so Klaus was already looking for the next best thing.

Chapter 493 - 493: I Will Call You Kathy

Loewe looked at Klaus and then at his friends. She turned toward the direction where Ko's mused head could be seen.

Hanna was elated, knowing that she would soon have a companion if things went their way.

Of course, like everyone else, she was shocked. Daniel had killed a Tier 9 beast—a feat she believed was beyond her capabilities. Yet, in that moment, she felt as though anything was possible.

This sense of possibility thrilled her, especially at the thought of gaining a companion she could coordinate with.

If she could create a moment like the one Anna had orchestrated for Daniel, she could inflict far more damage on the battlefield.

"How can I be sure you're not just using me and will toss me aside in the end?" Loewe asked, his narrowed eyes fixed on Klaus. "I've been sentient since I reached the 7th stage, and I know all too well what humans are capable of."

"There's no need to be afraid or suspicious," Klaus replied calmly. "You're a Peak Tier 8 beast, and I can see you want to break through and fully transform—unlike the brute my friend just killed."

"You want to achieve a complete human form, and for that, I can promise you this: if you form a contract with my sister, I will personally ensure you reach Tier 9 within three months."

On top of that, I'll teach you a method to attain a near-perfect human body once you break through," Klaus said, his expression deadly serious.

Inwardly, Klaus was conversing with the senior.

<Are you sure you can do that, senior?> Klaus asked.

[Are you doubting me, brat?] the senior retorted.

<No, it's just that I never expected there to be a method that can turn beasts into near-perfect humans. I only know of beasts taking human form after they become true beasts. Of course, their features still reveal they are beasts.

But claiming a near-perfect human form seems a bit much. As you know, I don't like making promises I can't keep.>

'But then I have Yuying's method that can turn her into a human, but she never permitted me to pass it on to another beast, ' Klaus thought.

The senior said he would teach Klaus a method that could transform Loewe, but the method seemed suspicious in Klaus's eyes.

It was different from what he knew.

[You don't know anything, brat. The universe is vast, and some things may not make sense to you but are common in the outside world. You just haven't encountered them yet.]

<I see. I will trust you on this, senior. Just don't screw me over. I know you've been pestering me to sneak back home so you can check up on Nadia; if you screw me over, I'll not only deny you access to Nadia, but I'll also find whatever hole you're hiding in and deal considerable damage to your old body,> Klaus threatened with a smirk.

Loewe looked back at Klaus. For a moment, she hesitated, but when she heard Hanna's words, her mind changed.

"Trust him, Loewe. He's the most trustworthy person I know. If you don't believe me, ask the others."

Loewe looked at Klaus's friends, who all nodded in agreement.

She pondered for a few minutes before nodding. Right now, she wanted nothing more than to become a true beast who could stand on her own two feet and make her own decisions.

This desire burned deep within her soul. After being forced into submission by a true beast many years ago to attack a human settlement—which ended badly for them—she had resolved to become a powerhouse herself.

If this human claimed he could help her, she would obey.

"I will accept the contract, however, I will stay here and will only be summoned when needed," Loewe instructed.

Klaus didn't immediately respond. A few moments later, he spoke up.

"If I find a way to bring the entire ThunderBerry Tree with me, would you then come with us?" Klaus asked. He knew the tree was the only thing keeping her there.

Loewe and his friends exchanged strange looks at his question.

They knew space rings couldn't hold living things, so how would he take an entire tree with him if that was the case? They certainly wanted to see how he could manage that.

"If you take the tree safely with you, I will indeed come with you all. But without the tree, I will stay here. If you don't like that, then we can fight. I'd rather die than leave the tree," Loewe said.

"Very well. I will take the tree with us. For now, let's form the contract," Klaus said before storing his sword away.

"Big sister, come," Hanna stepped forward and stopped in front of Klaus. Loewe was also gestured to step forward, which she did after some internal struggle.

Klaus started forming a hand seal, which took shape the next second. Two runes appeared and merged with their foreheads.

"Big sis, touch your blood to her forehead, and the contract will be formed." Hanna obeyed and placed her blood there.

The next second, the runes on their foreheads shone brighter, then dimmed. Hanna immediately felt a strong connection form between herself and Loewe.

Loewe felt it, too. "This... What did you do?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" Klaus responded.

"I can feel my strength grow by some degree when the contract was formed. How is that possible?" Loewe asked.

"Oh, that. It's just the kind of contract that was formed. It's not a slave seal, nor is it a strict master-servant contract. This one is called a Contract of Equals. Just as you can't betray Hanna, she also can't betray you.

Also, you will gain additional strength every time she levels up or breaks through. Of course, she will also gain the same from you.

But that isn't all. If she chooses to give you a name of her choosing, you both will gain an additional ten per cent boost to your stats," Klaus explained, leaving everyone dumbfounded.

"Give me a name, then," Loewe immediately turned to Hanna, who was already brainstorming a good name.

In the end, she picked a perfect one.

"I will call you Kathy, a short form for Kathrine. It was my mom's name, and now, you get to have it," Hanna said with a smile.

Her real mom was known as Kathrine. She loved her dearly, and since she was dead, Hanna used her name to gain strength. A very noble thing in her eyes.

Of course, it worked.

They both felt a wave of energy enter their bodies the moment Hanna named her. This made Klaus' other pals jealous.

"I also want a beast companion!" Anna immediately pouted.

"Me too," Lily seconded her demand.

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The guys also joined in.

"Don't worry, guys. We still have missions to do, so hold on for now. You will all get companions before we leave. Of course, I will be picking the companions, so if we don't find suitable ones here, we can look elsewhere."

"For now, we have to finish up here and go raid the domain of our dearly departed Ko. I would love to sink my teeth into some of his lightning apples," Klaus smiled, looking at the now dead tiger.

Chapter 494 - 494: Raiding Plans

After forming the contract, Hanna named her Kathy. Kathy felt powerful changes happening within her.

Her strength had increased by at least 30%, and she had gained a new skill that allowed her to wield her bone staff much more efficiently.

"Big Sister, you should ensure Kathy gets the resources she needs. And don't worry—when we return, I'll help you buy some of the items she'll need to break through. The sooner she becomes a Tier 9 Beast, the better it will be for all of us.

