

Paragon 561

Chapter 561 - 561: Hivemind

Klaus didn't immediately wake up from the strange state he was in after visiting his first incarnation, who was a maniac just like them all. In fact, he would need some time to digest this new information.

His first incarnation was not the original mastermind, and he, who seems to be the mastermind behind it all, also doesn't know what he is capable of.

He needed time to fully digest everything...

When Paragon gave him the orb, and he absorbed it, he appeared in a space that felt like his mind. No, it was his mind space. In a twisted kind of way, he appeared in a space that was his mind.

The moment he appeared, all he saw was a clear sky with millions of channels linking one node to the next. It was like a futuristic spectrum of interconnected channels—neurons.

Klaus tried to speak, but no words came out. Instead, the moment he appeared, these channels started disintegrating stage by stage, like a domino structure collapsing into a world.

Slowly, everything vanished, leaving an empty space.

Suddenly, a spark of electricity appeared, and the empty world began reforming. This time, multiple worlds started forming instead of channels inside one world.

The first world was followed by the second and third, and within minutes, 15 worlds had appeared. Inside each world, countless electric channels worked back and forth like a busy electrical circuit.

Suddenly, Klaus's eyes snapped open, and he felt invincible for the first time in his life. The feeling was electric...

At that moment, Klaus felt like he had stepped into a state of absolute clarity. Everything became crystal clear. It was as if his mind had been reconstructed, forming into a new entity akin to a powerful super processor.

And it was true. Klaus's mind had truly broken down into atoms and reformed. This time, instead of rebuilding as a single mind, it had formed 15 minds, and as the seconds passed, even more continued to form.

[Congratulations, brat, you have finally reached the first stage of the Paragon Path.]

Suddenly, the senior spoke from within his soul space.

It was Klaus's first hearing of his voice since entering the trial. From the moment he began the trial, his connection with the senior had been blocked. However, now, he could hear him clearly.

"How?" he asked. "What is happening, Senior?" Klaus couldn't comprehend what was happening to him.

In fact, he felt his mind grasping countless concepts simultaneously. He felt as though he could achieve a multitude of things at once.

All the techniques and skills in his arsenal are being understood in ways his past incarnations never could. He is now gaining clarity, and it was exhilarating...

[You have finally formed the Hivemind. This means you have finally stepped onto the true path of a paragon... The first Path of the Mind Paragon]

"But how? How do you know all this? How are you talking to me after weeks of silence? Who are you?" Now that Klaus could sense things weren't that simple, he began asking questions.

The senior knew too much, and Klaus wanted answers. He was the paragon, but he knew nothing.

[I know everything—or at least to some extent—because you told me everything. I cannot tell you how but know that I am not your enemy and do not know how this was possible. However, I know you chose me, and I will continue serving until I am no longer needed.

As to why I was able to reach you, it was because you have finally inherited the Hivemind and have already created 20 minds. I am currently tapped into one of these minds to speak with you.

In essence, you are supposed to have only one mind, but with the Hivemind, you now have 20 minds. As you grow, more will be added to the HIVE.]

"Damn," Klaus broke into a cold sweat upon hearing that.

[But I can't tell you who I am because I, in essence, am not a person. You will understand soon, but for now, I must first explain the Hivemind.]

Klaus nodded. "Go ahead, senior."

Klaus didn't want to admit it, but for a moment, he became scared of himself. In fact, he never expected this.

The current him was like a person with 20 minds. They were different, yet the same. It felt weird, yet he could tell he hadn't scratched the surface yet.

[The mind, soul, and body are the core aspects of a being. In essence, you are made up of these three aspects. However, these three are dormant and only grow using the default potential set by them since creation, no matter the technique used.

However, these are limitations even gods couldn't escape. Why? Because the mind, body, and soul are the core of any being.

But what happens if one chooses to recreate that mind, body, and soul? This is the question you asked yourself billions of years ago.

And the answer came the next second. It was to take matters into your own hands. So, you chose to become who you are today. You chose to reincarnate by cheating reincarnation.

You see, in your nine reincarnations, it was to wait for this moment every time you recreated your body, mind, and soul.

The first time this happened, you became the paragon of the first star. Then the second came, and they followed until you appeared, having accomplished this.]

"So all of this started because of the Nine Reincarnation Divine Body?" Klaus asked.

[Indeed. Everything was because of that. It was the answer you created for your problem. You had to die nine times to fix it, and at this moment, you are finally one with your body, soul, and mind.

This means that when the time comes, you will recreate your body and soul just as you did with your mind. You have created the Hivemind for the mind, and others will come in time.]

Klaus didn't say anything. Instead, he realized something, and to confirm it, he asked a question that puzzled the senior.

"If I am the mastermind, does that mean I knew what was going to happen up to this point? I mean, I created everything, right? Now, I have the Hivemind, meaning my mental capacity is 20 times more powerful, and it will keep growing, right?

So, did I know this day would come?"

[I don't know because you never knew. You were meant to know up to this point. Even I will forget everything after this conversation. I am only talking to you now because it was meant to happen.]

"So you are a robot?" Klaus laughed.

[No, brat. But I am also not exactly a person. I can't say more because I don't know. But know that the moment you reach the first quota, which is 50 minds, you will understand the path.

You are the engineer of your own destiny, Klaus. How you walk it depends on how you choose to engineer it.]

After saying that, he felt their connection was lost. Klaus sighed, knowing he had no clue who he was. Everything just seemed complicated.

But he understood one thing: if he were to become who he was meant to be, he must first know who he was. He had lived 9 lives; he must understand them all.

He knew he didn't choose to reincarnate for nothing. There must be something so important that he sought to recreate his mind, body, and soul.

If the answer he seeks lies within his past lives, he must seek them and know everything there is to know. The moment he discovers them, he will know the way forward.

"This is more than my 20 minds can take," Klaus laughed, knowing he was in for a rollercoaster.

Chapter 562 - 562: The Universal Enigma

The day Klaus awakened as a cultivator in the apocalypse, he received a skill called [Universal Enigma]. Back then, the description read:

"— As you level up, so does your mind. Anything there is to know, you'll come to understand. You can speak and understand all languages, no matter how ancient or obscure."

The description was straightforward enough. He could speak all languages, understand complex concepts, and grasp anything there was to know.

It was the perfect skill for someone destined to travel and explore other worlds, cultures, and races. However, that seemed to be all it was—just that.

Of course, Klaus had always suspected it was far more powerful, but until a few minutes ago, he had never truly grasped the full extent of its potential.

Now, he understood.

He was blown away when he finally saw the true nature of [Universal Enigma]. In fact, he had only just begun to uncover its depths, and everything about it was utterly bonkers.

Now that he has the [Hivemind] and has added 20 minds to the HIVE, he can tell the Universal Enigma is much more dangerous than it initially appeared.

To test it, he took out all five of his spirit weapons and unleashed all five for the first time. It was so effortless for him that he couldn't feel even a strand of pressure on his mind.

Before, he would feel some pressure on his mind when he unleashed 40 swords. However, now, with a whole mind dedicated solely to the Sword Box, another to the Crescent Disc, another to the Razor Disc, and two more to both Void Piercing Needles, Klaus started to see the true danger of his mind.

He felt no resistance.

However, something else appeared, and for a moment, he thought his mind might be overrunning. Perhaps the processor he is running on is just too monstrous.

In fact, "overrunning" was an understatement.

It felt more like his mind was overspeeding.

He could see countless possibilities for directing and attacking with his spirit weapons. He could predict and read how to move them, when to attack, and how to strike.

