

Paragon 531

Chapter 531 - 531: Flame Berserk Demon Hellhound, 7th Hell Demon (2)

"Damn it."

Klaus was thrown across the Hell Domain, flame chains chasing after him after the Bell of Harrows shattered, and a [Howling Roar Flame Attack] from Zarok landed squarely on his body.

His teeth were dyed crimson.

Blood dripped from the corner of his mouth.

His face was pale yet confident.

A few broken ribs...

And it had only been five minutes into the battle. The Paragon of the Nine Stars was not having an easy time, as one might expect.

Well, it was only normal, considering he was fighting someone five realms above him. Also, he was trapped within the enemy's Law of Self, making him begin to understand what Queenie had said:

'Once someone forms their Law of Self, you can't have an easy win, not even me.'

That was what she had said when Klaus asked for an explanation of the Law of Self. It was a concept he had been looking forward to comprehending once he became a Transcendent. At that stage, he could begin learning and visualizing his own Law of Self.

At the Sovereign stage, he would merely sense the laws, but as a Transcendent, he could start mastering them.

But today, he had to face someone who had already awakened their Law of Self... and he had to kill him.

Sounds easy enough.

Klaus stood up, his grip firm on his spear. One part of his mind focused entirely on maintaining that grip. Another part was controlling the flying swords with lethal precision.

For now, another part of his mind was controlling the Razor Disc while the last two worked in sync, searching for a way out of his current predicament.

'Distance: 70 meters.'

'I have to close in and maintain it for a while so I can use the Weapons Domain. That will allow me to use my skills much more efficiently.'

"You might want to offer me your heart, human; you stood no chance to begin with." Zarok taunted, but Klaus remained mute.

What he said was indeed true, but he had to first evade a sabre to the neck and then attack, which only drew sparks.

But Klaus wasn't concerned about that. For now, he would keep struggling while his poison did its work. He was in a fire domain, so the heat lowered the potency of his poison.

But he wasn't rushing it.

'Dodge and attack... that is the way.'

"Saber From Hell, Demon Blood Surging... Flame Slash!" A crimson arc made of pure flame locked Klaus in place, and like paper, it incinerated him. But Klaus didn't die, for he had just used his illusion to trick the demon into believing he was there.

Right now, his mental strength is strong enough to use the [Reality Check] illusion technique more actively.

"One Epic Slash," Klaus found an opening, and channelling his Lightning element and his slaughter aura, he unleashed a powerful attack that knocked Zarok off balance.

'He never saw that coming... Here I come again.'

Klaus's wings appeared, and like a samurai, Klaus flashed across the battlefield, unleashing countless attacks using just his sword aura, amplified by the sword's intent.

This pushed Zarok further back.

'My chance.' Klaus soared up and raised his sword.

"Asura Crazy Sword Strike!" The red skull appeared in the air and dissolved into his sword, making it turn dark red.

"Die."

The swordlight struck squarely on Zarok's chest, sending him flying back. Klaus's sword switched to a spear, and using the Vanishing Step, he appeared behind Zarok and delivered a powerful attack.

But just when his attack landed, Zarok smirked, "Got you, insect."

"Bind."

Flame chains shot from the ground, binding Klaus from his legs to his arms, locking him in place. The attack showed no sign of coming because Klaus never expected Zarok to place a rune where he was going to land.

Klaus fell for it, and now, he was in trouble.

"You should be grateful, human. You forced me to scheme. But you can die now."

"Berserker Flame Demon Strike!" A large head of a hellhound appeared in the air and charged at Klaus, who was struggling to break free from the chains that immediately locked 50% of his strength.

The head charged at Klaus, but just when it got within 5 meters of him, Klaus stopped struggling and sighed.

"Come out."

The dragon tattoo on his arm glowed, and the colossal head of a majestic flame dragon appeared and devoured the head of the hellhound before rising up in the air.

Zarok's body immediately tensed when he laid eyes on Klaus's Chaotic Nirvana Flame Dragon. It appeared, and Zarok's flame energy immediately started to weaken.

"It seems you will die today, Zarok. No hard feelings." The Crescent Disc flew and severed the chains binding Klaus, breaking him free.

He looked toward the dragon, which stretched 140 meters and smiled.

"Flame Baptism, partner." That was all little Paragon had to hear before the entire domain was filled with fire that seemed to burn anything it touched and create chaos while doing so.

The Last Floor of the Dungeon.

Lissa smiled, watching Klaus through the screen in front of them. Alida was the same. They were watching the battle between Klaus and the hell demon.

"Looks like the master in this life has something of a weapons expert and spirit master class," Alida said, watching as Klaus and his flame dragon began their assault, making sure they lowered Zarok's stats until things could be salvaged.

"He is much stronger for someone his level. He wasn't meant to come here until he became a Great Sage, right?" Lissa entered a pondering state.

"It seems he is much stronger indeed. But can he kill someone five realms above him?"

"That depends on whether Zarok manages to break his current situation. The battle won't end well for him if he can't break free from Master and his flame element."

"True, but I think Master knew that and that was why he was going all out."

The two cats seemed fascinated by the sight they were seeing. Klaus was giving them a show, at least.

Attacks rained down on Zarok, forcing him to go on the offensive. It had already been 20 minutes since he activated his Hell Chain Domain.

Klaus wasn't waiting for him to gain an additional 10% boost when the clock struck 30 minutes, which would happen in just ten minutes' time.

"World Ender."

A spell circle appeared in the air, and from within, a giant sword emerged. "Sword Veil Piercer."

The sword shot toward Zarok, who was forced to use his sabre to block while being pushed back. Klaus didn't waste time and appeared behind him, delivering a powerful attack.

ROAR!

The dragon roared as it breathed fire on Zarok, who was in great pain from the flames that seemed to be affecting him.

'I can't believe I can't overpower an Ascendent. I am a paragon; the rules don't apply to me.'

Klaus was determined to kill the bastard before he gained the upper hand. His star qi surged endlessly, but that was all.

An Ascendant wasn't easy to crack, and that could only be because Klaus, a mere Saint, had no business fighting one.

Well, he was in for a hard time because Zarok finally decided to use his last two moves. Klaus was in for a treat.

"Berserker Flame Hellhound: Transformation!" A 25-meter-tall Hellhound appeared. Zarok had transformed and finally taken his true Beast form.

"Twin Sabers." Two curved sabres appeared and hovered in front of the Hellhound, whose power had just risen by 20% after assuming his true form.

'Time for me to kill you, demon.'

Chapter 532 - 532: Flame Berserk Demon Hellhound, 7th Hell Demon (3)

The two Saint Cores and four Sage Cores were drained of energy. The battle had already been going on for an hour, and Klaus was bleeding all over.

But hey, he managed to draw blood from the colossal hellhound, which was now giving him the taste of an Ascendant who has a law of self.

Zarok was at 80% of his strength in his humanoid form. However, that was the form everyone feared, for he couldn't be killed easily in that state.

He was nearly invincible in his humanoid form.

But Klaus had a plan, and it was working. His confidence in that plan was only ten percent. Yes, Klaus never expected that plan to bear fruit, but he knew why he made it—and that reason was for this very moment.

The main plan was for Zarok to take his beast form, putting him at full strength.

Very ironic, considering that just 80% of his power was already this overwhelming. But Klaus actually wanted that, and now he got what he wanted.

He had to sacrifice four Sage Cores and two Saint Cores just to achieve this, and thankfully, he received what he wanted. Now, he had to kill him.

But that's a big "but"...

Klaus didn't have a way to kill the 25-meter-tall demon hellhound whose body was still covered in metal armour. It's not entirely covered now, considering there were some bleeding parts, thanks to Klaus putting in the effort.