"Also, Kathy, I'll teach you how to cultivate a near-perfect human form once we return. And you must ensure no harm comes to my sister during her solo missions," Klaus instructed.

Both Kathy and Hanna nodded in agreement.

Hanna was thrilled to have a companion she could talk to and train with. For now, her focus was on ensuring both of them were happy.

On the other hand, Klaus wanted nothing more than to ensure his sister's everlasting happiness.

Daniel stepped forward and retrieved the Tier 9 beast core from Ko, the Razor Claw Storm Tiger, who hadn't had a chance to display his formidable abilities due to the overwhelming assault unleashed by Klaus and his friends.

"I can't believe you actually killed a Tier 9 Beast, Daniel," Mark said with a proud smile.

"You know what they say—awesome people tend to do awesome things. Don't be jealous, though. Soon, you'll be able to do awesome stuff like me," Daniel shamelessly bragged, causing his friends to look at him with disdain.

"Daniel's right. Awesome people tend to do awesome things. That's why, on our next mission, Danny, Kay, Kilian, and Mark, you'll be the ones to handle the fight," Klaus said, making his friends freeze in shock.

"That's not fair! This freeloader only got the chance because Anna set the stage for him," Kay protested.

"Nothing in war is fair or just, buddy. Daniel won this one. And as someone who believes in awesomeness, I have to say—you four are pretty useless at the moment. You might want to consider joining the awesome men's club soon."

Klaus placed a hand on Daniel's shoulder, giving him a proud pat to emphasize the moment.

He was proud of them. But that doesn't mean his friends are weak. No, they are strong, but he wanted to use Daniel's success to motivate the rest of the group.

"Here you go," Daniel said, handing the core to Anna. Since he had already received the experience points, all he could do was pass on the core.

"Thank you," Anna replied as she accepted the core. However, she knew she couldn't make much use of it. Her affinity for the ice and water elements meant the lightning core wouldn't offer a significant boost.

"Hanna, this core will be perfect for you. You should have it," Anna said, offering the core to Hanna.

"Are you sure? This is a Tier 9 core," Hanna replied, surprised.

"Yes. I don't have the right affinity for this core. You or Kathy will benefit from it the most," Anna said with a smile, handing the core to Hanna.

Anna, Hanna, Lily, and Daniel were all in the third stage of their core formation. Only the fourth stage remained before they could advance to the Saint stage.

If Hanna were to absorb this core, she would reach the fourth stage first among their group, giving her an edge to climb the ranks faster.

"Thank you, Anna," Hanna said, placing the core into her space ring. She glanced at Kathy and gave her a nod. In the blink of an eye, Kathy turned into a lightning bolt and vanished.

Moments later, she reappeared, holding ten cores. Three exuded ice Qi, three emitted fire Qi, and four radiated wind Qi.

"These are the cores from monsters that tried to infiltrate my domain. They are all Tier 8 beasts. Since you've given Sister Hanna the Tier 9 core, I will give these to you," Kathy said, presenting the cores to Anna.

"Thank you, Kathy," Anna replied, accepting the three ice cores after a quick nod from Hanna.

Because of the contract between Hanna and Kathy, they could now communicate telepathically. Kathy had informed Hanna about the cores after Anna handed over the Tier 9 core.

Lily received the four wind cores, while Kay and Kilian took the fire cores.

"You should use this opportunity to gather more cores. We'll sell them at the Academy shop for additional points. Once we enter the inner sections, things will get more intense, and I want you all to be ready," Klaus said before turning to Kathy.

"What can you tell us about the domain Ko came from?"

"It's similar to mine—a valley like this. However, unlike me, who guarded the ThunderBerry Tree alone, Ko had subordinates. Powerful ones."

"How strong are we talking?" Klaus asked.

"From what I know, he had one Tier 8, ten Tier 7, and twenty Tier 6 subordinates he relied on for most of his resources," Kathy explained.

"Thank you, Kathy. But before we move forward, let's take care of the ThunderBerry Tree," Klaus said, walking toward the tree.

"Big Sister, can you pluck the ripe fruits first?" Discover hidden tales at My Virtual Library Empire

Hanna nodded and carefully collected the ripe berries. Afterwards, Klaus contacted the senior.

<Senior, are you done setting up the space?> Klaus asked. The senior told him he could create a space within his soul sea to house the plant.

And since he had more than enough space to house a plant, the senior created a large enough space for more than twenty plants.

[Yes. You can transfer it there using the TPP,] the senior responded.

Klaus nodded and tapped into his Spirit Master talent. In an instant, the plant and a large portion of the surrounding soil rose into the air.

He moved it closer to himself, then snapped his fingers. The TPP appeared, opening a portal about six meters wide.

Klaus quickly placed the tree into the portal, and the next moment, it vanished from sight.

Inside his soul sea, a space resembling a self-contained world now held the plant, securely rooted in the rich soil. The area was saturated with dense Star Qi, nourishing the plant.

"It's all done," Klaus said with a satisfied smile.

"Big Sister, let's deal with the Lightning Apple Tree next. After that, I'll help you create a space for Kathy to stay in. For now, we'll move together."

They left the valley and headed toward Ko's domain, just two miles away from Kathy's territory.

Klaus knew that with Ko dead, it was only a matter of time before another overlord would arrive to claim the territory.

Allowing that to happen would be a waste. For now, he could only hope Ko's subordinates were unaware of their leader's death and hadn't destroyed the tree.

If that were to happen, it would truly be a loss.

"Danny, Kilian, Mark, and Kay, you'll handle the Tier 8 beast. Use this chance to take a bold step toward the Awesome Men Club," Klaus said with a smirk.

After moving for twenty minutes, they arrived at Ko's domain, which held a green plant with dozens of Lightning apples hanging on it.

Chapter 495 - 495: Raiding Ko's Domain

When Klaus and his friends arrived at the valley that once belonged to Ko, the Razor Claw Storm Tiger, they were greeted with a serene view.

Klaus quickly scanned the area to confirm the number of monsters they would face.

"It looks like your data was spot on, Kathy. There are indeed one Tier 8, ten Tier 7, and twenty Tier 6 creatures here," Klaus said, flashing a charming smile at Kathy, who stood beside Hanna.