Even without an opponent, he could already sense the danger in his mind. It was as though he had finally reached the level where his mind could execute countless scenarios and select the best option in under 0.0000001 nanoseconds.

"Damn... what have I become?"

Although he hadn't become all-knowing, Klaus had certainly gained the mental capacity to comprehend an immense amount of information easily.

Klaus stood up and walked toward the Thousand-Splitting Demon Cutting Disc, picking it up. He didn't understand why these soul weapons weren't destroyed when their owners died, but he was grateful nonetheless.

He quickly formed a contract with his first spirit weapon, and the moment he did, everything felt natural to him.

The Demon Cutting Disc buzzed, and like a swarm of bees, a thousand razor-sharp discs materialized, zipping through the air with deadly precision.

Strangely, Klaus needed only two minds to control all thousand discs, and he still had 18 minds left to spare.

"With this, I am a one-man army. I can simply use my mind to control these weapons while fighting normally without any distractions," Klaus laughed, feeling accomplished.

With the Hivemind, Klaus's mind had become a complex network. He could now execute many tasks simultaneously without any stress on his mental capacity.

Of course, if the tasks exceeded what his 20 minds could handle, he might face limitations. But that was unlikely, considering his current usage of only ten minds:

Seven were allocated for his spirit weapons, one for close combat, one for his mage-like abilities, and another for illusions and poison techniques.

So far, he hadn't needed to use more than ten minds, leaving him with ten extra to compensate for anything he might overlook.

"I can use the ten and then use the other ten to perform all kinds of calculations I can use to kill more efficiently. This way, no matter the obstacle, I wouldn't have to worry about missing anything."

"Damn..."

The smile on his face said it all—he was thrilled, and this happiness stemmed from the benefits he had gained from his recent kill.

Had it not been for the two things he received from the Antenna of Niimo, he would have spent much more time absorbing and cultivating before reaching this point.

"It seems they didn't exaggerate it when they said I was a genius. Leaving this trial for myself is indeed genius. Had the heavens not intervened this early, I wouldn't have become this powerful.

With this mental capacity, I don't even need to lift a weapon to kill those I wish to."

Klaus stood up and dusted himself off.

"Kindly give me my next challenge," Klaus said. Immediately, the details of his next target appeared, bringing a smile to his face.

< Malphas, Devastating Gauntlet Demon >

-> Fist of Destruction

-> Rank: Tier 10 (Ascendent LVL 4)

-> Threat Level: SS (High)

-> The one that Shatters with His First

– Malphas is a colossal 4-meter-tall stone demon who packs a powerful punch, both with his body and, most notably, his fists.

– He possesses a unique bloodline that grants him enhanced defense and physical strength, capable of shattering the fabric of reality when unleashed.

– Rumor has it that when his gauntlet turns red in battle, nothing opposing him will survive the onslaught. A single punch can reshape terrains and obliterate mountains.

– Despite lacking speed, he compensates with unparalleled physical strength and defense. If you attempt to match his punch, you wouldn't even leave a single scratch, let alone draw blood.

– With his Law of Self, you wouldn't feel confident landing a blow, as you'd be too preoccupied defending your head.

– He wields a 'Law of Self' called the Domain of Absolute Strength.

– This invisible domain ensures that anyone caught within it cannot escape. Meanwhile, Malphas gains a 40% boost in strength and a 30% boost in defense. Additionally, with every punch he lands, he has a 50% chance of paralyzing his opponent.

– Malphas has mastered the laws of combat, strength, and defense. The only way to kill him is by using his own strength against him.

Klaus read the details of the next challenge with a smug expression.

"At times like this, I'd usually say something like, 'Damn... this bastard is overpowered.' However, not today.

With the new me, while I'm not underestimating this bastard, I'm also not underestimating myself."

A smile bloomed on his face as he flexed his arm, feeling the energy coursing through him. The current Klaus was like the Seven Great Sages and two Sages combined into one body.

Klaus knew the next target was powerful, but he had just the right tools to counter it. With that in mind, he prepared to be sent to the trial to face his sixth target: the fourth strongest hell demon.

The moment he appeared in the domain of the Devastating Gauntlet Demon, Klaus felt the overwhelming strength saturating the air. The terrain was rugged stone, scattered with jagged rocks and massive boulders.

Standing atop a mountain, Klaus gazed into the distance, where a colossal stone figure began moving toward him.

A few seconds later, the massive, ugly, yet dangerous-looking stone demon, whose entire body seemed to be coated in metal armor, appeared 200 meters from him.

'That is one large motherf*cker'

Chapter 563 - 563: Malphas, Devastating Gauntlet Demon

Malphas looked massive, intimidating, and dangerous. In fact, the sight of the demon standing 200 meters away left a bad taste in Klaus's mouth. Yet, a smug smile remained on his face.

Why?

Because his mind was calculating countless possibilities on how to go about killing the demon, and each scenario struck him as absurdly funny. They all involved him getting turned into a splat.

It didn't sound funny, but it looked funny, and so Klaus made a decision: he would see just what his newly enhanced mind was capable of.

"Mr. Malphas, although I'll be killing you no matter what, why don't I use you to test something first?"

The moment Klaus spoke, he unleashed a mind attack that forced Malphas to take a step back and close his eyes for 0.001 seconds.

But that fraction of a moment was enough. When Malphas reopened his eyes, he saw fourteen Klaus figures, each standing 4 meters tall and wearing gauntlets.

They all had different hairstyles and expressions, but every single one bore the same imposing gauntlets.

Without so much as a greeting, the first Klaus—sporting long black dreadlocks—charged at Malphas. The demon, visibly pissed from losing the initial exchange, prepared to retaliate. Klaus had played dirty, but it was necessary.

This was a test to see just how powerful the [Poison Damage] form of his [Reality Check] illusion skill truly was.

It was also to see what he could do with his mind...

Of course, he wasn't optimistic; however, his mind changed when his first illusion clone, which had taken a tangible form thanks to his class, clashed with Malphas.

Their punches met, and they both took a few steps back. Of course, Klaus's illusion clone took ten steps back, while Malphas took four.

But the fact that Klaus managed to land a blow and didn't immediately get pulverized made him understand one thing: the clone was much more tangible than he had thought. But most importantly, his mind was even stronger.

"I have 30,000 more points; I guess I'll add to stamina and intelligence, considering my strength is already 32,000-plus, and that's just my base points."

He quickly added the points and then felt the change. Though his mind is monstrous, with points surpassing [100,000], just adding 15,000 more proved very beneficial. He could literally feel the change.

Klaus, who was standing a few meters away from the battle, smiled, knowing he had just found something he could rely on—his illusions and his big mind.

"I wonder how powerful I will become when I awaken my illusion bloodline."

With that thought, Klaus sent three more illusion clones to gang up on Malphas. Of course, the fact that he unleashed ten clones also meant ten portions of the Hivemind were currently in use.

But he didn't care, considering he was also using two more to analyze the battle and counter without much stress.

Five minutes later, Malphas obliterated three clones, but three more joined the fray. Klaus felt only a slight tingling in his mind when a clone was obliterated, making him sigh in relief, knowing he wasn't in any danger at all.

This also meant that while one mind rested, another could take its place.

'That is OP as fuck,' Klaus thought with a grin, watching as his poison began taking effect on Malphas. One of the dangers of destroying the clones was the poison that would be unleashed.

The fourth form of the technique that makes the illusion tangible is not known as [Poison Damage] for nothing...

Basically, the clone was made of an illusion made tangible by incorporating poison. So, when a clone was destroyed, the poison was released, ensuring it was automatically inhaled.

For now, Klaus was only using paralyzing poison since his control over it was still quite rudimentary. But thanks to his impeccable control over illusions, he could weaponize the poison effectively.