An hour passed, and Zarok got a 20% boost, all thanks to Klaus not being able to finish him off.

'I should be able to kill an Ascendant in under ten minutes before learning this world,' Klaus thought, and then he chose to use one of his trump cards.

"Demon Killing Circle!" Klaus's Soul energy surged, along with his star qi from two of his three remaining Sage Cores.

"You... What did you do?" Zarok, in his beast form, asked, his voice as deep as a pit.

Klaus unleashed his one and only trump card, and just like that, he took equal control of the law of self that belonged to Zarok.

But he had to sacrifice two more Cores and a large chunk of his soul energy. However, he succeeded. He now had equal control over the Hell Chain Domain, and thus Klaus began his counterattack.

"Bombard him with attacks, buddy!"

The dragon roared and unleashed Dragon Authority, immediately forcing fear into Zarok's heart. The dragon's tail lashed, and a 100-meter-wide fire arc cut through the air, striking the back of the hellhound.

'Time to use my knowledge as a reincarnate to win this battle.'

Klaus chose his techniques and tapped into his last core; he attacked with a technique even he didn't fully understand.

Thankfully, his Weapons Domain was active, boosting his mastery of the sword.

"Runic Spellblade... Falling into despair." A smile appeared on Klaus's face. Well, if you looked closer, it wasn't exactly a smile but more like a twisted form of a smile influenced by a technique.

The smile was twisted, but it was all the technique working.

"I look in the face of danger and laughed..."

A runic circle appeared around his arm, instantly boosting his attack. It was a white, runic circle.

"I look in the face of torment and laughed..."

Another runic circle appeared. This one was red with cute patterns on it. His strength amplified again.

"Cough." Blood seeped from the corner of his lips, making him look sorry, yet the twisted smile on his face made it hard to feel pity for him.

"I looked in the face of Death and laughed..."

A green runic circle appeared, and his strength shot up again. But he coughed up another wave of blood. The spell was taking a toll on his body...

"I look in the face of despair and laughed... Why? Because I am despair."

BOOM

A powerful energy burst out of Klaus's body, tearing his armour to shreds. Runes danced around his body. The three circles around his arm merged into a golden one.

"Twenty minutes," Klaus said before flying high into the air. What followed was a wave of attacks that wouldn't pale compared to an army unleashing their attacks simultaneously.

"Eye of Despair: Look into the face of despair."

Klaus was attacking while a green eye appeared in the air. This was from the Eye of Despair of the demon bead, and at that very moment, Klaus was using it.

Dozens of techniques had already been used. Klaus was digging into all the skills and techniques he picked from his past life.

Zarok was struggling now.

This was all thanks to the dragon. It wasn't giving him a chance to attack Klaus, and so, with twisted laughter, augmented by the power he was using, Klaus continued to bombard the hellhounds with attacks.

Klaus was bleeding and coughing up blood, but for his first battle against an Ascendent, things were going well for him. Well, he had lost an armour, but he was doing well even in his ragged clothes.

"Bind."

Klaus used the chains to bind the legs of the 25-meter hellhound.

He charged at the colossal body with his fist. The golden Rune revolved around his arm as he landed a powerful punch on the metallic body, sending it falling to the side.

"Thanks... cough!... for the boost." It had already been ten minutes, and he had received the boost on top of the 30% he gained when he took authority of the hell chain domain.

It couldn't be deactivated because they both had to agree, now that they were both owners... well, temporarily owners. Klaus was merely using the demon-killing circle to copy Zarok's authority of the domain...

[Shared]

Klaus had enough, and with his last core draining, he had to use his ultimate boost. His strength soared by 230% thanks to the augmentation from his women.

It was 210 at first, but after his breakthrough, it seem to have increased by 20%.

'This is it.'

"Bind!" The chains surged and bound the large body on the ground. The chains were now much thicker, and thankfully, they were able to hold.

Cracks began appearing, but that was not important. What appeared in the air was what truly mattered.

A 6-layer spell circle materialized, and a giant sword about 250 meters long with a pointed tip emerged from the spell circle. Giant runic circles revolved around the blade.

"Back to Despair," Klaus's face turned white as he raised his sword. "Giant Calamity Sword Descent!"

He pointed his sword down, and like an arrow, the sword shot down, locking onto the giant body on the ground.

The sword went through its body like cutting tofu. A painful roar erupted from Zarok's mouth, filling the air with the feeling of pain and anguish.

But it didn't die...yet.

A giant hammer appeared in Klaus's hands, and he flew up into the air. The sword had managed to pin the bastard to the ground, making it unable to move. But it didn't kill it, far from it.

Klaus had expected that, so he made his last move, taking a page out of Daniel's playbook.

"When I kill you, I make sure you die properly."

He flew down at a terrifying speed, raising the hammer overhead.

"Giant Hammer Falling!" A giant projection of the hammer appeared and merged with the hammer in Klaus's hands.

BOOM!

That was the last thing Zarok heard before he succumbed to the attack from the true form of the Giant Hammer Falling.

Daniel would have loved to see that up close.

Chapter 533 - 533: Gains (1)

Five days after the battle with Zarok, Klaus finally opened his eyes from his meditative state. Thanks to the two doors inside his soul sea, all seven Sage Cores and two Saint Cores had been restored to their previous state.

The battle hadn't gone as planned, but he had gained one more Life Point, bringing his total to three now.

Yes... Klaus had never been confident of victory, as he never intended to use the [Runic Spellblade] technique with the Eye of Despair.

Well, it came back to him when he activated the Runic Spellblade technique, so he had to go with the flow, which allowed him to win at a great cost. Luckily, what should have taken weeks lasted only five days.

"Fuck... I am not using that technique again." Klaus stretched his arms. "Well, until I need it again, that is."

The pain rocking his body had started to subside now that his healing was at full capacity. Twelve hours later, he was good as new and finally ready to proceed to the next step.

"Three items. I guess these two are the Soul Crystal and Blood Essence," Kent muttered, watching the three items hovering before him.

He recognized one since he had seen it multiple times before; however, the two beside it were new to him.

Nevertheless, since the trial structure had stated he would receive a Core, a Soul Crystal, and a Blood Essence, he could only assume the other two were the remaining items.

<If you are ready, the absorption can begin.>

Klaus heard the voice and sighed. He prepared himself, knowing the power emanating from the three items was far more potent than anything he had sensed from Zarok.

It could only mean these items were not as simple as they seemed to most. He had to be prepared. Mentally, he was ready, but physically, he needed to let his body accept the pain that was coming.

"Let's do it."

Then it began. Klaus's scream filled the first trial area as the three items were absorbed into his body. Immediately, runes began to form, dancing around him for a full five hours.

In the end, all the runes fused into one large rune, appearing like a tattoo inside one of the stars on his back.

Only eight stars remained now.

It was ironic, considering he had nine-star tattoos and had to complete nine trials. In a way, it made sense—this was something he had planned for himself.

"So, I didn't die, but it hurt like hell," Klaus muttered.

"Huh?" Klaus flinched when he sensed something approaching him. It was sudden, but by the time he turned around, a stream of liquid metal was already entering his body.

His senses dulled for a moment, but when he regained them, his body exploded with energy. He immediately pulled up his stats, and damn—his strength and defense had skyrocketed.

His mouth widened, jaw nearly hitting the floor.

===> STATS <===

Strength: 27,300

Agility: 10,370

Stamina: 10,340

Defense: 26,600

Intelligence: 8,100

Health: 22,000

"So, I not only absorb the Core, Soul Crystal, and Blood Essence, but I now have his armor merged with my body, raising my defense and strength by several thousand." Klaus grinned wryly.