At the moment, Kathy didn't want to leave Hanna's side. The reason was clear—she believed sticking with the blue-haired beauty would lead her to what she desired.

She might have reconsidered if she knew the dangers awaiting her in the coming weeks. But there's no room for regret when pursuing power; she could only blame herself for what was to come.

"Danny, Kilian, Mark, and Kay will handle the Tier 8 beast. And before you protest, know this: no matter what happens, none of us will step in to save you. So, don't die," Klaus said, addressing his four male friends, whose faces were etched with concern.

Thanks to their rigorous training, they were all Tier 4 fighters who could easily take down Tier 5 and Tier 6 monsters. They could handle a Tier 7 opponent—even multiple Tier 7s when banded together as a team.

However, Tier 8 was an entirely different challenge. Facing it without Klaus's help sounded like a dangerous gamble, and the weight of that responsibility was not lost on them.

But Klaus wasn't concerned about that. He planned to swoop in at the last second to save them, but for now, he wanted to instill fearlessness in the face of Tier 8 monsters—and beyond.

It was one of the reasons he made them take on high-level missions. Since they would inevitably face dangerous monsters sooner or later, it was better to start now.

"Lily, Hanna, Kathy, and Daniel will handle the Tier 7 monsters. The same rules apply to you. Nobody will save you," Klaus said with a faint smile. He knew Kathy wouldn't let any real harm come to them.

After all, she was a Tier 8 beast herself.

"Anna and I will take care of the twenty Tier 6 monsters," Klaus added, assigning the roles before gesturing for everyone to move forward.

Soon, their presence was noticed. The monsters charged in their direction, led by a Dark Horn Panther towering over two meters tall.

"What are you doing here, Loewe?" the panther growled, glaring menacingly at Kathy. "Have you forgotten the agreement? If Lord Ko hears you attacked while he's away, you'll be as good as dead."

"Don't worry, Ko is dead, and you're next," Kathy replied coolly. But before the panther could respond, Kay attacked.

"Flame Barrage!" A single arrow flew from his bow, but over a dozen fiery arrows struck the panther, who instantly activated a defensive barrier.

"You dare—" The panther's words were cut short as Kilian attacked.

"Fire Beam!" A blazing beam of fire struck the panther, isolating it from the horde of monsters behind it.

"Well, ladies, good luck," Klaus said, gesturing forward before activating the Demon Killing Circle around the twenty Tier 6 monsters.

He held Anna by the waist, and before she could even register the motion, they had moved and appeared inside the circle.

Lily, Hanna, Daniel, and Kathy sprang into action, unleashing their attacks on the Tier 7 monsters.

"Kilian, you and Mark should take the vanguard. I will help create a distraction for Danny to strike," Kay instructed, swiftly forming the most effective battle plan.

Kilian wielded his sword and Mark his spear.

With their combined efforts "poking the bear," Kay could use his arrows to create chaos, setting up opportunities for killing blows. Success depended on how well they distracted and stalled the panther.

Danny, their powerhouse and brute force, was their ace, and the plan hinged on his ability to deliver the decisive strike.

Kay circled the panther, losing arrow after arrow aimed at its head. Kilian followed up with rapid attacks, sending arcs of fire that served their purpose—keeping the beast distracted.

"Earth Spikes!" The panther roared, stomping the ground hard. Jagged spikes erupted from the earth, shooting toward the four bugs blocking its path to its true target—the bird lady.

"Spear Enhancer!" Mark activated the spear skill Klaus had given him, boosting his speed by 30%. The spikes aimed at his friends were destroyed before they could get within a meter of them.

"Cloning Sword Strike!" Kilian activated his skill, and two clones appeared, rushing toward the panther caught off guard.

When the clones approached, they attacked the panther from the left. Meanwhile, Kilian leaped toward the right, striking the beast squarely, unleashing a Fire Beam. The panther was sent flying backward.

"Good one, Kilian. Now, Mark, overwhelm it and aim for its head," Kay commanded as he moved in circles, firing arrows with precision.

Meanwhile, Danny crept closer, keeping his presence concealed, preparing for a single, decisive sneak attack.

"Looks like they're doing better than I expected," Klaus remarked, glancing toward his four male friends locked in battle.

"Look at you, worried about them yet pretending you're not," Anna said, her voice laced with amusement.

She used [Ice Chains] to bind the Tier 6 monsters trapped within Klaus's slaughter aura, following up with [Ice Spear] to finish them off.

The two stood calmly as the affected monsters struggled to resist or flee, but Anna ensured they couldn't escape her icy grip.

"I just need them to grow stronger and do it faster. When we enter the Inner Section, we will be sent to the Badlands, where the dangerous monsters and beasts reside. I don't want them to lose their willpower there.

From what your sister told me, that place is no joke. I will use that place to train you guys into the dangerous monsters I know you all are. But to do that, you must know fear and embrace it." Klaus said.

"We will make sure we don't slack off then," Anna replied as three Ice Spears shot through three Tier 6 monsters, killing them instantly.

"Oh, I know. I will make sure none of you slack off. After all, when we go back, I won't allow you any rest," Klaus said, giving her ass a gentle squeeze.

Anna blushed, losing control of three monsters, but Klaus snapped his fingers, sending ice spikes through them.

Since Anna and Lily were waiting to reunite with their third member, Asha, Klaus knew they would soon feel the effects of the Star Qi coursing through them.

In fact, the unease creeping into his mind and the discovery that humans aren't the strongest on Earth made him more determined to claim the rest of his ladies completely.

This way, just like how his Star Qi was strengthening Lucy, Miriam, and Oheme, Anna and Lily would grow stronger too.

He wanted to dedicate an entire week solely to attending to them, but thanks to a certain redhead, he had to put his plans on hold—for now.

Meanwhile, Hanna, Kathy, Lily, and Daniel were locked in combat with Tier 7 monsters in another part of the battlefield.

They had already slain five out of the ten foes, but the battle, while nearing its conclusion, was far from over.

Chapter 496 - 496: Killing The Panther

"It looks like they might actually be able to handle the monster," Lily commented, watching as Kay and the others clashed with the beast.

They are done killing the Tier 7 monsters and now watch the raging battle a few kilometers from them.