At this point, whenever Malphas destroyed a clone, the poison dispersed into the air, forcing him to breathe it in. Klaus could only smile, knowing that as his poison talent and class grew, so would the lethality of his toxins.

A clone with short red hair exchanged blows with Malphas, forcing the giant back a few steps. The clone unleashed another punch, but its fist was caught as Malphas's eyes turned crimson.

He was furious, and Klaus could see the demon's gauntlets beginning to glow red. This meant he was about to use a power-up.

However, the Demon Killing Circle activated, instantly copying the buff onto Klaus's clones. At once, four Great Cores were consumed, and Klaus's mind used four additional mental spaces.

This made Klaus break into a cold sweat, realizing that the Demon Killing Circle wasn't something he could use recklessly. In fact, he should have waited until Malphas was more fatigued.

While the move worked, it came at a great cost.

Still, it worked, and Klaus learned a valuable lesson.

"From now on, I'll only use it on myself. I won't waste it on my opponents. But first, this bastard must die."

The clones all moved in, clashing with the giant stone demon, creating devastating explosions. Klaus watched the spectacle from a safe distance, waiting patiently for the right moment to unleash his ultimate move.

A golden bell appeared in his hand and began deepening in color, taking on a dark gold hue as time passed. Thirty minutes later, Klaus felt it was time, considering he was growing tired in some parts of his mind.

However, it was not enough to take him out of the fight, especially since the stone demon had already obliterated close to 50 clones.

Naturally, he was supposed to have long since lost his mind, but he now had the hive mind and a rather abnormal will. So, he was as good as new.

Exactly one hour into the battle, a powerful bell sound rang out, and Malphas was frozen for a second.

But a second was far too long for Klaus to wait. In fact, a second was too long for anyone—even a god—to freeze in battle.

The Thousand-Splitting Demon-Cutting Disc moved through the air like a zipper, immediately severing one hand and one leg. Klaus wasn't taking any chances, but those were his ideal targets, as per the plan.

Malphas was coated in metal armor, so from the start of the battle, the plan had been to create openings for this very moment. Klaus seized the opportunity when the left hand and left leg became exposed.

He had been waiting for that moment, and he went for it.

Now, Malphas was completely disadvantaged. Even though he was a demon with high regeneration abilities, he couldn't regenerate within seconds when he was poisoned and exhausted.

"Giant Hammer Falling." Of course, Klaus wasted no time, leaping into the air with a giant hammer in full swing.

Unlike Daniel, he had mastered the technique he had given him, so the hammer was packing enough power to break anything. He may be wielding an ordinary hammer, but he wasn't wasting the energy behind the attack.

The hammer landed on Malphas's head, causing him to fall backward with his skull cracked open. The hammer struck squarely, killing him instantly.

The moment Malphas fell, the Core, Soul Crystal, and blood essence emerged, and Klaus painfully absorbed everything.

As before, he also absorbs the metal armor around Malphas's body. He could feel his defense and strength steadily growing the instant he absorbed it.

He quickly formed a connection with the gauntlets before requesting his next opponent. Surprisingly, the next opponent was a spearman. However, after reading his details, Klaus was disappointed.

The bastard was even weaker than Malphas. However, he had a poison affinity, which was why he became the 3rd Hell Demon.

Chapter 564 - 564: Demon of Music...Death

The Thousand Splitting Demon-Cutting Disc zipped through the air and severed the head of an elf demon wielding a red spear and exuding a potent black mist.

The head flew into the air and fell with a thud.

Klaus, who was 400 meters away, sighed and then began moving toward the dead body of the 3rd Hell Demon.

His name was Malco, and, per the description of the 3rd hell demon, he was a dark elf and a spearman. Basically, he was just like the average villain, but his poison made him powerful and dangerous.

His poison was extremely potent, and, according to his details, every attack contained a powerful toxin that could easily kill anyone without strong enough poison resistance.

Because of that, Klaus knew that while he could contend with the Level 4 Ascendant, whose threat level was at the SSS (low) stage, he couldn't underestimate him. Thankfully, he wouldn't have to.

If Klaus couldn't engage in hand-to-hand combat, he could at least rely on long-range attacks, which would put the demon at a disadvantage.

However, there was another problem, and this was due to Malco's Law of Self.

Perhaps he was concerned about his fear of not having a shot at close combat with his opponent, so he comprehended a law that would allow him to use his poison more actively.

His law was called [Poison World].

This law allowed him to spread his poison all over the battlefield within minutes. According to the description, the poison could spread 4 km wide.

So Klaus knew he had to end the battle faster. He may have poison resistance, but it was only at the Tier 4 (Grandmaster) stage.

He would need to rise to the Sage stage before he could have a real shot at fighting in close combat. So Klaus became much more efficient this time. Using all his spirit weapons, he practically made it so Malco couldn't even focus on him.

The battle lasted for 56 seconds, but Klaus managed to kill him.

It took much more focus and energy, but he was now confident he could kill a Level 4 Ascendant. Of course, it would depend on the opponent, but in this case, he managed to overpower his opponent and win.

Klaus quickly absorbed the three items. However, immediately after he was done, his poison affinity shot up to the Tier 5 (Saint) stage.

The armor was absorbed, and Klaus formed a contract with the spear, making him extremely happy. He now possessed seven soul weapons.

His favorite so far was the saber he got from Zarok, the Hellhounds.

He was especially happy to have it, considering the saber had two forms. The first was the single-handed one, which was a giant saber.

The second allowed him to use dual-wielding. The saber curved slightly in this form, making it look cool and deadly. He hadn't had much chance to use it, but he knew it was one of the best gifts he had received in this trial.

The second item was the seven deadly cards. He was particularly thrilled and knew that if he played his cards right, he would soon have seven demon lords as subordinates.

But that would be set aside for now, considering he had other things to do first.

Klaus took a fan from his space ring and began examining it. The Ice Scorpion lady he killed in his second trial used the fan.

Something was telling him the fan was no ordinary soul item. In fact, he was sure the Ice Scorpion lady didn't even know that the fan wasn't ordinary.

Klaus examined it for a while until suddenly he saw it.

'A seal, huh?' Klaus thought with a smile that made him want to roll on the floor.

"I knew there was something about this fan." He examined it for a few more minutes before putting it down. He then retrieved the bow he received from the Manticore.

As expected, that one also had a seal inside. Klaus immediately realized that perhaps this trial was much deeper than he had first thought.

"I mean, the voice called it The Trial of Inheritance, and even Paragon said I should be ready for when the Paragon Forge awakens."

Klaus didn't have an explanation for any of this. In fact, he didn't know which was which, but he knew one thing: soon, he would become someone worthy of being referred to as a paragon.

After completing everything, he moved away and sat down. He took some pastries from his space ring and began chewing on them as he replayed some of the battles in his mind.

In the end, he could only sigh, knowing that if he had the Hivemind back when he fought the Seven Demon summons, he wouldn't have suffered as many injuries.

So far, it had been his bloodiest battle.

The battle inside the Demon's Abode Forbidden Zone didn't even come close to his clash with the seven level 3 Ascendents. But he was grateful for the suffering and the victory.

Now, he could boldly say he was able to contend against 7 Ascendents while just a Saint and won. That was a brag nobody could boast about.

Well, Queenie, Miriam, Queen Lunara, Kilain, Lily, and Lulu could brag about that. Because while they didn't know it yet, these six individuals had been monsters in their past lives.

After resting for 4 days and finally forming his 8th core, he asked for his 8th challenge. When the description appeared, Klaus smiled...

Why...?