"I wonder if I can summon his armor." Klaus tapped into the feeling, but unfortunately, he wouldn't be turning into Ironman today.

"Not that I'm disappointed." Klaus turned toward the last thing hovering before him, and his greed surfaced.

The first thing he did was bite his thumb and put the blood on the red saber before him. It took just a few seconds, but then the saber became his and vanished into his soul sea.

A few seconds later, Klaus summoned it, and it appeared, two meters long in his hand, the blade coated in fire qi that threatened to incinerate anything it touched.

"Ignis Revenant: The Chaos Flame Demon Saber." Klaus flexed the saber with a broad smile.

"That is a good name." He could sense just one technique embedded in the saber, but even without practicing it for hundreds of years, he immediately mastered it.

Klaus was very happy to acquire the weapon that had nearly killed him 78 times. Yes, that was how close he came to dying during his battle with Zarok.

Perhaps his mind should slow down sometimes.

"I didn't die, and that is all I should focus on." Klaus turned and looked at Zarok's huge 25-meter body and shook his head.

He never expected his first battle to go that smoothly. But thankfully, his past memories had helped him win, and now he was very strong. But he had a nagging feeling...

"Something ain't right," Klaus muttered as he tried to sense what was happening. He tried hard to dig into it, but no matter what, the thing wasn't showing.

However, he could swear when he formed the contract with the sword, he received something else.

"Hmm." Klaus unsummoned the saber and then summoned it again. His eyes widened as his surroundings shifted, and then it happened.

The 100 meters around him were plunged into a perpetual domain of hellish flame, twisted chains made of dark fire, and—within the domain—Klaus saw something that made his blood run cold despite the infernal heat.

"A summoning gate?" He stepped closer, inspecting it. "No, not a summoning gate. But that can't be right. I'm not a demon... why do I have this?"

Klaus's blood began to freeze as the realization hit him.

"A Soul Forge. It's a freaking Soul Forge!" His blood surged as he erupted into maniacal laughter, like a madman who had just won the lottery.

Lissa looked at Alida, and the two burst into laughter.

"So that's what the master prepared for himself. It seems his shamelessness knows no bounds." Alida shook her head.

"I know, right? How can one person be this monstrous and shameless at the same time? Forming a Bloodline Meridian wasn't enough. He had to absorb the armor and claim the weapon too. But no, he also had to steal the Law of Self, and now... there's a Soul Forge."

"Too bad he can't use it yet until..."

"I guess that's for the best."

The two cats held pondering expressions on their faces. They were the only beings who could live for billions of years, so they knew more than anyone.

But they could only discuss among themselves. They didn't dare talk to their master, as that would break the timeline he had set and call upon them the wrath of the heavens.

However, it seemed even they had never expected things like this to happen.

They never expected Klaus to arrive when he did, and they most certainly never anticipated him gaining this much when he was only meant to have the core, crystal, and essence.

"Looks like we will have some more work on our hands soon. I wonder how long we will have to sleep after this trial," Alida sighed.

"I only hope we are awakened before the world awakens. We cannot miss the fun," Lissa sighed as well.

After a while, Klaus stopped using the Law of Self he had somehow obtained from Zarok. The Soul Forge was something nobody should possess, but he did now, and for some reason, he felt very happy seeing it.

"Even though I can't use it now, I can still farm souls and store them there. I wonder which unfortunate race will come after me when I leave this place."

A wicked smile appeared on his face as he gestured for the next trial.

Chapter 534 - 534: Four Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen (1)

<Your second opponent is the Four Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen. It's the 9th strongest hell general and your second challenger. Now, I will display the details of your opponent to get an idea of who you will be facing.>

<Four Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen>

-> Queen of Ice and Carnage

-> Rank: Tier 10 (Ascendent - LVL 1)

-> Threat Level: S (Low)

-> Dance of Eternal Ice Mage

-- They call her Ember, the Eternal Ice Queen, for her chilling personality and her unmatched command over the ice element.

-- She is a mage wielding an array of ice spells capable of plunging entire battlefields into a frozen wasteland. The ice she commands is no ordinary element; it defies nature and reason.

-- Ember belongs to a rare species of Scorpions with four tails, each imbued with a distinct power. The first tail holds Chaos, the second Anarchy, the third Helplessness, and the last Death.

-- Since even Ember herself does not know the true name of her ice, others crafted a title inspired by these four aspects: The Ice Queen of Anarchy.

-- Survivors of her wrath, few and far between, speak of her as a merciless killer devoid of sympathy for any soul. Yet, they all agree that escaping is impossible when she unleashes her four aspects.

-- Her Law of Self is called the [Eternal Dance of Ice and Death]. Within her domain, no other elements function. Furthermore, any wielder of the ice element stepping into her realm suffers a crippling 70% debuff.

-- Despite her immense power, she ranks only eighth among her peers, not for lack of strength but because she is too lazy to seek more territories to conquer.

<Eternal Dance of Ice and Death>

-- A domain of ice that covers a 100-meter radius. Nothing can escape its grip.

-> Inside this domain, all Stats are halved.

-> All other elements aside from Ice are disabled.

-> You will receive a debuff of 70% if you wield an Ice element.

"This is clearly a cheat. How can one have the mental capacity to visualize and create such a powerful law of self?"

Klaus scratched his head as he read the message.

The feeling of dread was creeping toward him slowly. The debuffs were just too much for him. He was just a Saint, and from the look of things, he wouldn't survive even a minute inside this domain.

"Imagine I died just because a god chose to give me a debuff before fighting me. Clearly a cheat, and I won't buy this."

Klaus lay down, coating the ground with ice as he began to strategize.

His ice element had yet to awaken, yet this meant that no matter how domineering his power was, he would be done for the moment he faced that debuff.

In fact, aside from having his stats halved, he would also get an instant debuff of 70%. That was just stretching it too thin.

"But then again, to kill her, I have to do that without stepping inside the 100 meters of her. That can only be the way for me."

Klaus began forming a plan gradually. The process he was coming up with involved his Spirit Master class and illusion...

Since he wouldn't be stepping into the domain, he could use his brain to control the swords and other spirit weapons to do the work.

"Damn it. I wanted to go big with these sabers, but alas, I have to save them for the next guy," Klaus muttered as he closed his eyes and began to wait for the plan to bloom.

Two hours later, a smile appeared on his face.

He sat down and retrieved a 2-meter-long arrow made from a very strong metal. Madam Fei had become something of his private shopper.

Before coming to the academy, he made her buy some weapons for him. Among them were 210 arrows made of very strong metals, each selling for 100,000 gold coins.

It wasn't easy to procure Madam Fei more than she appeared to be, so since she confided in Klaus, he allowed her access to 20% of his wealth.

Her job is to use his money to procure rare weapons for him. Klaus is a weapons expert, so every weapon attracts him.

He started using a technique similar to the Hellfire Arrow Tempering skill he had given Kay. This one was different and much more complex.

It is the God-Killing Arrow Runic Tempering Art. Essentially, this technique allows him to temper an arrow capable of killing a god by imbuing it with runes.

The technique has two forms: Manual and Energy.

The manual form involves him inscribing the runes into the arrows by hand. This means he has to be an expert at rune inscription.

However, since he wasn't much of an expert in that field due to his lack of knowledge, he could only resort to the Energy form, which draws on his energy and converts it into runes.

The more energy he has, the more runes he can imbue into the arrow.

And Klaus wasn't holding back. He planned to create two arrows, each requiring a Sage core.