It had already been thirty minutes since the battle began. Kilian was cut on the arm and bleeding, Mark had bruises on his arm and face from a nasty fall, and Kay was bleeding from the nose.

Only Danny seemed unscathed, largely because he had barely engaged in the fight.

The panther, however, was also badly injured. A deep cut on its neck marked the aftermath of a vicious attack Danny had landed just a few minutes ago.

Danny wasn't as active as Kilian, Mark, and Kay, but he was carefully preparing for a decisive strike. His opportunities so far were too risky, leaving him unable to use his technique effectively.

Despite everything, they were holding on.

"Kay is actually good at controlling the battlefield, but Mark needs to become much faster to run interference during attacks effectively," Klaus remarked, assessing the situation. "His speed is crucial, but he's not yet at the level where he can fully use it to his advantage."

"But this is also good. He seems to be prioritizing both strength and speed from the start. With the cultivation technique I gave him, he can walk down that path without hindrance.

I just hope he doesn't become lazy and slack off along the line," Klaus added.

"Don't worry, Klaus. We all take your teachings seriously; he won't stop even if his soul tells him to," Anna said, making Klaus nod with his shoulders high.

"Well then. Since I am something akin to your master, you all should know I aim to make you defenders of the Earth. No slacking off," he commanded in a tone befitting a master speaking to his disciples.

"Tsk. No need to be shameless about it," Hanna retorted, returning her attention to the battle.

Klaus just smiled at her antics and placed both hands on Lily and Anna's shoulders as they watched the fight.

Daniel stood much closer to the battleground, itching to join the clash and unleash some Hammer Arts. But alas, he wouldn't get the chance today.

"Danny, get ready!" Kay shouted.

"Kilian, Mark, use your techniques and retreat!" he instructed before activating his own technique.

He wasn't about to use his ultimate skill just yet, considering it might backfire. He needed to save that for a just-in-case situation.

"Lion Roar Piercer!" Kay unleashed a powerful flame arrow that immediately transformed into a huge lion's head with a long, pointy horn.

The arrow roared and struck the panther's body, which was just a moment too slow to raise its earth-wall defense.

"Infinity Spear Art. First Form: Strike-Through!" A spear light flashed forward and pierced the panther's body, sending it flying back. Mark gasped for breath as he retreated.

"One Flame Transcendence Sword Art" Kilian joined in, "First Form: Void Cutter!" A red sword light flashed out from Kilian's blade, vanishing instantly before reappearing at the tiger's belly mid-air.

The attack landed deep, cutting a vicious wound. But that wasn't what killed it.

Standing on the other side of the battle, Danny roared and unleashed his long-awaited axe strike.

"World-Breaking Axe. First Form: Giant Axe Form!"

A giant axe appeared in the air and, like a meteor falling, slammed into the panther's body, cutting deep into its neck.

"Eat this!" Danny shouted again, channeling his remaining strength into the axe. He landed another blow on the neck, severing the head completely.

"Yes!" Danny punched the air in triumph before collapsing onto his back, exhausted.

Kilian and Mark were also on the ground, struggling to catch their breath. The only one still standing was Kay, who had just enough energy left for his ultimate attack.

Had Danny failed to kill the panther, Kay was prepared to finish it off. Since he had chosen to lead the battle, he was responsible for seeing it through to the end.

Fortunately, his three teammates had managed to bring their opponent down.

"Good job, everyone. You four have proven you have what it takes to join the Awesome Men Club," Klaus said, patting Kay on the shoulder.

For now, he decided not to address their shortcomings during the battle. There were many things they could have done to make the fight easier, but that conversation would come later.

He would correct them once they had calmed down and cleared their minds of fatigue.

"Mark, you can go for the core. I'm sure one of your ladies would love to have it," Klaus said, nodding toward Mark.

Mark nodded in return. He and the Zhou twins had grown much closer recently, even reaching the next level in their relationship, so Klaus wanted what was best for him.

"Don't worry; I'm sure we'll gather more earth cores by the end of this mission, so you won't have to pick between them," Klaus added with a grin.

"Okay," Mark replied, a faint smile forming as he pushed himself up.

Klaus then moved toward the Lightning Apple Tree, plucking one directly from the branch and sending it to his lips.

He bit into it, and immediately, he felt his lightning energy surge, dancing out of his body and startling his friends.

"Good stuff," Klaus nodded, taking another bite.

He plucked two more and handed them to Hanna and Kathy. The two exchanged a glance before taking a bite. Just like Klaus, their energies surged, filling them with newfound strength.

"According to the tracker, this fruit sells for 10,000 Celestial points each," Anna said, glancing at her academy tracker.

"Then we're rich," Kay grinned. "I count more than six dozen apples. With this, along with the ThunderBerries, I'd say we've struck gold." He quickly made the calculations, causing his friends to grin from ear to ear.

"That's the plan. We need all the money we can get, but for now, we must complete our mission within the next two weeks," Klaus said.

Since they took on high-level missions, they were bound to face the dangers that came with them. Luckily, they would earn extra points from selling the monster cores and the Fruit.

"Hanna, let me help you form the space for Kathy. We'll rest for the day, then start fresh tomorrow to continue with the rest of the missions."

The next few hours were spent resting and absorbing monster cores. Klaus wanted everyone at their peak for the remaining missions.

Once the team missions were over, he planned to split the teams in two while he would go solo for their individual missions.

Of course, since nobody was monitoring them, they could team up for their solo missions, but Klaus wanted them to do it individually.

He also planned to have them undergo rigorous training after completing the missions before returning to the academy.

The next day, they were ready to continue their missions. Klaus led them to the next location, where they needed an elephant's tusk.

In fact, three of their missions involved obtaining the tusk of the Diamond Body Brute Elephant, a Tier 8 monster that could rival Ko, the Tier 9 beast they had killed.

And so, their day was set to be a dangerous one.

Chapter 497 - 497: Blood and Iron (1)

Boom

An explosion rocked the forest, shaking the trees and the ground.

"Fuck you, brute! Eat my hammer!" Daniel screamed as he dashed at the three-meter-tall elephant, its diamond-like body radiating a chilling ice aura.

"World-Breaking Hammer!" Daniel roared, leaping six meters into the air. His hammer enlarged mid-flight before crashing down with immense force onto the elephant's body.