Because he could tell, he was about to witness something he never knew he had in him. Why? Because he was about to discover why he both liked and hated music.

< Syrith, The Demon Of Music >

-> Music Enchantress

-> Rank: Tier 10 (Ascendent LVL 4)

-> Threat Level: SSS (Medium)

-> The One Who Kills Through Happiness

- Long before becoming the 2nd Hell Demon, Syrith was a performer in the Art of Music. She was widely known as the Demon of Music.

- She played the Zither, and whenever her slender fingers plucked a note, the hearts of all demons calmed, and their joy and happiness rose. She was loved by everyone. Children, teenagers, and adults equally love and admire her.

- Until it happened. She was forced into the bed of a demon king, and after, she was tossed away like trash. Her dignity was trampled on.

- She vanished for decades until one day, the Demon of Death and Music appeared. Now, instead of simply making people happy, she makes them laugh, smile, and shed tears of joy as they die.

- Wherever she goes, she leaves trails of dead bodies, each with a blissful smile on their faces. It was said that she held all the pain from her misfortunes, unlike before when she was always smiling and happy.

-- Many say she was learning how to smile again, which is why she killed people through joy. But in reality, she comprehended a law of self so sinister that even the heavens shuddered at her mercy.

-- Nobody knew how she did it. Many said she had a fateful encounter. Others said it was fate itself. But in reality, it was something much darker. Something that was said to come from the distant future to avenge those who harm the innocent.

->[Law of Absolute Happiness.]

- This law made it so that no matter your mood, everything would be replaced with joy and happiness whenever she plucked a single note from her zither.

-- Killing her will depend on how much joy and happiness you can resist. Your weapons are useless against her as no weapons can kill her.

-- To kill her, you must make her smile again.

[Death in this trial is permanent, so don't die. There are no second chances.]

Chapter 565 - 565: Play Me A Tune (1)

Klaus didn't panic after reading the description, despite knowing he couldn't kill his next target using his weapons or skills. It was as though he was heading into his next battle unprepared, yet he felt ready.

"So this will be a battle of wits," Klaus muttered.

He could already tell the battle would involve deciphering the true nature of the music she would play and uncovering what compelled her to create such a benevolent tune with a malevolent intent.

The description portrayed her as a victim, making Klaus recall a moment from his past life when he killed the Flame Dragon to gain access to the ancestral grounds of the Chaos Flame Demon Dragons.

Back then, that dragon was far more perceptive than his friends, and Klaus had been forced to kill him. But it was only after the act that he discovered the dragon was one of the few genuinely good demons.

He blamed himself for it at the time, and now, seeing another good demon turned sinister stirred something deep within him. It felt like he finally had an opportunity to make things right.

"This time, I have to do the right thing," Klaus vowed.

He then focused on the sentence that mentioned she had help from the distant future. The thought lingered briefly before he dismissed it, choosing instead to concentrate on his next battle.

He sighed and decided to enter the 8th trial.

Klaus was immediately transported to a lush garden filled with an array of vibrant flowers. The scenery captivated him.

Everything about the garden was simply breathtaking.

Klaus moved through the lush garden until he arrived at a spot where a beautiful lady sat with a zither resting on her lap.

She had long blonde hair, green eyes, and two small greenhorns on her forehead, each adding a unique charm to her appearance. Klaus immediately realized she had been waiting for him, but seeing her took him aback.

He could sense it...

'She has been waiting for me for a long time.'

To confirm his thought, the moment their eyes met, she smiled slightly. Klaus couldn't help but smile back as if they were old friends finally reuniting after eons.

"Hi," Syrith said, her voice soft, like a lady greeting her long-lost crush.

"Hi," Klaus responded almost instinctively.

He was puzzled.

Syrith was supposed to have a frown on her face—that was what he had expected. Yet, contrary to his assumptions, she held a warm smile.

"No need to look puzzled," Syrith said calmly. "This is, as you said many years ago, a part of the process. I am simply doing what must be done at this very moment.

Also, don't hesitate to ask if you are wondering what I mean by this. You will understand later. However, you should not assume this is not a part of the trial. If you fail, you will die."

Syrith's expression turned serious as she finished speaking.

"I see. Then what happens now?" Klaus asked, his voice steady.

"It's very simple: I will play a tune, and all you have to do is listen to the whole song without succumbing. I have to tell you, this is the most difficult trial you will face, so be ready," Syrith said.

Klaus nodded and quietly sat down. He somehow knew that what she said was indeed something hard to endure.

He might not know how he came to understand this, but he knew sonic attacks were on the same level as soul attacks and, in some cases, even more destructive.

"Go ahead, play me a tune," Klaus said, ready to take on the eighth trial.

Syrith sighed, and then Klaus saw the look he had expected. A frown appeared on her face as she guided her hand to the strings of the zither.

Then her slender fingers plucked the first note, immediately capturing Klaus's attention. Suddenly, he felt a change occur around him as the second note filled his ears.

His heartbeat slowed down, and a feeling of joy and happiness overwhelmed his senses. Then it happened—Klaus was pulled into the realm of music.

However, it wasn't what one might expect.

In music cultivation, when one gets immersed in music, the realm of music allows one to become one with the sound, and every note resonates with one's soul and mind.

In some cases, if nature is embedded in the music, those listening will be pulled into this realm where everything is real and fake.

In this case, Klaus was now pulled into a similar state. But this wasn't a fake reality but a reality made from memory.

It was Syrith's memory, and without even having to be told, Klaus knew what the trial was about. He would have to live through Syrith's memory and experience everything as an audience.

If he managed to live through everything and didn't die, he would pass the trial.

And so, Klaus began witnessing Syrith's life.

She was a person born into battle. She entered the world on a battlefield, and just minutes after her birth, her mother was killed by an enemy soldier.

Fortunately, she was rescued, and from there, her journey began. Klaus, with his immense mental strength, was unaffected by this harsh scene, but he couldn't help feeling pity for her.

As Syrith grew up, her life began to take shape. At the age of 16, she discovered her love for music. Inspired and determined, she joined a sect devoted to the Art of Music.

With time, she improved her craft. Her talent did not go unnoticed, and her brilliance began to shine. She wasn't someone who could easily be ignored—her beauty and charm captivated everyone, regardless of gender.

Syrith's rise was swift. She gained recognition, made many friends, and each week hosted a music session within her sect where she played cheerful tunes that lifted everyone's spirits.

Eventually, she was recognized as a Core Disciple of her sect and was sent to a much larger sect, one entirely dedicated to music.

At this point, Klaus found himself smiling. Everything he witnessed so far was filled with joy and happiness.

Syrith's journey was far more vibrant and inspiring than he had anticipated, and it was a pleasure to watch.

However, unbeknownst to Klaus, he inadvertently created a vulnerability by allowing himself to revel in the joy and happiness of what he was seeing. The Music of Death was now quietly infiltrating his subconscious, subtly invading his mind.

But he didn't know that.

He was immersed in the music, so much so that he didn't even notice when something dangerous started happening to his body.

However, he continued to listen as the music slowly influenced his mind.

Many years passed in the memory he was seeing, and before he knew it, he had witnessed 57 years of Syrith's life.

He saw how she thrived in the new sect she was sent to, how seriously she took her cultivation, and how much she loved herself and cared for her body.

Klaus saw everything, and the more he watched, the happier he became. He was being influenced slowly, but he didn't know it.

Klaus spent over 70 years witnessing Syrith rise to the peak of Music Cultivation.

But everything changed when she left the sect and began using her music to make people happy. It was also when she chose to walk the path of Purity.

If only she had known her life was going to end in the most gruesome way possible...She would have listened to her master and stayed forever in the sect.