This could only mean one thing: if he indeed managed to drive one of these arrows through the Ice Queen's body, she would surely die.

And he was creating two.

As the saying goes, if you want to kill them, be sure to kill them properly, or else they will come back to haunt you.

After three hours, the arrows were complete, and an Ascendant killing weapon had been created. All that he needed to do now was wait until Hanna stopped using the bow.

Luckily for him, it took just five hours before he felt his connection form with the bow.

Since it belonged to Hanna, it always stayed in her soul sea. But knowing Klaus would need it since he had already told her before leaving, she only used it for ten hours every two days.

"All I need is a good shot, and this lady will be dead before she knows it," Klaus smiled.

"Killing an Ascendant sure is very difficult. I must do better and dominate that realm before leaving." Klaus felt his blood boil as he slipped into an identical armor to the one he had destroyed.

Nadia made sure her boyfriend had dozens of armors.

What a good girlfriend she is.

Klaus took an apple and began devouring it as he waited for 6 p.m. to arrive. That was when he planned to put his attack into motion.

He had already planned everything with backup plans, so he was waiting for the time to carry out his task.

Since he was going against dire odds, he could only prepare and not get complacent because he had already killed an Ascendant.

This was a new battle, and he must bring his A-game.

"Alright, I am ready to kill," Klaus muttered, and before he knew it, he was transported away.

A few seconds after she left, the Demon Bead appeared and hovered above the dead Zarok. It emitted a few hums, and then, from within, a red gem with five edges appeared and shone brighter.

A few seconds later, the colossal body of Zarok was sucked into the bead. It hummed and then entered the bead again.

A few seconds later, it vanished back into Klaus's soul sea.

Chapter 535 - 535: Four Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen (2)

"Damn, this place is freezing," Klaus muttered, gazing at the large expanse of frozen ice. The domain of the Four-Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen was nothing less than a fortress of ice.

"On second thought, I'll add all points to Agility. Speed is important," Klaus said, quickly allocating the points, instantly making him feel more confident. His speed is on the next level now...

He began flying toward the area where the ice seemed thicker and denser. After a few seconds of flying, he arrives in a rather majestic setting...

"A demon with style. Not bad," Klaus mused as he gazed at the majestic mountain made of ice in the distance. The sight was breathtaking, but it would soon be dyed with blood.

For that was the only outcome of this battle—blood mixing with the bluish ice.

"You are trespassing here, human."

Just as Klaus was 300 meters away from the ice fortress, a chilling tone echoed, instantly halting his advance.

His eyes turned red, activating the eye of malevolence... that was when he saw the beauty he was about to kill.

'Such a pity,' he thought.

She had long blue hair and a slender figure, yet heavy on the chest. Her eyes were a striking blue, and, well, who said beast demons were monsters? No, this one could easily bring the fall of a nation.

She was clad in form-fitting armour that seemed to expose some sensitive parts of her body spitefully. She was practically tempting Klaus.

'Such a pity,' Klaus thought again, and then he made up his mind.

"I am here to kill you, so I guess my trespassing should be the least of your worries," Klaus said with a smug grin.

Laughter rang out from the ice fortress as the blue-haired lady fanned herself with the most lethal yet elegant weapon. The fan looked deadly and refined, but 'such a pity' indeed.

Such a beauty would have to die so he could live.

"I don't think what I said was funny... did I?" Klaus asked teasingly.

"You, a mere fragile human, think you can handle me?" Ember, the Ice Queen of Anarchy and Death, asked with an amused smirk.

It was the funniest thing she had heard in her long life of carnage and destruction.

"I don't know about fragile, but back in my world, I'm known for handling my fair share of dangerous women. Too bad your handling will be... different," Klaus said, his tone growing serious as he felt the shift in his surroundings.

He was caught inside her domain. His stats dropped significantly, but he didn't panic. Instead, a sword materialized in his grip, and he struck backwards, deflecting a metal fan that had nearly severed his head.

"Not bad, but you can forget about killing me. Of course, I won't kill you now; I need to taste you first." Her scorpion-like tongue licked her buttery lips as she lunged at him again.

Klaus smirked, and then four versions of himself appeared, making the scorpion lady frown and halt in her flight. She gazed down at the four versions of Klaus, her frown deepening.

Why?

Because the four were Klaus in both blood and spirit, they were different at the same time—a bizarre sight that would undoubtedly catch anyone by surprise.

One was clad in dark pyjamas, holding a painting brush. The smirk on his face suggested he wasn't taking the battle seriously.

Another wore the regal garment of a king, a crown resting on his head. In his hand was a wand, signifying he was a mage.

The third was shirtless, displaying a ripped physique that could steal any lady's heart. His gaze on the scorpion lady was filled with lustful intent.

But the menace was the fourth. He was a mummy, holding a sign that read, "Remember how you died."

Suddenly, the shirtless one dashed away, and the others followed with equally peculiar behaviour. They ran in different directions, deepening the scorpion lady's frown further.

"Trying to run and leave the domain? In your dreams," she sneered, dashing after the mummy. But her body froze mid-air as she felt her soul struck by a powerful soul attack.

For a moment, she was paralyzed in the air—just enough time to hear the last words she would ever hear.

"Skybound Bow Art: Void Piercing Arrow."

Klaus, now 200 meters away in the air, released one of the two arrows tempered with the [God-Killing Arrow Runic Tempering Art].

The arrow vanished, leaving no trace of its presence. The next instant, it pierced through the heart of the scorpion lady, who didn't even realize what had happened until it was too late.

She fell to the ground, lifeless. Blood oozed from her chest wound, soaking the blue ice as Klaus had envisioned.

"Ha," Klaus sighed.

His brain had gone into overdrive for a second, but his plan had worked. And as always, a good plan is only perfect when executed flawlessly.

Klaus had done just that. He had killed an Ascendent rather easily and effortlessly...

The plan was rather dangerous, and he knew it from the start.

He planned to use the [Poison Damage] form of the [Reality Check] illusion technique to create four tangible versions of himself.

The illusions could not be discerned from the real him unless the opponent's mental strength was exceptionally strong.

Even then, superior mental strength wouldn't be enough without overcoming the Star Qi coating the illusion clones.

That couldn't be done in an instant, and a single second was all Klaus needed to make his hasty retreat using the [Vanishing Step] movement technique and take to the sky.

The rest would depend on how engaged the opponent became with his illusion clones.

Thankfully, Klaus's sense of humour was rather wild, and he was able to catch her off guard for three seconds—one more second than he had initially estimated.

This was thanks to the [Mummy] clone that was displaying the sign. Klaus needed that to make her spend another second of delay.

Then, his decision to add 10,600 points to agility was spot on. He managed to move quickly and with precision. With the [Skybound Bow Art], he was confident she would die for sure.

But even if she managed to defend against the arrow, she would still be injured, giving him the chance to fire a second one.

But that wasn't the only surprise Klaus had in store.

As someone who was an expert with every weapon, he knew how to use them well. He had hidden the [Void Piercing Needles] in the [Mummy] and the [Mage King].

Klaus was always prepared because he knew he had to bring his A-game. The current him had no business defeating Ascendants.

But he had to, and that meant using his brain.

'I guess I'll have to add more points to intelligence after absorbing the core and forming the 8th core. I'm almost there,' Klaus thought before landing softly beside the large scorpion body that had appeared.

'I can't take this body too,' Klaus sighed. He had tried taking Zarok's body before but wasn't able to. This was the same.

He sat down as pain coursed through his body when the three items were absorbed into him.

Alida looked at Lissa, and the two smiled. They had witnessed the short yet decisive battle, and in their eyes, their master was a monster.