Instead of being smashed into a pulp, the elephant was merely pushed back three meters, while Daniel was sent flying twenty meters away.

His face was streaked with blood, and his armor was torn in several places.

"Are you okay?" Kay called out, losing a volley of fire arrows at another elephant, this one exuding a sinister aura of darkness.

"I am fine," Daniel said before charging again at the Elephant with the ice element where Anna was doing her best to hold back with her Ice Rhinos and now an Ice Lion.

Kay got back to raining flame arrows on the other elephant with the Darkness Element.

The presence of this dark-element elephant was particularly menacing, as its diamond body shimmered ominously under the dark energy.

Yet, Kay's arrows kept it at bay, preventing it from advancing further.

The battlefield was littered with the bodies of dead monsters and half-beasts, a grim testament to the terrifying battle that had unfolded there.

For now, the only remaining adversaries were the [Diamond Body Brute Elephants], a special race of monsters. They are locked in combat with Klaus's team, who seem to be holding on by a thread—Klaus included.

They are all injured in different places.

You're probably wondering how they ended up in this situation. Don't worry; I'll tell you.

It all began seven days ago after Mark, Danny, Kay, and Kilian teamed up to kill the Dark Horn Panther.

Klaus's team went after their next team mission: obtaining three tusks from Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephants.

That, of course, was the plan. They were only required to kill two Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephants and extract their tusks.

However, things took a turn when, while searching for the Brutes, they stumbled upon rare information from a half-beast on the brink of death.

Kathy recognized the beast, and after a brief discussion, she extracted the information from him just before he passed away.

This forced Klaus and his team to alter their plans.

The new strategy was for each member to complete their individual missions first. Klaus deemed the information they had received from the irritating half-beast monkey to be of greater importance.

Thus, they shifted focus. Danny, Daniel, and Lily were the first to tackle their tasks, which required them to hunt ice-type monsters and extract their cores.

After a day of relentless effort, the three killed Tier 7 ice-type monsters single-handedly. The battles were grueling, and they would have failed if left to face them alone.

Fortunately, Klaus was there to guide them, offering strategic instructions that turned the tide and ensured their victories.

Anna, Daniel, Kay, and Mark were the second group to go the next day, dedicating an entire day to hunting down their respective targets.

Daniel and Kay were tasked with hunting Tier 7 fire-type monsters to extract their cores. Anna and Mark, on the other hand, chose the same mission, which required them to extract the legs of Poison Scorpion Spiders.

Klaus used 5% of his aura to suppress the monsters for their battle, enabling Anna and Mark to bring them down after a prolonged and intense fight.

Thankfully, they emerged victorious.

Mark had taken on two missions, each requiring him to extract two legs, while Anna successfully extracted six legs. Luckily, the spider had six legs to spare, leaving Mark with extras to sell for some celestial points.

On the third day, Hanna set out for her mission. She completed her battles with relative ease thanks to Kathy, her beast companion.

Hanna was tasked to hunt Tier 7 monsters, but with a Tier 8 beast companion boasting overpowered stats, the battles were straightforward for her.

Klaus followed next, spending two days personally hunting five Tier 8 monsters. Four of them fell quickly and easily, but when he encountered the fifth, an earth-elemental monster, he had to bring out all his strength.

After a grueling 50-minute fight, the mighty Klaus finally brought down the Tier 8 monster Earth Bear.

The feat left him and his friends awestruck, serving as a stark reminder that not all books can be judged by their covers.

He could kill a Tier 8 Purple Tail Lion in under 10 minutes but struggled for 50 minutes before finally defeating an Earth Bear.

At that moment, they realized just how challenging their team mission would be. It was going to be far more difficult than they had anticipated.

Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephants are monsters, most of which are Earth-type. However, even a Level 5 Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephant could contend with a Peak Tier 9 Earth Bear.

Klaus and his pals knew they were in for an exceptionally dangerous battle. Nevertheless, they had to set their fears aside and follow up on the information they had received.

That was why, on the sixth day, Klaus and his friends moved westward. According to the Annoying Monkey's intel, a Tier 9 beast had discovered a Phoenix Flamefruit plant and a fierce battle was already underway.

Although they might arrive late to the scene, Kathy reminded Klaus that whenever a plant of that caliber appeared, it would take seven days before anyone could safely approach it.

Because of this, they decided to complete their individual missions first, hoping to get lucky before starting their team missions.

The Phoenix Flamefruit is an incredibly rare fruit with overwhelming abilities. According to the academy tracker, it grants a single life revival upon death if consumed within 24 hours before the event.

Additionally, if a fire-element user consumes it, their chances of awakening their fire element rise to 99%. Even being near the fruit significantly speeds up healing.

A Sage and others can also consume it.

While that was impressive enough, their greed surfaced when they saw the price of a single Phoenix Flamefruit.

One fruit cost ten million Celestial Points. Because of this, Klaus and his friends decided to pursue it. Through true blood and iron, they were determined to claim the plant—full of priceless fruit.

Unfortunately for them, Klaus's bad Karma was so bad that they indeed saw the plant with over a dozen Phoenix Flamefruit hanging on its branch when they arrived.

But things didn't go as planned.

A battle between monsters and beasts was also underway, with hundreds of dead monsters and beasts. Klaus used the Void Piercing Needles to control the battle, and after 5 hours, the last monster fell.

Klaus's 7th core was also formed.

Then, on the 7th day, when the barrier came down, they moved forward, but that was when their nightmare began.

It appeared they weren't the only ones hiding in wait for the barrier to come down.

A Tier 9 Diamond Body Brute Elephant with the Earth Element was hiding his force in the ground. So when Klaus and his pals made their move, they also appeared.

To save his friends, Klaus immediately used the Demon Killing Circle to trap the Tier 9 beast and two Peak Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephant Beast.

Thus, the battle for survival and who gets to take the Phoenix Flamefruit began.

Chapter 498 - 498: Blood and Iron (2)

"Moon Slash."

A fiery crescent moon arc flashed out from Klaus's sword, streaking straight for the head of a Peak Tier 8 Diamond Body Brute Elephant. However, a block of earth materialized and shielded it from the attack.

"You don't have what it takes to kill us humans. Trapping us won't change anything. Just look at your friends, and you'll understand," said Rory, the Tier 9 Diamond Body Brute Elephant.