Chapter 566 - 566: Play Me A Tune (2)

Inside the music, Klaus lived 120 years, but on the outside, only 5 minutes had passed. Syrith was plucking note after note on her zither while Klaus sat with a smile on his face.

He was experiencing and watching Syrith's life unfold before his eyes for years, and in each memory, he saw something fun, something filled with happiness...and something new.

Syrith lived a life full of happiness...

He saw how she travelled through the demon states, using her music to bring joy to others. Everybody loved and cherished her.

She was their idol. Young demons who had just entered the path of Music Cultivation aspired to be like her because she was their inspiration.

For some reason, this made Klaus incredibly happy.

However, as he continued to watch and smile, something suddenly changed, and he frowned. The scene he was witnessing was not pleasant at all.

Suddenly, a dark aura burst out of Klaus's body as he clenched his fists and gritted his teeth. He was entirely focused on the scene of Syrith being overpowered on the bed of a demon king.

The sight was so gruesome that, at that very moment, Klaus wanted only one thing—to storm into the scene and ensure the demon king suffered the most gruesome death imaginable.

Ten years.

That was how long it took Syrith to finally gain her freedom, and it was only because the Demon King had grown tired of her and set his sights on someone else.

That day, Syrith cried her eyes out and chose to end her suffering. And she did—though it lasted for a mere five minutes before she awakened.

On that day, when she awakened, everything about her changed.

Her smile turned into a frown. Her mood grew foul, and when she took out her zither, instead of playing a tune that brought joy and laughter, it played a melody that caused people to die from laughter.

Her music had become a disease, infecting all who heard it. Demon states perished, Demon Kings, demons of all ages and genders—they all fell victim to her music.

It was like a plague, spreading far and wide.

Klaus, who was watching this, radiated a murderous aura so intense it could threaten a Void Stage expert. At that moment, his mind was consumed by an overwhelming will to kill and destroy.

Klaus's eyes turned dark, his hair blackened, and even his lips and fingertips became shadowy. Everything about him was corrupted.

The aura emanating from him was corrupted, reeking of death and decay. It was so potent that the once-lush garden had transformed into a desolate wasteland.

Even the air itself carried the stench of death, and the most shocking thing was the change in the environment's colors.

The once-vibrant surroundings had faded to shades of black and white—or something close to it. As time passed, the environment continued to lose what little color remained.

On the last floor of the dungeon,

Lissa looked at her sister Alida with a worried expression. They both understood what was happening to Klaus, and they knew it was a very bad thing.

"This can't happen; Master cannot fail here," Lissa said, her voice filled with concern.

Alida, however, remained focused on Klaus. Her eyes were locked on the aura surrounding him, and for ten full minutes, she neither blinked nor spoke a word. It was as if she were studying something intently.

Finally, thirty minutes into the music, Alida seemed to have figured something out. By that time, Klaus had already lived about 500 years within the music's illusion.

Alida sighed, and a small smile appeared on her face.

"Why are you smiling, Alida? Master is in danger!" Lissa shouted, alarmed at her sister's expression.

"Why shouldn't I be happy? It's not like Master is in any real danger," Alida replied, her tone smug as she glanced at Lissa, who seemed to be the more emotional of the two.

"What are you talking about? Can't you see the corrupted aura around him? He is clearly in danger!" Lissa exclaimed, her small fists clenched tightly.

"You know, Master would really punish you if she knew you couldn't recognize the Aura of Death," Alida laughed, and Lissa's body froze. She looked closely at the dark aura emanating from Klaus, and for a moment, her body shuddered.

"You don't mean..."

"Yes, Master has realized the Aura of Death. As to why he hasn't woken up yet, I don't know, but he has already passed the 8th challenge. Look, even Syrith is smiling now."

Lissa looked, and Syrith was smiling. She had accomplished the task given to her years ago by the one and only Paragon of Death, Klaus's 6th incarnation—the one who came back in time to make this moment happen.

It was said that one day, the Paragon of the Nine Stars would face an unprecedented calamity that not even immortals could prevent. However, when all hope was lost, the tune of death would play, and all who listened would die.

Klaus didn't know yet. In fact, he wouldn't know for a while, considering his timeline had been altered. But one day, when he was on his last leg, his past—one that wasn't meant to exist—would surface. On that day, the legend of the long-lost Paragon of Death would rise again.

Klaus stayed immersed in the music for a whole day until, suddenly, a deep, dark aura filled with sinister intent burst out of his body, bringing the 8th trial to an end.

Syrith, who wasn't affected by the aura, looked at Klaus, who had finally returned to his old self and seemed to have forgotten everything that had just happened.

"Remember, Benefactor, when all hope is lost, and there's nothing else to do, play a tune, for that is the path of the Paragon of Death."

As soon as Syrith said this, her body turned into sparkles of light and dispersed into the air, leaving Klaus with a happy smile, which made him smile back.

She left her zither and the three items, which Klaus immediately absorbed. Strangely, it wasn't painful at all, unlike the seven trials he had previously completed.

He then picked up the zither, and oddly, he already had a contract with it. In fact, he could tell the zither was happy to see him.

It was strange, but he felt it wasn't unusual—in a strange kind of way.

Klaus held the zither in his hands, and instead of perceiving it as a musical instrument, it felt like a killing weapon. Strangely, despite never having played a zither before, he instinctively knew he could play it flawlessly.

But at the moment, he didn't feel like it.

For some reason, he felt a profound sense of peace, and rather than indulging in music, he saw no need to play it at all.

Syrith's last smile brought him a moment of peace he was currently bathing in. This lasted for a while.

It had already been over two months since he entered the trial. While he was growing stronger and remaining hidden from the prying eyes of the heavens, he wasn't at peace.

He didn't want to find out the hard way what that unease might mean, so he immediately requested his final trial. However, when he saw the name and description of his next—and last—opponent, his smile froze.

Panic set in.

< Hydra, The Eight-Headed Hyra Demon Serpent >

-> The Elemental Demon

-> Rank: Tier 10 (Ascendent LVL 5)

-> Threat Level: SSS (High)

-> You would have to kill it 8 times to successfully kill it...

" "

" "

....?

" "

Chapter 567 - 567: The Eight-Headed Hydra Demon Serpent (1)

Klaus appeared, hovering in the air. All around him was a surging sea spreading as far as the eye could see. He had finally entered the last trial, and from the expression he wore, Klaus wasn't happy at all.

He had read the description three times, and each time, the word "impossible" came to his lips—precisely what the trial was all about.

To confirm his thoughts, just as he appeared, a terrifying serpent rose its head from the depths of the sea and locked eyes with Klaus. It was the massive head of a snake, too large to even compare to a human.

At best, the size of the serpent's head was akin to that of a 20-meter-long Diamond Skin Brute Elephant. To add more horror, this serpent had only one green eye and a single greenhorn.

But then, things changed. A second head rose, identical in size but with yellow eyes and a yellow horn.

Next came a third head with red eyes and a red horn.

A fourth head followed with black eyes and a black horn.

Then, a fifth head with blue eyes and a blue horn.

A sixth head emerged with white eyes and a white horn.

The seventh head appeared with brown eyes and a brown horn.

Finally, the eighth head rose, adorned with majestic golden eyes and a golden horn.

This monstrous demon was the Eight-Headed Hydra Demon Serpent, a Tier 10 monster demon comparable to a Level 5 Ascendant.

According to the description, each head was its own entity. Essentially, Klaus was about to face the onslaught of eight Level 5 Ascendants, each individually more dangerous than he could handle.