"I guess he has the spirit of a Paragon in him after all. I wonder if he already realizes that his intelligence is his greatest strength.

Ah, well."

Chapter 536 - 536: Earth's Decision

It had already been over a week since Klaus entered the dungeon, and after spending five whole days outside the dungeon, Queenie and Nari finally returned to the academy.

Nari, of course, went to check on Klaus's friends as she was instructed to, and after ensuring they were safe and seriously in seclusion, she went off to laze around.

Of course, she was an Overlord, so from time to time, she did her job, and ten days after Klaus entered the dungeon, the Overlords returned from their assignments.

They were tasked with having a sit-down with the leaders of the various Unions to discuss the alliance with the Moonborns.

Naturally, this was just a courtesy, as the Overlords could make these decisions without consulting anyone. But for the sake of peace and tranquillity, they had to inform them.

Now, inside their usual meeting room at the top of the academy mountain, the eight Overlords had gathered to make their reports.

Of course, only six out of the eight would be making a report since Nari and Queenie never really paid much attention to such matters.

They had designated the various War Gods and War Goddesses of their Unions to handle the discussions in their stead.

"Reports"

Queenie spoke in her usual cold tone, but this time, it lacked the chilling intent it usually carried. It seemed the Overlord's cold heart had begun to melt.

Sorrine from the Ice Union was the first to speak.

"I spoke to my people, and, well, as expected, they were all concerned about trust. They don't know if we can trust this person, but honestly, it's the same doubt we all have in the back of our minds.

But after explaining the situation they're in and why we should take them in, it seems they've calmed down a bit.

However, they're still uneasy about whether we can truly trust them. Some suggested sending delegates from their side to come here and have a sit-down with the various Union heads to determine if they're trustworthy.

That's their decision, but personally, I think we should just let their queen—who you said is the strongest—appear on Earth and assure everyone there's nothing to fear."

A small, cold smile appeared on Sorrine's lips. She was subtly hinting at Queenie's mother to show her strength and establish who was in charge.

Sorrine wasn't just from a cold continent—her heart seemed just as frigid.

"My people from the Northern Union are open to having new neighbours. They were particularly scared shitless after discovering there had been people on the moon all this time.

If they wanted to, they could've just destroyed our satellites and dropped some bombs on us. This realization scared them, so they're all in for an alliance," Dharma, the pink-eyed overlord, reported.

"My people are the same. We water-borns understand the need for stronger allies, so we're all in for it. The water is a very dangerous place, so we require stronger allies.

Having stronger warriors as friends sure would come in handy," Tydor, the Overlord of the Water Borns, said pleasedly.

Truth be told, he wasn't the only one pleased with this arrangement.

They knew the dangers surrounding humanity, and from the report Queenie gave them, having a dozen Ascendants sure brought its perks.

They didn't need a genius to tell them that, without even knowing it, the moonborns were several times stronger than them.

They would most certainly love to have backup fighting forces. If possible, they could even expand their fold and add more strength to their midst.

"The Eastern Union also wants to continue with the alliance," Mira, the Overlord from the Eastern Union, added. The last thing they wanted was to say no.

"My Southern Union is also on board," Jose, the overlord from the Southern Union, reported.

"Austral Union is also ready to have them as neighbors and allies," Isaac said

"Then it is settled," Nari said, looking smug. She turned to face Sorrine. "You can go back to your people and tell them the Fire Queen, Nari, said they have a week to come up with a good answer, or else I will pass through."

Her words were particularly arrogant and amusing, but the Overlords knew she wasn't joking. On the contrary, they knew Nari would follow through—and she had done it before.

When the Ice-borns appeared and tried to claim the Earth, it was Nari who put them in their place. Back then, the Overlords had gone to calm the conflict, but Nari went berserk and killed a few hundred Ice-borns, making them immediately understand their place.

She was destructive, and as someone who lacked control over her emotions, it was a huge gamble to dismiss her threats. She might just snap and do something drastic, like attacking an ice land or two.

Sorrine could only smile.

"What Nari said is true, but leave out the threat part. The faster they get our reply, the better. If possible, the moonborns should be ready to move to Earth within the next four months.

We need to make haste since they are running out of time, and it would be bad if they perished because of our pettiness."

Queenie had already received word from her mother that the Lunar Beast situation was worsening. At best, they would need to start fighting back within the next six months.

They needed to get out of there fast before the formation protecting them collapsed.

If it failed, they would be overrun—and that was not an outcome anyone wanted. They'd rather invade Earth and take their chances. Who knows? They might even succeed in conquering it.

After a few more discussions, Queenie informed them that Klaus had started conquering the dungeon ten days ago.

"How confident is he in conquering it?" Isaac, the Overlord from the Austral Union—the former Australia—asked.

Nari smirk.

"He was able to hold back a Transcendent-level beast with a defense-type Law of self while killing two Sovereign-level pseudo-beasts, so I'd say he's about qualified more than any warrior...us included."

The six Overlords looked surprised upon hearing what Nari had just said.

"Oh, he nearly killed the Transcendent in the end, by the way."

These words only made the Overlords feel uneasy. If Klaus was able to hold back a Transcendent, wouldn't that mean he was nearing the stage to surpass them once he became a Sage?

That thought freaked them out.

"Don't look at me like that, Sorrine. It's not my fault you didn't see it," Nari teased, then glanced back at Queenie, who held a cold expression but was laughing in her heart.

Her man seemed to have made her very happy with his strength, but as to whether he would be able to clear the dungeon, that would depend on how smart Klaus played it.

Even when he became a Sage, he still wouldn't be able to suppress an Overlord since that was simply impossible. But that didn't mean he couldn't kill one.

He might not have the strength to handle an Overlord now without careful planning, but he'd certainly wipe the floor with them once he became a Great Sage.

Klaus was a monster, no doubt, and since he had already started killing Ascendants, he could only hope to trump them as he had done with the lower stages.

Chapter 537 - 537: Gains (2)

Two days after killing the Scorpion Lady Demoness, Klaus had recovered his strength to its peak. Since he was the only one there for obvious reasons, he slept for two days on the ice.

He woke up refreshed but cold to the bone.

The pain from absorbing the Core, Shard, and Essence had been unbearable, causing him to pass out right after completing the process.

The reasons for his collapse, however, were jaw-dropping.

"I can feel them now. The forbidden ice is almost at the awakening stage," Klaus said, his laughter ringing out as he felt a surge of happiness.

The seven forbidden ice he had awakened before were beginning to surface. As someone who had already experienced their power, he could feel them lingering just beneath the surface, making him eager to awaken them fully.

His eighth core was almost formed, and Klaus decided to use normal cores to push its progress. Retrieving a couple of hundred cores, he absorbed them while reflecting on his body's changes.

First, it seemed he had absorbed some form of exoskeleton from the colossal scorpion, boosting both his offence and defence significantly.

He could tell with just one punch, he could kill a Peak Great Sage.

The feeling was euphoric, and he wanted to test his newfound strength against a stronger opponent.

After several minutes of absorbing the cores, the 8th core formed, and Klaus's strength rose again. He received 2,000 points to distribute. Of course, he added everything to intelligence.

He needed his mind's thinking capacity to be as sharp as possible to pass through these trials. Luckily for him, he didn't have to do much since his [Universal Enigma] passive skill seemed to have a handle on things.

"Next, I will handle my stamina, but with 8 Sage cores, I don't rely much on using my stamina," Klaus pondered for a few minutes before making up his mind.

Then he picked up the fan, the weapon used by the scorpion lady breathly, immediately forming soul contact with it.