Klaus turned to glance at his friends—and, well, they all looked like hell. The battle was clearly not going in their favor. Yet he wasn't worried.

Though they weren't doing great, they weren't losing either. Klaus just fervently hoped no more monsters or beasts would show up.

Any additions to the brutes would make things significantly harder.

"Think about yourself first. When I'm done, you'll be the one lying dead." Klaus surged forward and resumed his assault. Unfortunately for him, the Tier 9 elephant was an earth-type beast, while the Tier 8 half-beasts were Fire and Ice types.

This meant that both their offence and defence were superior to his. With the Tier 9 elephant reinforcing the defences of the Tier 8 half-beasts, the fight was becoming increasingly unfavourable for him.

"Damn it," Klaus cursed as he dodged a flame attack—only to get struck by a massive boulder made of earth.

"Eat my axe, dummy!" Danny charged at a Tier 8 Fire-type Diamond Body Brute Elephant, his axe enlarged to three times its normal size.

Mark sent wind arcs from his spear at the same elephant, ensuring it couldn't defend against Danny's attack.

Meanwhile, Lily ran interference around the other Tier 8 elephant, hoping her teammates, Danny and Kay, could take down their target.

Blood and cuts painted parts of her body from the earth spears the Tier 8 elephant fired at her as she blocked its advances. She was injured in more than one place.

She, Danny, and Kay were battling two Tier 8 half-beasts, hoping to kill them and assist the others. However, they weren't the only ones fighting beasts far above their level.

Anna, Daniel, and Kay faced a similar challenge.

Fortunately, Klaus gave Anna the ice Lotus Flower with all three abilities activated. This allowed Anna to hold back one Tier 8 beast while Daniel and Kay focused on killing the other.

Conversely, Kilian clashed with a Tier 7 Diamond Body Brute Elephant that wielded the wind element. Kilian has the fire element, a very powerful element, but that doesn't mean he was having it easy.

Luckily for him, it was only a Tier 7 monster. Despite its wind element, its colossal size limited its speed.

However, he couldn't get close to it. Three meters of the beast's body had turned into a vortex, creating razor-sharp air blades around it.

Fortunately, Kilian was a fire-element swordsman, enabling him to launch long-range attacks. Though only a few connected, he was pulling his weight to kill it as fast as he could.

Hanna and Kathy were also engaged in battle with three targets—two Tier 8 beasts and one Peak Tier 7. Hanna faced off against one of the Tier 8s, while Kathy, her beast companion, held back the other Tier 8 along with the Tier 7.

The two fought fiercely, knowing any delay could spell disaster.

"Fire Beam!" Kilian unleashed a beam of fire from his sword, carving a path through the wind vortex the monster had created.

In the next moment, two copies of Kilian closed in, stabbing their swords into the monster's head and belly. The beast used its tusk to retaliate, impaling one of the clones.

But that was all it managed before the other clone drove its sword halfway into the creature's body.

"Fire Beam!" Kilian shouted, jumping into the remaining clone. A powerful beam erupted from his sword, blasting through the monster and tearing a chunk from its body. The force sent the beast flying several meters.

"Gasp!"

Kilian, with his body riddled with dozens of cuts, struggled for breath but charged at the monster as it tried to rise.

"Flame Cut!" Though his voice was strained with pain, he swung his sword, carving a deep wound into the elephant's head.

He followed up with five more strikes, each more forceful than the last, until the elephant fell for the final time. Kilian had killed the beast, but at a steep price—his arms and body were covered in cuts, blood pouring from his wounds.

"Kilian, go to Anna! The flower will speed up your healing!" Klaus shouted as he blocked an ice attack from another elephant.

Kilian nodded and moved into the domain created by the Ice Lotus. He had calculated the risk of his assault, knowing he would be injured, but the extent of his wounds had exceeded his expectations.

Fortunately, Klaus had given the Lotus to Anna before the battle, and she had already activated it. The rest depended on Klaus Star Qi, which, for the moment, he wasn't concerned about.

"One of your minions is dead; now watch how the others fall too," Klaus sneered as he executed a series of attacks before using the vanishing steps to appear behind the Tier 9 beast.

However, he had to abandon his attack and block an earth boulder aimed directly at his head.

[Brat, you can try an air assault,] the senior suggested, knowing the current Klaus had no business going against a Peak Transcendent.

In fact, Klaus must be applauded for holding his ground against a Peak Transcendent and two Peak Sovereigns. A very commendable feat. But that was all he was doing—blocking them.

Had none of his opponents been Earth-type beasts, he might have had some chance to kill one of them at least.

But the Tier 9 beast, who had taken a demi-human form, was making things rather difficult for him.

'Taking to the air will do no good, senior. That bastard is very good at defence. My attacks aren't doing anything. Even if I use the [Asura Crazy Sword Strike] and [Dragon Slash], I still wouldn't gain the advantage.'

'I know my limits, senior, but I also know that even if there were two Tier 9 and five Tier 8 beasts, I still wouldn't hesitate to trap them. I am that crazy.'

[Indeed, you are much crazier than I thought. You had an 80% chance to escape with your friends, but you chose to stay. Why?] the senior asked.

Indeed, just when the elephants emerged from the ground, Klaus detected them and could have escaped with his pals, but he chose to stay and fight.

'A part of it is greed, senior. I can't leave that tree, but another part is to turn them into demon generals. Look at them; they're tapping into their hidden potential to overcome the odds.'

Klaus smiled, using his senses to watch the battle unfold.

Naturally, all his Spirit Weapons were hidden across the battlefield, which he planned to use to save them if it came to that.

In other words, while the elephants had the upper hand, Klaus wasn't worried. The elephants were stronger, but he also had his own strength—and that would soon form when his friends somehow managed to take down two Tier 8 elephants.

"Here I come again. Mountain Cleaving Slash..."

Chapter 499 - 499: Blood and Iron (3)

"Mountain Cleaving Slash!" Danny raised his axe with full force as Mark moved in to distract the elephant.

"Die, motherf*cker!" Danny's axe slammed into the head of the Tier 8 elephant, cutting a deep wound. Blood gushed out, spraying all over him. He was both in blood, taking the form of a gladiator.