He wasn't happy, but if he wanted to survive, he had to kill all eight heads within 24 hours. If even one remained alive after the time limit, the others would regenerate, regardless of how many he had defeated.

Adding to his despair, all his Life Points were rendered useless. In this trial, he could only try his best not to die—even if it's just once.

The heads of the snakes rose, towering 150 meters above the surface of the seawater, casting an ominous shadow over the sea.

Each head was covered in a bone-metallic-like material with a jagged surface and razor-sharp edges. Everything about the snakes was simply too terrifying.

"All this, and they each have a different law of self... Was I this bored in my past life that I chose to create this impossible last trial?"

Klaus could hardly believe himself anymore.

At that point, he realized this trial wasn't random; he had created something for himself to inherit something. Of course, he was grateful—until he saw the monster's description. Then he knew he had to go all out, using everything he had.

"Mercy on the souls of those who would dare offend me if I somehow manage to pass this trial..."

"Do you snakes have a name, or should I just call you by your eye and horn colors?" Klaus tilted his head and asked with a mocking smile.

Of course, he wasn't about to cower in fear.

If only he knew that as soon as he appeared inside the final trial, five ladies on the outside felt a wave of fear wash over them.

Queenie was currently trying to calm her heartbeat while the image of Klaus lingered in her mind.

Lucy was no different. Ohema and Miriam, who were currently in seclusion, felt the same. Meanwhile, Hanna, who had just sent an arrow flying through the body of a Tier 8 Blue Skin Ape, suddenly clenched her chest tightly.

This caused Kathy to move quickly and support her before she could collapse.

"Haus..." she muttered, using Klaus's real name from his past life as Fruity. Hanna had been having recurring dreams of her past life in Havana, and every day, when she woke up, her bond with Klaus grew stronger.

Unknowingly, this bond was far more than a mere feeling. It was connecting them on a deeper level, for she was his Starlight.

So, when Klaus appeared at the last trial, Hanna, whose connection to him was much stronger than that of the other ladies, felt Kent's fear for him. She was literally the link connecting Klaus to one of the paragon stars.

After some time, she recovered but could no longer continue the mission. She left to go have some rest with her beast companion.

Meanwhile, inside the trial, Klaus's body was now encased in the exo-alien armour, which covered about 85% of his body.

The only parts left exposed were his face, arms, and head. However, two horns protruded from his forehead as part of the armour, and arm guards adorned both hands.

The sabre he had taken from the Hellhound was gripped firmly in his hand.

His spirit weapons hovered beside him, ready for battle.

'This is it. This is the battle that will determine whether I am truly worthy of becoming a Paragon,' Klaus resolved. Without hesitation, he pointed his weapon at the eight-headed serpent.

"Let's fight."

The black-eyed snake head was the first to attack, shooting a dark beam toward Klaus. The beam arrived before him in an instant, but he was already on the move, so the attack missed.

Klaus wasn't about to take on attacks if he could simply evade... The Dragon is hibernating, and waiting for it to finish will take too long.

"Dragon Slash!" Klaus unleashed a powerful attack that immediately manifested a large flame dragon. It surged forward but was blown to bits before reaching 100 meters of the eight snakes.

However, Klaus used the explosion as cover to attack with his spirit weapons. The Thousand-Splitting Demon-Cutting Disc split into 400 pieces and attacked simultaneously.

Klaus also took the chance to launch another attack, this time using the Void Piercing Needles, but as expected, they proved ineffective.

The needles bounced off the snakes' skin, but they helped him determine just how thick the snakes' hides were and how much force he needed to put into his attacks.

'Aside from the Thousand-Splitting Demon-Cutting Disc, the rest won't do much damage. They can only serve as distractions.'

Klaus smiled when he realized he was both outnumbered and outgunned. For some reason, the smile on his face only grew wider.

Explosions that made the sea surge continued to rock the surface as Klaus attacked with his sabre and the cutting disc.

Klaus slowly kept pushing forward until he finally entered the 80-meter radius of the monster's snakes. Dangerous distances, but he had to.

This final trial featured a monster instead of a beast. Perhaps it was a mock battle to prepare him for the mission he and Queenie will be doing when he is out of the dungeon.

He moved even closer, a dangerous decision but the only viable option. He immediately activated the law of self, which previously belonged to the [Four-Tail Ice Scorpion Demon Queen] he had killed in the second battle of the trial.

[Eternal Dance of Ice and Death]

The 300-meter radius around him instantly turned to ice. The sea froze, and the snakes' movements were significantly slowed.

Kent moved in for a decisive attack but quickly retreated when he noticed the brown horn on one of the heads beginning to glow.

At that very moment, Klaus smiled bitterly and muttered a heartbreaking phrase.

"I am fucked..."

" "

Chapter 568 - 568: The Eight-Headed Hydra Demon Serpent (2)

Cultivators with Earth affinity are mostly those who, if they manage to take their elemental mastery to the next level, become the most annoying and terrifying opponents one could face.

After mastering their element to a certain stage, Earth elemental cultivators can transmute their earth element into metal.

Of course, that is only if they manage to awaken their element.

But there are a few, like the Zhou Twins, who managed to transmute first before they awakened it. Currently, they are a force to be reckoned with in the academy.

Their defence and offence are very powerful simply because everything has transformed into metal. So when Klaus saw the brown horn glow and, as an Elemental Overlord, immediately sensed the danger, he retreated.

But it was no use. The brown horn on one of the heads glowed, and the Ice Domain that had been impenetrable when Klaus faced it in the second trial shattered like glass. From the depths of the sea, metal spikes began shooting toward Klaus.

He moved back and activated the [Bell of Harrows].

He used it as a defensive shield and started tanking all the attacks. At the same time, he unleashed the [Nine Star Ice Lotus Bloom], which immediately froze the area within 30 meters of him.

He was in danger, and he would not allow this to continue for long. His advantage was in the ice domain, but it was now gone—though not for long.

He unleashed the Law of Self of the Manticore Demon, making it so all metal spikes entering the 150 meters around him lost 60% of their effectiveness.

Klaus was decisive; he immediately unleashed his latest skill and chose to start messing with the brains of the eight snakes.

The [Whispers of Discord] was activated, and, as Klaus intended, he targeted the head that was unleashing the spikes, slowly eating into its brain.

His trait as a weapons expert allowed him to see the bigger picture in battle and maintain a clear head, even in disadvantageous situations.

"Eye of Malevolence." The crimson eye appeared in the air, and a deep crimson energy shot out of it. However, the golden eyes on one of the heads glowed and clashed with the crimson energy.

Klaus just smirked, and the next second, a painful howl came from the mouth of the golden head, causing the sea to surge.

Klaus smiled like a madman as he used the Vanishing Step to move. At the same time, the [Alasbatar Sky Bow] he had acquired from the Manticore demon appeared in his hands along with one of the 2-meter-long metal arrows he had tempered...

"Void Piercing Arrow."

The two-meter-long arrow pierced through the golden eyes of the snake, blinding it instantly. Of course, it still had seven other eyes to see and attack with, but Klaus was decisive and took care of the head with the most annoying Law of Self.

The snake's blood-curdling scream spread throughout the sea, making Klaus giggle before moving back. So far, he had only sustained minor injuries thanks to the armour he was wearing.

"If you can't kill them...blind them."

But he wasn't about to get complacent.

He had only taken care of the eyes that allowed the snake to launch attacks containing debuff skills. Its Law of Self, "Light of Restoration," basically allowed it to steal Kent's energy for itself. It was very nasty, so Klaus risked his life to take it out.

But it came at a cost.

Suddenly, the seven remaining heads activated their elements, and everything became chaotic.