Afterwards, he received the Law of Self, which used to belong to the Scorpio lady. He used it, but the domain he envisioned wasn't what he had seen.

This one was different.

When the lady used it, it felt more like being inside a domain.

But what he saw now was more like a domain of blizzards and ice mist. Klaus immediately knew something was happening beyond his control.

First was when he absorbed the three items from Zorak. There were only supposed to be three things for him to absorb.

But he absorbed his armour, and then he inherited his Law of Self, which, for some reason, contained a soul forge.

Then he encountered the ice domain, and the same thing happened. Except this time, there was no forge, but the domain mutated.

It had become more like a technique than a Law of Self, and Klaus could tell it had already surpassed the initial 100-meter radius.

"Hmm, this demands some answers," Klaus muttered, looking around him. He used the fan to cool himself off before scrutinizing the ice domain.

The irony in that. Fanning one's self inside the domain of ice.

"So it wasn't that people can't use their elements inside. It's more like when they do, the domain becomes stronger instead,"

Klaus had already theorized this when he received the details about the scorpion lady, but since he was going against the odds, he didn't test it out.

If only his strength had been much greater than the lady's, he would have had time to experiment. But now, he could do that since the law of self had become his and his alone.

The only downside was that he had to awaken his ice element to implement his own laws within it. His understanding of the element was still very weak.

He needed to first comprehend the elemental laws to the [Realm] stage, as he had done in his past life when he managed to enter the realm of elemental illusion.

Klaus had already made some progress with the fire element, but with his intelligence now boosted, he was nearing the stage where he could start seeing the changes.

"Now that I think about it, Nari's fire element has entered the [Realm] stage. The feeling I got was all too familiar."

Due to his weaker understanding of the elements, he couldn't do much. But now, he could—and he would.

He had a domain of ice and fire, now acting as his law of self.

The next phase was for him to form his ultimate law of self. Based on the theory he had already started developing, all these laws of self would contribute somehow.

In other words, these laws of self were the building blocks for his ultimate law of self-awakening.

"Wouldn't that be awesome?" Klaus muttered, then laughed.

He stood up and began walking around the place, moving through and studying the fortress left behind by the scorpion lady.

"Such a pity," he thought.

Afterwards, he requested his next trial against the 9th strongest. Klaus was tasked with fighting a demon who wielded a bow. Naturally, he was thrilled.

Finally, he could use his sabre while dodging and closing in on the target.

"It seems Master is not taking this as shamelessly as we thought. He is much more intelligent and careful, yet dangerous at the same time," Lissa said with a pondering expression.

"Master has never been careful. He was more hot-blooded, which landed him in my troubles. But seeing this side of him, it makes him very dangerous," Alida responded.

Naturally, they were both scared of this new discovery.

They expected the Ice Scorpion to put up a fight, but it ended just as it started. Of course, that calls for concern, but the fact that Klaus managed to kill someone five realms above him with a single attack scared them.

"Imagine Master was in one of those Galaxy factions; many races would try hard to kill him while others would suck up to him," Lissa laughed.

"I am more afraid of what he will become once he is done with this trial."

"While he wouldn't be able to handle a Void Stage expert until he becomes a Sovereign or even a Transcendent, I would love to see a struggling battle between Master and a Void Stage expert."

Alida laughed, too.

"Don't raise the bar that high."

"We all know the difference between the Ascendant stage and the Void Stage; Master must first become a Transcendent and start making headway in his Law of Self-Comprehension before he can think about facing a Level 1 Void Stage Expert."

The two ladies rewound the recording of Klaus' battle with the scorpion lady, but in the end, they all sighed and chose to wait and see how things went.

Klaus may be stronger than most, but he surely has a limit.

However, that limit can be broken if someone becomes much more adaptive in combat. Klaus may be aloof and not serious sometimes, but before every battle, he will create a good plan to back up the main plan.

This means he already has the techniques and skills he will use before the battle, and due to that, whenever the odds go against him, he will know what to do to kill his opponent.

Such is the law of Slaughter... Always finding ways to succeed in committing murder.

Chapter 538 - 538: Killing the Demon Manticore Archer, 9th Hell Demon

An arrow zipped past Klaus's ear, forcing him to move aside as another flash streaked past him. He was up in the air, wielding twin sabers bathed in lightning and flames.

Opposite him stood a bushy-faced demon-man with a muscular physique, a scorpion-like tail, and armour that seemed to be made from fish scales—or so it appeared.

Klaus couldn't tell, mainly because he was under heavy barrages from the demon Manticore archer.

The demon had a pair of large horns and bird-like wings.

Its body seemed to be a grotesque amalgamation of different monsters. Klaus couldn't help but feel curious about what kind of creature a Manticore truly was.

Now, he was facing one—and struggling.

This was Klaus's third challenge and the ninth-strongest opponent he would face.

Of course, the demon was also an Ascendant Level expert, but a threat level ranked at SS low making him the least formidable of the opponents on Klaus's list.

That didn't mean the fight was going easy for him.

On the contrary, this might just be his most difficult challenge yet.

The Manticore demon was using a bow and arrows. However, the most dangerous aspect wasn't the bow. Alongside its physical arrows, it was firing condensed arrows of light energy from its horns and tail.

And as if that wasn't enough, feather-like projectiles shot from its wings, adding to the relentless barrage. Every flap of its wings was sending out feather-like projectiles.

Klaus was forced to stay on the defensive while the demon maintained the offensive. Unlike before, Klaus wasn't talking or taunting his opponent—he was hurt in more than one place.

'It seems his law of self wasn't exaggerated. This bastard really takes self-love to a whole new level,' Klaus thought, narrowly evading more attacks while trying to defend himself.

From the description he received, this Manticore has a 'Law of Self' called [Sky Dominion]. According to the description, it has no opposing effect.

But that is what makes it dangerous. Basically, this bastard comprehended a law that all his stats receive a 300% boost when fighting in the air.

And the shameless part? As long as he stays in the air, this effect remains active. No matter what control or debuff technique you use, his Law of Self cancels it out.

This means that even if Klaus used the [Demon Killing Circle], he couldn't create a domain where they all fight on land. If he applies the law of self against the demon and him, the sky dominion will cancel it.

In other words, this battle can only happen in the air. Currently, Klaus has used [Shared], boosting his stats by 240%.

He has formed yet another core, so the boost moved from 230% to 240%. He will receive an even greater boost once he forms the ninth core and breaks through.

This boost has increased Klaus's fighting strength to the point where he is defending and dodging, ensuring the enemy's attacks don't land more on his body.

'His arrows are coming quite fast. How is he doing that?'

Klaus decided to close the gap forcefully, but the demon moved further back, rendering his attempt futile.

'This shameless bastard. You're basically ten times my strength, so why are you running?' Klaus made no further attempt to close in and instead used the opportunity to execute all the plans he had devised to win—somehow.

The sky battle continued as the minutes passed, but neither of them seemed willing to concede defeat.

Naturally, Klaus didn't want to die and use his life points. But seeing how badly things were going for him, he started considering it.

If he could study his opponent more and then die, he could come back with a solid plan to secure a decisive win.

Yet, he didn't want to die.

Not to the ninth strongest when he had already killed the seventh and eighth. That would be a plain disappointment.

'This is it. I have to make him pay before killing him.'

Klaus deactivated [Shared], causing his temporary boon to disappear. His strength dropped, and his speed reduced to the original level.

Then he cast his own spell, and the Demon Killing Circle appeared around him. It opened five meters wide.

His mind and soul went into overdrive, creating a law-like force within the circle.

He didn't understand how laws worked, but the Demon Killing Circle allowed him to determine what would happen within its boundary. If his soul could support it, it would become reality.