The bastard looks scary.

"Hahahahah... Is this how it feels like to be a Gladiator?" Danny laughed loudly, his voice carrying a power none of his friends expected.

They all felt it—a surge of energy, as though their bodies were being filled with an otherworldly strength from his shout, Klaus included. This brought a small smile to Klaus's lips. It seems Danny's light element has more mysteries to it.

"Spear Enhancer!" Mark wasted no time and activated his ability, boosting his speed by 30 per cent.

"Spear Thrust!" He moved like the wind, unleashing dozens of thrusts at the elephant. Despite its overwhelmingly hard body, his strikes were so sharp that countless wounds appeared, draining 80% of its life force.

"Eat my axe again!" Danny, bathed in blood but having the time of his life, charged forward once more. This time, his body glowed with a yellow light, filling him with renewed strength.

"Overwhelming Axe Strike!" The axe struck again, and this time, the wound was far deeper, causing the elephant to falter.

"Spear Thrust!" Kilian exclaimed, finishing his move. After a few precise thrusts, the first Tier 8 monster fell to the ground.

"That's what I'm talking about!" Danny shouted, grinning from ear to ear.

"Hey, brute, go help Lily. I'll help Kathy," Mark said before dashing off. He appeared before the Tier 7 monsters, relieving Kathy so she could focus on the Tier 8.

Hanna was holding her ground just fine—no wounds, no cuts. Kay was in the same state, and Anna was also keeping up.

Of course, the three are not hurt mainly because they are not fighting in close combat. Thanks to their cautious fighting style, getting injured wasn't a concern for them.

"Lightning Burst!" Hanna shouted as her arrow exploded in front of the Tier 8 monster she faced. The explosion momentarily blinded it, allowing her to strike again.

"Exploding Bolt Piercer!" she unleashed another powerful attack.

Unfortunately, the monster countered by channelling its fire energy to defend itself before unleashing a wave of fire at Hanna. She dodged nimbly, then resumed firing lightning arrows while searching for another opening.

"Anna, try using a spell to restrict it for a second! I just need one second!" Kilian called out, recovering inside the ice domain and preparing to act as soon as Anna created an opening.

Meanwhile, Klaus was locked in a fierce clash with a Tier 9 and two Tier 8 brutes, neither side gaining the upper hand.

"Mr. Rory, just you wait. The moment my friends take down another one of your goons, I'll kill your brute buddies and then beat the crap out of you. Trust me when I make a promise," Klaus said teasingly.

"Your bragging rights are, without a doubt, one of the best, human," the Tier 9 elephant snorted through its rather large nose.

It was to be expected—after all, it was an elephant in demi-human form. While its head resembled a human's, the enormous nose gave him away.

It sounded and looked weird to see and hear a monster talk.

"Don't worry; I'll show you real pain and suffering," Klaus replied before leaping back to evade a tusk thrust from one of the Tier 8 monsters.

'Senior, why can't we tame this brute?' Klaus asked.

[That's because this brute is a Transcendent. It means it has formed its own law of self or, in the process, too. In other words, this brute has gained recognition from the heavens, making it something that can't be tamed by the current you.]

To have a shot, you must first become a Saint, which none of you are at that stage just yet.]

'Law of self? What is that?' Klaus asked.

Queenie had mentioned it before and provided some explanation, but he figured a new perspective couldn't hurt.

[It's more like the path one chooses to walk. In the case of your Asura lady, she chose the path of blood, war, and carnage. So, her strength will continue to rise in battles where blood is flowing.

In the case of this brute, his law of self seems to be tied to defence. You've noticed that you never seem to gain the upper hand, no matter how you attack him and his companions. His law of self revolves around defence.

This means that until you have the recognition of a Saint, trying to form a contract with him will backfire. That's how the heavens have designed it.

So, you can either kill it or let it go.]

'I see. I guess Danny won't be getting lucky this time. But there will be other chances in the future,' Klaus sighed, then continued to wait for his friends to take down another brute.

This would allow him to reclaim his Spirit Weapons. Since he didn't have time to use his two most powerful attacks due to the lack of an opening, he could only wait to create one himself.

He had wanted to tame the Tier Nine Brute for Danny, but as it stands now, that wouldn't be happening. Unluckily for them, despite the Tier 8 being half-beasts, they were still dummies.

This meant having brutes with no brains wouldn't do his pal any good. 'So, I can only wait for a better opportunity in the future,' he thought.

Back to his friends, with Mark taking the Tier 7 brute out of Kathy's hands, she started gaining the advantage over the Tier 8 brute she was now facing.

Danny and Lily also gained the upper hand. Lily's speed was being used to her advantage, making her an annoying insect to the brute, who failed to notice another brute timing it for a powerful axe attack.

"Kilian, get ready. I'll create an opening—make it count," Anna said, summoning five Ice Rhinos at once.

The rhinos charged at the brute, who immediately unleashed a wave of ice, destroying them instantly.

"Shit," Anna cursed. "Hold on for now. I'll look for another chance." Thankfully, Anna was under the ice domain, so her energy was recovering much faster.

"Daniel, I don't think this brute is taking us seriously," Kay said, looking at the 3-meter-tall elephant bathed in dark energy.

"I know, right? All my attacks are being nullified before they can deal any real damage," Danny responded, frustration painting his face.

"Let's keep holding it back. I don't think it can continue doing that for long—it has to have a limit," Kay said, firing barrages of arrows at the brute.

It was their first time facing a darkness-type monster, so they failed to understand the strongest trait of all darkness-type monsters:

They don't fear brute attacks.

Most dark elements can cancel such attacks. The only thing that can kill them is soul attacks or, well, if the brute attacks far surpass their limit.

Of course, if it runs out of energy, things can be hammered.

But that was a big "if." After all, a darkness-element beast has high stamina—something that allows them to stay in a fight for hours.

"I am on fire today. Mountain Cleaving Strike!"

Chapter 500 - 500: Blood and Iron (4)

"Mountain Cleaving Strike!" Danny jumped high into the air, rising 7 meters off the ground before crashing down hard on the monster, which was distracted by Lily.

"KO, motherf*cker!" Danny's axe dug deep into the elephant's head, killing it instantly. Brain matter gushed out, along with blood that further drenched Danny's body.