The redhead was bathed in flames, the white head in water, the blue head in ice, the yellow head in lightning, the green head in metallic vines, the dark head in extremely thick darkness, and finally, the brown head was coated in metal.

"Just what I wanted," Klaus sighed, and then he unleashed his buff...

His wings burst out, and lightning surged from his body. His movement doubled, and just like that, his sabre split in two, making him dual-wield.

His mind also surged, and all 1,000 demon-cutting discs appeared, surging toward the snake like a swarm of bees.

Just like that, Klaus entered the second phase of the battle with the Eight-Headed Hydra Demon Serpent and was still disadvantaged.

The demon-cutting disc surged like bees, but the redhead opened its mouth and breathed out flame like a dragon, blowing 70% of the disc away. The rest of the disc attacked, and a few cuts appeared on them.

Klaus was on the move the next second, and before the seven heads could notice, Klaus punched forward at the golden horn on the head he had blinded.

The gauntlet he took from the Malphas smashed into the horn, blowing it to bits. But Klaus didn't come out unscathed.

A boulder made of metal smashed into his body, sending him flying deep into the sea. He sank to about 400 feet deep. However, he managed to kill one head.

It was either he cut off the head or destroyed the horn. But looking at the thickness of the heads, he wasn't about to waste time trying to cut it off...

Now, he had to get back out of the water.

But that was easier said than done. The moment he sank into the water, the white head roared, and the sea surged. Klaus, who was in the water, immediately felt the water turn sharper, and like a sword, his body started bleeding.

His silent screams filled the sea.

The pain reached down to his soul. The pain was just too much, but that wasn't all—within two seconds, his body was cut in ways he just couldn't ignore.

Suddenly, the sea burst open, and Klaus, now bleeding all over, emerged with eyes as red as blood. His body was cut in all the right places.

His hands became weak, and as he expected, the attack had drained his stamina greatly, but Klaus didn't mind that. He waved his hand, and all thousand cutting discs surged forward, attacking the Metalhead.

Klaus took out the bow and started firing arrows at the other heads.

The lightning head fired bolts at him, but Klaus used the Illusion Clones to move and attack. His hivemind made him more resilient with the [Reality Check] skill.

The brown-headed snake was the one giving him the most trouble. Klaus expected it to act as the defence for the other seven heads, but it was now the most attacking head.

It was as if it had an endless supply of energy to channel. And while it was a Level 5 Ascendent, the punch it was packing was deadly.

Meanwhile, the lightning head was also making things difficult for him despite using illusions. As for the dark head, it wasn't attacking at all.

The ice, water, wood, and fire heads were attacking alongside the lightning and metal heads.

Klaus wasn't having it easy.

"Die, bastard!" Klaus shouted as he finally managed to penetrate the brain of the metal head. He used [Whispers of Discord] to give it an order.

The next second, a pointy metal shot from the depths of the sea and stabbed into the head of the white head. Klaus was already on the move with his gauntlet.

Before the other heads could react, he landed a decisive blow that shattered the horn into bits, killing the water elemental head.

He was on the move again.

When he created some distance, he whispered something that showed just how powerful the [Face of Discord] was.

"Self-destruct..."

" - "

Chapter 569 - 569: The Eight-Headed Hydra Demon Serpent (3)

BOOM

The metal head exploded, causing a powerful shockwave that threw Klaus back several meters. The explosion was very destructive, and Klaus, now pale and as white as paper, could only watch as the chaos began to die down.

But he was on the move the next second, ready to kill the remaining five heads. When he used [Whispers of Discord] and began whispering into the head of the metal head, it was more difficult than he had thought.

At first, he used it to whisper attacks aimed at the other heads. However, he faced powerful resistance, requiring about six mind spaces to crack. But Klaus was the Overlord of Slaughter, so he found another way.

He whispered for the snake to attack him instead. This made it very happy, which, in a way, created a backdoor to its head. Klaus used his body as bait, and well, he suffered for it.

But when he felt his connection to the metal head grow stronger, he immediately went for the kill. Of course, the moment he whispered for the death of the water head, the resistance began to appear.

Klaus knew that if he wasted it, he would regret it, so his mind quickly came up with the best move: kill the metal head before it could do anything to disrupt the link he had formed in its head.

Thus, he gave the order for self-destruct, and it was incredibly powerful.

"Giant Colossal Spear Descent." A spell circle appeared, and a large spear made of ice shot at the dark head. But before the attack could land, the ice head of the snake shot an ice beam, destroying it instantly.

Suddenly, a painful scream came from the ice head, which had just been blinded. Klaus sacrificed one of the Void Piercing Needles by sending it on a one-way strike through.

Well, sacrifice is a wrong word—it was more like depositing it in its body, which was surprisingly affected. The needle entered through its eye, and Klaus lost connection to it.

But he didn't care, mainly because he was finally matched 4 and a half. Now that the ice head was blinded, it was up to the Darkness, Wood, Lightning, and Fire to compete with.

A lightning bolt blew away Klaus, but he was back and attacking again the next second.

"Lissa, do you think Master will be alright? I mean, he has already killed three and crippled one, but he has also lost a lot of his energy?" Alida asked her sister, who was also watching the final battle, with a worried expression.

"He will be fine, Alida. He is Master; this is just something small for him," Lissa said, but even she didn't sound convinced.

"Master will win... He has to win, or his world and everyone he loves is doomed," Alida said before taking her sister's hand right when Klaus was sent flying again.

'Shit... these bastards are aggressive now.'

Klaus flew high into the air and channelled his strength into his sabre, unleashing a powerful Moon Slash at the dark head. He tried the Whisper of Discord again, but it didn't work.

It was as if the remaining heads had shut it off.

"Time for you to die, bastard." Klaus took out the spear he got from his third challenger and tossed it in the air. Then, he flew even higher into the air and descended at a speed several times faster.

Then, like kicking a ball, his foot struck the blunt end of the spear, and it shot off like a missile.

The spear went through its eye, just as he had done with the Void Piercing Needle on the ice-type head. It was decisive, but Klaus wasn't celebrating yet. Blinding them didn't mean they would stop attacking.

They were attacking despite being blinded.

Fortunately, their attacks also affected the other heads, which forced Klaus to move quickly to end them.

However, just as he was closing in, a vine latched onto his leg before he could get close to the darkness-type head. Klaus swiftly severed it and retreated.

He continued attacking while doing his best to handle the Lightning, Wood, and Fire heads. The battle was anything but easy.

The more he attacked, the more danger he found himself in. It was as if the remaining heads were actively protecting the blinded ones.

Four hours passed, and Klaus was still doing all he could to kill the Ice-type head and the Darkness that the Void Piercing Needle and the Spear blinded.

Klaus was switching between weapons and using dozens of skills, but he still couldn't break through to the heads.

Suddenly, an opening appeared, and Klaus, who was now alone on the battlefield, charged toward the Firehead. It was about to spray a wave of fire, but before it could, Klaus appeared within 40 meters of it.

A spear appeared in his hands, and like throwing a javelin, he hurled it, stabbing through the eye of the Lightning-type head, which was distracted by one of his illusions. Klaus wasn't taking any chances.

Now, he had blinded the Darkness, Ice, and Lightning heads. He quickly moved in and, with a decisive blow, shattered the horn of the Ice-type head, killing it.

Klaus quickly retreated but was caught by a vine stab that practically tore through his ribs. Although Klaus was wearing the exo-armor that healed the wound quickly, it didn't stop him from feeling the pain.

Six hours passed, and Klaus was nearing his breaking point. He was losing blood faster than he could regenerate.