It was, in essence, like a Law of Self, and Klaus decided to use it to craft something for himself, mirroring the Demon Manticore's self-centred law of self.

Suddenly, the red Demon Killing Circle turned golden, and that was when doom struck the Manticore.

"What?"

The Manticore spoke for the first time, shocked as his arrows lost 70% of their strength upon entering the five-meter radius around Klaus.

"Surprise, motherfucker! Did you think you were the only one with self-love?" Four spirit weapons materialized behind Klaus: the two [Void Piercing Needles], the [Crescent Disc], and the [Razor Disc].

Klaus had levelled the playing field. Now, it was a direct clash to see who would emerge victorious.

His [Instant 70% debuff] domain or the sky dominion domain...

Klaus's soul ached under the strain, but he had to win. To do that, he had to embrace his own self-love. He had aimed for 100% nullification, but his soul could only sustain 70%.

Klaus was very shameless in going for a 100% nullification... But if he had succeeded, he would just have to stand there and let the demon manticore attack...

Thus, the four Spirit weapons attacked as Klaus continued to dodge, defend, and bleed while drawing closer to the demon, who was now beginning to see the downside of his law of self.

The moment someone finds a way to level the playing field, things become far more dire. And as it stood, Klaus had the upper hand.

He was still weak, but he was killing it.

The Razor Disc zipped past the left horn of the demon, forcing him to move to the side. This allowed the Crescent Disc to attack from behind.

"Arrrghhh!"

A painful cry escaped the lips of the demon, who, after defending against the Crescent Disc, was struck by two needles that pierced through his left eye.

Yes, Klaus wasn't fighting like a dignified warrior.

When the odds are stacked against you, you fight dirty. That was the only way. And now, Klaus had managed to blind him in one eye.

The Crescent Disc struck again, opening a gash on his left arm and drawing blood. Then the Razor Disc sliced deeply into his right arm.

"First rule of killing an archer: always go for the arms."

More cuts began to appear on the demon's arms, making it difficult for him to shoot an arrow. Finally, his left arm fell off, and his world descended into perpetual doom.

The right arm followed suit, and just like that, Klaus managed to send the Ninth Hell Lord plummeting to his death. But he had made a promise—a promise to kill the bastard agonizingly.

"Strike of a Thousand Cuts."

Klaus channelled a skill into the Razor Disc, increasing its spinning force several times.

Then it moved, and in the next few seconds, before the body landed on the ground, countless cuts littered the demon's form, killing him in the most painful way possible.

Klaus sighed, deactivating the Demon Killing Circle. He then activated the [Ice Lotus Bloom], and the healing process began.

He sat down, took some pastries Hanna had prepared, and began eating. Of course, his mind was on something else. He wished he could kill the bastard again for making him suffer.

He was bleeding all over. He never even had the chance to use the Sabar like he had anticipated...

'Damn it.'

Chapter 539 - 539: Death Is Not An Option

"Good bow," Klaus said, examining the bow used by the demon Manticore. His injuries were now healed, and he had finished absorbing the Core, Soul crystal, and Blood Essence.

All that remained was to claim the weapon left behind. It was the spoils of war...

Strangely, they were all soul weapons. Of course, he wouldn't have left them behind even if they weren't soul weapons.

The bow was made from brown bone, with a string crafted from a fibrous substance. Just touching it made it feel more comfortable than one might expect.

He recalled how the Manticore demon had used it and could tell the bow had some enchantments. But now that he held it, he realized that perhaps the deceased demon was simply that skilled.

The only enchantments were [Auto Lock] and [Fast Reload], essentially the most basic ones a bow could have. In fact, even beginner-level bows typically carried those enchantments.

However, he noticed something else that made him regard the dead Manticore with newfound respect. The bow bore a seal.

He carefully examined it carefully and could tell it had a seal...

He didn't yet know what the seal was, but after studying the Skybound Bow Hanna used, he had learned that seals were often placed to suppress a weapon's full power. Once unsealed, the bow would become far more powerful.

If the seal had been locked all this time, then the demon he had just killed must have been a true menace. Klaus could easily have fallen to its attacks.

Thankfully, he had been smart enough to devise a counter for his Law of Self. Now, he had both the bow and his Law of Self.

He could only be thankful for how he was learning this Law of Self from all the demons he was killing.

Right now, when fighting in the air, his strength would receive a boost of 300%. Adding that to the 240% from the [Shared] boost, his strength would rise severalfold.

Perhaps he could finally kill a Level 2 Ascendant without suffering any injuries—or even take down two.

That, however, might also be a fleeting dream, as every level-up at the Ascendant stage was akin to the distance between the Earth and the moon.

But then again, he was a paragon, one who defied the laws. The rules didn't apply to him, at least.

"Alasbatar Sky Bow... Not a bad name," Klaus said, putting the bow away. He then requested his fourth challenge.

< Oscar, One Horn Half-Demon >

-> The Runic Card Dealer

-> Rank: Tier 10 (Ascendent LVL 3)

-> Threat Level: SS (Medium)

-> The Seven Deadly Card Dealer.

-- Oscar was a human who somehow found himself in the world of demons—a realm of unfriendliness and despair. Life was that bad.

-- Somehow, Oscar came into possession of seven deadly cards. Once a struggling but brilliant Runic Mage, he was now the 6th Most Dangerous Hell Demon.

-- The seven deadly cards in his possession held terrifying powers that could not be taken lightly. Thanks to the cards, he alone was enough to destroy armies and kill thousands.

-- He had become dangerous and far more lethal than his former self. He had changed for the worse when he met a certain Demon King.

-- The once-weak human had inherited the bloodline of a demon king, bound by a promise to protect the kingdom when the king was no more—a vow between brethren.

-- After the demon king's death, Oscar killed the last demon he was bound to protect and used their soul spirits to purify the seven deadly cards, unleashing their terror.

-- Should you find yourself fighting him, ensure you never die at his hand, for your soul would be lost forever.

-- Dying is not an option here. So don't die.

-- As for his law of self, it remains unknown. Perhaps, he doesn't have one...

Klaus didn't immediately say anything. He just stared at the descriptions with widened eyes, needing a moment to process what he was reading.

'Have I been scammed?' he thought.

It just didn't make sense. He had life points, so perhaps, in death, he should respawn—but it seemed he was in for a freaky surprise.

"Please tell me I respawn after death," Klaus asked.

<No. Death in this particular Trial is permanent. So you must not die.>

Death... what a cold bastard.

Klaus couldn't understand why death existed. It was an unpleasant thing. Yet, at this moment, he risked knowing death firsthand, for at any moment, he would face off against a being of unimaginable power.

...There was no telling if he would greet death—and perhaps, forever.

But that wasn't the most important thing right now.

Klaus hadn't gleaned anything useful from the description he had received. There was no mention of Oscar's strength, his law of self, or what the seven cards could do.

Those details were crucial to him.

In battle, knowing even the smallest detail about your enemy could make a difference. But in his unfortunate case, he would be facing a completely unknown figure.

'I don't even know his height... this is bad.'

Great Sages? Fine.

Sovereigns? Very well.

Even Transcendents? He didn't care.

However, this situation revolved around a Tier 10 existence—someone on the same level as a Human Overlord.

Klaus was at his wit's end.

But then again, if this were like his previous battles, he would have gladly died once just to kill the bastard.

But death wasn't an option now. Perhaps his thirst to taste death once was seen by the heavens, and they even deny him that.

But the heavens have no jurisdiction in this trial, so perhaps today wasn't meant for him to die. Perhaps, this was why he never considered the possibility to begin with.