"Nice one, Danny. Remind me to talk to your old woman about letting you have more than one girlfriends," Klaus shouted from inside the demon-killing circle.

Right now, he was immensely proud of his brute friend, who had killed one and created an opening to take down another Tier 8 brute elephant.

"I'd like that, Klaus," Danny grinned, turning toward his brother Daniel, who was hammering away at the Darkness-type elephant.

"I'll go help him; you go assist Mark," Danny said to Lily before charging in Daniel's direction.

"What a brute," Lily murmured with a slight smile before dashing toward the Tier 7 brute Mark was clashing against.

Hanna was close to finishing off her opponent, and Kathy was nearly there as well. With Lily joining Mark, the Tier 7 brute wouldn't last much longer.

Meanwhile, Anna and Kilian were steadily making progress, waiting for the right moment to strike a fatal blow.

Danny, Daniel, and Kay continued hammering, shooting, and axing at the Darkness-type Brute elephant while Klaus battled fiercely against his three opponents.

Far from the battlefield, atop a mountain, Old Lu, the dean of the academy, and Nari, the fire queen Overlord, were looking at the battlefield with calm expressions.

"It seems these kids are more monstrous than I thought," Old Lu said, looking at how Klaus and his pals were battling the Brute Elephants.

It was, without a doubt, a sight to behold.

A few days ago, after Klaus and his friends left for their mission, Nari followed them. Old Lu, who had also been watching Klaus the past few days before they left, followed her.

He knew what Nari was trying to do, so he came to ensure she didn't disrupt Klaus and his friends' mission.

Thankfully, she seemed to have just come to observe. However, when Klaus and his friends jumped into the ambush, Nari nearly jumped in to help them. Thankfully, Old Lu held her back.

"Of course, Klaus is my brother after all. I know he can handle this, brutes," Nari smiled cutely.

Old Lu looked at her strangely before speaking. "You seem different, Nari. You look more emotional in a way. Aren't you always emotionless?" Old Lu asked.

"I am not emotionally okay. I just don't want that white-haired bastard to die," Nari said, clenching her fist.

Old Lu smirked, looking at her expression. 'She has emotions, but she doesn't know they are emotions. How weird,' he thought inwardly, turning back to the battlefield.

He rubs his bald head, looking at the miracle created through Blood and Iron by Klaus and his pals.

"But I can't believe these kids managed to find Phoenix Flamefruits. They are very lucky," Old Lu commented.

"Don't even think about taking it from them, Old Lu. I will roast you alive if you have any funny ideas," Nari said before sending a piercing fire arrow from the tip of her finger.

Kilometres away from the battlefield, a Tier 9 wolf was pierced through the head, dying instantly. While Nari wasn't joining the battle, she was also not allowing others to interfere.

Old Lu could only shake his head and hope Klaus would give him one Phoenix Flamefruit after acquiring them.

Back inside the demon-killing circle, Klaus laughed and then sneered at the three brutes he was clashing against.

"Gentlemen, now that my friends are out of danger, it's time for me to get serious." Klaus smiled again. Suddenly, all his spirit weapons appeared behind him.

The two Void Piercing Needles appeared. The Crescent Disc also materialized along with the Razor Disc. They all hovered behind him, making his grin widen.

He looked toward the Tier Nine Brute and sneered again.

"Be thankful, brute. I will be dedicating an entire core for you alone," Klaus's eyes flared red, sending a wave of mental attack that caused the Tier 9 brute to lose focus for a split second.

But that was all it took for Klaus to make his move.

"Bell of Harrows; Divine Bell." The bell fell on Rory, who was immediately enclosed inside of it. Klaus's core surged, and Star Qi poured into it.

Bang.

Rory attacked the bell. However, that was his mistake. A wave of soul and sonic attack hit back at him, sending a wave of pain that reached deep into his mind and soul.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Klaus laughed before turning to the Tier 8s, who were about to experience a world of pain.

The Void-piercing Needles shot forward and began attacking. The Crescent Disc and Razor Disc also joined the fray, making Klaus's smile widen yet again.

Now, all he had to do was stand and wait for an opening. This, of course, didn't take long since the four spirit weapons were moving so fast that the two couldn't handle it without their boss raising defence around them.

"Dragon arm guard." Klaus activated his arm guard, making his sword tremble in delight.

"Dragon slash." Fire surged into his sword before taking a powerful swing that immediately unleashed a fire dragon, which slammed into the Fire-type half-beast.

Its body was scorching hot from just that one attack.

"This attack will be perfect for dealing with hordes of monsters," Klaus muttered before switching to Moon Slash. He immediately sent an arc of cracking lightning that pushed the half-beast many meters away.

"Vanishing Steps."

Klaus vanished, and in the next second, he was in front of the Fire-type half-beast. He tapped its body, and then, like injecting energy into a person, Klaus injected a wave of ice that immediately started reacting with the monster's internal heat.

Klaus quickly moved back several meters.

"Hey Rory, do you know what happens when fire and ice mix?" Klaus asked, looking smug at the Tier 9 beast, who was helpless inside the bell.

"I will tell you. When fire and ice meet, something called a boom happens. Something like this," Klaus looked at the half-beast and muttered.

"Boom."

The monster's belly exploded, sending its organs and blood all over.

"Bastard!" Rory shouted as he smashed the bell, but that was yet another mistake. The sonic and soul energy struck him yet again, making him wince.

But, a crack appeared in the bell. However, even if it turns to his beast's form, the bell will enlarge and occupy it.

So he was safe to keep exploding the belly of the Tier 8 Brutes.

With his affinity for fire and ice, he gained complete control over the monster's body when his ice mixed with the fire. The rest was just pushing it to explode.

"Your turn," Klaus looked at the Tier 8 Ice-type half-beast and said. Suddenly, his body started radiating intense heat.

"Don't worry; you will also explode. But whether we do it the hard way or the easy way, that will be your choice," Klaus muttered coldly before unleashing a fire arc at the monster riddled with wounds from Klaus' spirit weapons.

The attack landed squarely, sending the beast flying back. The next second, another attack struck its body, sending it even further.

Then Klaus moved and injected the fire into its body before stepping back. He stared at Rory and mouthed,

"Boom."