After becoming a Sage, his regeneration ability had become much more powerful. Right now, he could even regenerate body parts, but it costs a tremendous amount of energy. Luckily for him, however, he had more than enough energy.

However, the fatigue that came with using all these skills and techniques was too much for someone at his level to handle.

'Should I use it now?' Klaus wondered, considering he had already used all the Law of Self, which he had gained from the previous trials, and exhausted all the skills provided by the Pentaface Bead (Demon Bead).

He was contemplating whether to use the [Shared] abilities of the Paragon mark. Although he couldn't communicate with his women, he could still activate that skill.

At this moment, Klaus would gain a 275% boost to all his stats for one hour and thirty minutes. It was enough to make things much more interesting for him.

But it was his last resort. Aside from that, the only thing left was the [Overdrive] skill, which would give him a 1000% boost by sacrificing 100 years of his lifespan.

That wasn't an option.

Klaus immediately went into deep thought, dedicating two whole Mind Spaces to checking through his skills and techniques, while another Mind Space was verifying if he had made any mistakes in using them.

He was using his brain, all right. However, the odds were simply too overwhelming for someone at his level to handle. He should at least be a Sovereign to face such odds.

Klaus was digging through his mind, searching for a way out. If he could blind the Wood and Fire heads, he could finally take care of them using the [Shared].

[Brat, you have the Hivemind... So think!]

Suddenly, the senior spoke and Klaus paused his attack for a moment. The words were just words, but the way they sounded was different.

It was as if he had gained clarity in that instant.

"Right, I have to think."

Chapter 570 - 570: The Only Way is to Die

The Hivemind is like a network of minds linked together, resembling a vast neural network system. Neurons fire electrical pulses every millionth of a second.

Klaus is currently housing twenty minds. These twenty minds are all interconnected to form the Hivemind.

The battle had already drained him, but he had to win. When the Senior spoke at such a critical moment, Klaus paused and recalled all his spirit weapons, including the Demon-Cutting Discs.

The only thing left was his wings, which he used to fly at terrifying speeds, evading every attack. He devoted just one mind to controlling his flight while the remaining nineteen were engaged in something he never thought he would attempt.

As the Senior had said, he had the Hivemind, so he had to use it to think.

The words were simple, yet Klaus understood what he needed to do. At that moment, his nineteen minds fired in unison—electricity surging through neurons and channels as he pushed his mind to its utmost capacity.

At that moment, Klaus was like Brainiac 3.0.

Ten seconds later, he was done, but he didn't look happy. He had done what needed to be done. Using his superior mental capacity, he played the battle out 6,578 times in his mind.

He analyzed 6,578 different scenarios in which he might emerge victorious. He factored in every detail—the events, the powers and abilities displayed by both him and the monstrous snakes, their movement patterns, the heads that had perished, the ones blinded, those still attacking, his own battered state, the remaining skills at his disposal, and, finally, the Overdrive and Shared skill.

After calculating all these variables and exploring every possibility, the conclusion was the same each time. In order to kill the eight-headed Hydra snake, he had to die.

The only way forward... was death.

[You had your answer, kid. Now it's up to you to figure out what to do next.]

The senior seemed to have changed somehow. It was as if the moment they entered the Trial after he had been disconnected for a few weeks, he came back different. But, at the moment, everything he said was true.

Klaus must choose how to proceed.

He had all the variables, but in the end, he had to make a bold decision.

"6,000 scenarios will be easy, but my death will be painful. But 577 will be difficult with an easy death," Klaus sighed as he dodged a flame spear and a stabbing vine.

"As for the last scenario, how I will die is unclear." Klaus moved through the air like lightning. He had just created scenarios of how he would die—a very messed-up thing, but his mind allowed him to make those decisions.

Of course, it would depend on how he acted, but no matter what he did, in the end, one of the 6,578 scenarios he envisioned would come to pass.

Even if he switched between scenarios, he would arrive at one of the endings he had created. Of course, there was one where he knew he would die, but he just didn't know how.

"Dad once said, 'If you are scared of the unknown, you must embrace it. Who knows, you might die screaming.'" Klaus laughed, and a spear appeared in his hand. His entire body was bathed in lightning.

The Lightning Source Diagram appeared.

He paused for a moment and looked at the dragon tattoo.

He moved, and the sky turned into a storm of lightning and thunder. Klaus's speed increased as he used [Shared], taking his stats to the next level.

His speed was now several times faster.

All his spirit weapons appeared and attacked. Seven illusion clones materialized—one was a bodybuilder, another a doctor, the third a soldier, the fourth a samurai, the fifth an archer, the sixth a Stormtrooper, and the last a Jedi.

"That is a messed-up scenario, Klaus, but I do crazy sometimes," he laughed at his own imagination.

He moved, and a twisted smile spread across his face as he activated a technique he had used before.

"Runic Spellblade... Falling into Despair," he said, activating the skill he knew would leave him passed out for days—if he didn't die first. Somehow, that was a strangely comforting scenario.

"I looked danger in the face and laughed," he muttered the incantation, a white runic circle glowing around his arm, amplifying his strength.

"I looked in the face of torment and laughed..." Another runic circle appeared.

"I looked in the face of Death and laughed..." Yet another appeared, further increasing his strength.

Klaus used the third form of the [Astra Phantom Step] movement technique for the first time since becoming a Sage.

"Void Step."

He moved and vanished. The next second, he appeared in front of the flame-type head of the snake and stabbed the spear through it. A moment later, he was 200 meters away, coughing blood.

"Void Step." Another second later, he used it again, appearing in front of the wood-type head of the snake, stabbing the spear through it, and finally blinding the remaining heads.

But blood was flowing from both his mouth, nose, ears and eyes. His body is still not strong enough for the [Void Step]

The Lightning, Darkness, Wood, and Fire heads were now blinded. But this was where the problem he had predicted began.

The moment all its eyes were blinded, the snake began activating all its skills and attacking randomly. Klaus looked at his arm and saw that all three runic circles were working.

He glanced at the dragon tattoo once more and smiled.

"I hope this works, buddy... or else I'll KO myself."

The spear vanished, replaced by a sabre in his hand. Klaus moved in for his final attack, the one that would determine his fate.

"Weapon Enhancement Art..." He brandished both weapons, one in each hand. The illusionary clones he had created moved in, and when they were a meter from the four heads, they self-destructed, creating a poisonous mist.

"Soul and Weapon As One." Klaus stood in the air like a samurai. He fixed his gaze on the four heads and moved.

"Void Step."

He vanished and appeared in front of the snake. Then suddenly, the sabre elongated, becoming a 150-meter-long blade.

Klaus wasted no time and attacked, cleaving from right to left. The long sabre cut through the air, and like slicing through tofu, it severed all four heads...well, he spiritually severed the heads.

The speed of the cut pulled Klaus away, but as he was being pulled, the variable he had envisioned appeared.

The Lightning-type head fired one last bolt just before the sabre passed through it, causing Klaus to move directly into its trajectory.

He was struck and sent flying, landing deep beneath the sea, where he immediately passed out with a large hole in his chest. He was submerged underwater with no sign of life in him.

After Klaus used his soul to enhance the sabre, it cut through the snake's soul, killing it instantly. Its colossal body fell backward and crashed into the sea, sending water splashing everywhere.

That was the scenario Klaus envisioned, using his powerful soul strength to augment the sabre. It was the only way he could kill the bastards.

However, he never saw how it ended because he hadn't anticipated that final attack. In his mind, since everything was unclear, he believed he would die because of the soul attack he used and the Void Step he performed in rapid succession.

But he never saw that attack coming, and thus, the Paragon of the Nine Stars is now lying under the sea with a gaping wound in his chest.

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