'I can only do my best and beat that guy senseless'

Klaus stood up and stretched his body for a few quick seconds, making sure his muscles were loose from what was to come.

He then retrieved five two-meter-long arrows and began tempering them using the [God-Killing Arrow Runic Tempering Art]

Since he was going to kill the unknown, he might as well prepare something that has the knack of killing a god.

Death is not an option.

He might not be lucky enough to die today, so he could only prepare for someone else's death. As for how he would do that, Klaus spent the next five days forging the best arrows.

When the five days were over and 24 arrows were ready, Klaus was ready too. It was time to kill some bastard and move ahead in the trial.

But then, he arrived at the place of the battle, and his heart nearly gave out.

"You've got to be kidding me," Klaus said, staring around the strange-looking bone arena. It was white and, well, just being inside, reeked of death.

"You're here to kill me, right?" a voice spoke, forcing Klaus to look at the cloaked figure hooded with a green, tattered cape. His face wasn't visible.

However, a single horn jutted out, and from the look of it, that horn had to go.

The figure was clad in tattered dark fabric fashioned into makeshift clothing, and he wore leather shoes—the only classic thing about him.

However, the most eye-catching feature was the seven cards circling him. They appeared to be made of diamond-like material, each adorned with a distinct drawing.

Klaus wanted those cards. His greed demanded those cards, so he resolved to kill the hooded figure for those cards.

"You're ugly..." Klaus blurted out, signalling the beginning of what might be his most dangerous battle yet.

Chapter 540 - 540: The Seven Deadly Cards, 6th Hell Demon

Klaus stared at the hooded figure, trying to see something—anything. Perhaps he was trying to gauge if he even had a shot to begin with.

But while his eyes revealed nothing, his senses told him something far worse. What he felt made cold sweat trickle down his back.

Pity.

Hunger.

Disdain.

Disgust.

These were the four emotions radiating from Oscar, the half-demon. Klaus could tell he was nothing more than prey in the presence of this being. He wasn't being taken seriously, and for that, anger boiled within him.

But he never got the chance to speak.

Why?

Because Oscar spoke first, and his voice was chilling.

"I don't know if I should pity you, human, for your foolishness." Oscar shook his head. "You know, I was once a human. But even in my 400 years as one, I have never seen a human as stupid as you before."

'Ouch... that stung.'

Klaus took a mental note of the clear disrespect directed at him. He would repay it a thousandfold... if he had the chance, that is.

"I don't know why a mere saint would trigger the Trial of Annihilation of the Nine Hell Demons, but I should be thankful. You have what I need to take the next step. Be grateful."

Oscar's sinister laughter filled the space, making Klaus feel a bad premonition. But he couldn't retreat, so he might as well go with the flow.

"I don't understand what you mean, but I would like to know before I send you on your way. Fear not, I will ensure your death is as swiftly painful and torturous as it gets. That is the mercy I can bestow upon you."

Klaus was scared shitless; his danger sense was screaming like an ambulance.

Oscar shook his head, clearly amused.

"You'll be dead soon anyway, but why don't I use this chance to show you why your death is guaranteed?" The seven cards flew up and hovered two meters apart.

Then, they expanded until they were about three meters tall and two meters wide.

"You know, 300 years ago, I had to kill 1.2 million demons just to feel the power of the Seven Deadly Cards. Back then, I thought they were mere cards with random stuff I could get, like drops and whatnot.

But I was mistaken. You see, these cards are much more than trinkets. They are doorways to summoning Great Demons that will forever be bound to their summoner.

I didn't know better back then. Perhaps I was just too ambitious to think 1.2 million lives would suffice. But alas, I had to sacrifice my own life just to fulfil the requirements."

At this point, Klaus felt the overwhelming danger and instinctively took a step back, though he was still standing in the air. Oscar chuckled.

"In the end, I could only summon beings at the same rank as myself. But that's beside the point. I never expected you, however, to have such a strong soul. Because of this, I will use my force to take your soul.

Be grateful. Your sacrifice will ensure the long-forgotten seven Great Demons are summoned into this world."

The moment he finished speaking, the first card shone. From the doorway, a figure began to emerge. As it stepped through, Klaus felt his heart pound violently in his chest.

'A Level 3 Ascendent... fuck.'

It's a black metallic figure with everything dark. Its braided hairs are as thick as an adult's index finger, each strand ending in razor-sharp spikes. They fall down its back, dancing in the air as if they have a life of their own.

Standing at about 3 meters tall, it wielded a green-hilted Odachi even taller than itself. Its eyes burned a dark red.

'That is an alien, alright,' Klaus gulped. Then the second card shone, and another figure appeared.

A busty lady dressed entirely in pink, including her fan. She had a sensual body and an aroma that immediately assaulted Klaus's heart and mind.

Her clothing covered only 30% of her skin, leaving the rest exposed and dangerously alluring. Klaus knew he was in deep trouble having a succubus join the fray this early.

'This lady needs to die first, or I am done for.'

The third card shone, and another figure appeared. This one was the same height as Klaus but had two horns on his forehead and a rather large set of red eyes. His skin was scaly, and he had a tail.

However, he also carried two swords sheathed behind him.

'A dual-wielding swordsman.'

The fourth card revealed a lady wielding a red bow, clad in red leather armour. She looked human, but her dark skin and long ears suggested she might be a Dark Elf. Klaus didn't know her exact race, but the long ears gave him an idea.

'An Elf archer.'

The fifth card revealed a giant, red-skinned troll wielding a massive hammer, with veins lining his arms, legs, chest, and face.

His cracked skin revealed lava-like veins burning with a mixture of danger and malevolence.

'Fuck...'

The sixth figure appeared shadowy, phasing in and out of existence. Klaus couldn't make out its true form, but he knew the shadowy figure was an assassin—and perhaps the most dangerous of them all.

'Fuck... fuck... fu—'

The seventh figure was an Orc Shaman. The mere sight made Klaus's heart skip a beat.

In one hand, it wielded a staff; in the other, a dark grimoire—or so it seemed—its pages open and exuding a dark, malevolent aura. The shaman was clad in tattered dark clothes, and its appearance was far from friendly.

Its lower body looked perfect, but its upper body was disturbingly bony.

"You are dead anyway, so why resist?" Oscar's sinister laughter echoed everywhere, making Klaus's eyes narrow.

"Indeed, this is a powerful line, but why don't I ask something? Since you are dead anyway, does this mean that after killing this good-for-nothing summons, you will be gone for good?" Klaus asked.

"Yes. But I don't see that happening. After acquiring your soul, I will be reborn and even ascend to the next stage. You are like a blessing in disguise."

Klaus burst out laughing. He couldn't believe how funny his life had turned out.

'Perhaps I should really cut my coat according to my size next time...'

His eyes turned red, and then the shirt he was wearing was covered as an exoskeleton-looking armour started appearing around his body.

It covered his chest and shoulders, materializing into arm guards and then into boots made of spikes.

'Perhaps after killing this bastard, a new modification will be added.'

After killing the manticore, Klaus saw that the liquid stuff he was absorbing was some kind of exo-alien armour that had become one with his body.

His confidence was at its peak as he looked at Oscar and his ten summons.

"You know, there is a saying that goes like this."

The spirit weapons appeared.

Two Void Piercing Needles, a Crescent Disc, a Razor Disc, and the Sword Box—all appeared around him.

ROAR!

The dragon roared into existence, painting the sky red.

Finally, the saber appeared and then separated into two identical sabers, making him dual-wield.

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Klaus charged forward, braving the impossible tide of a Saint against seven Level 3 Ascendants.

...Despicable, but also dope as fuck...