

THE LAST PARAGON IN THE APOCALYPSE

Chapter 8: First Life and Death Battle

A beautiful crescent moon made of ice sliced through the air, cutting a massive mountain bull cleanly in half. There was no blood when the two halves of the monster hit the ground, the ice had sealed the wounds. A few meters away, Klaus stood with a satisfied smile, admiring his work.

"Damn, your boy Klaus is on fire today," he said with a playful grin, feeling like a spoiled family heir showing off his new toy. The past hour had been all about perfecting his technique—cutting down monsters with a single swing. At first, it was rough, more like a desperate attempt to pull off the move. But as he kept trying, something clicked.

He started to get the hang of it, feeling more connected with the power inside him.

What surprised Klaus the most was how quickly he was picking things up. Just by killing monsters, he was gaining new insights. In this last half hour

alone, he'd taken down four more Tier 1 monsters. With each one, his understanding of the Moon Slash skill deepened. It wasn't just about brute force; there was a rhythm, a flow that he was beginning to grasp.

One of the first things he noticed was how to better manage his spiritual qi. In his initial attempts, he used up about 50% of his qi in one go. The result? He nearly tore his own meridians and muscles apart. Not exactly ideal. But as he kept practicing, he learned to control it more precisely, avoiding unnecessary strain on his body.

But that wasn't all. Klaus found out that using less spiritual qi and focusing more on the elemental essence actually boosted the power of his attacks. It wasn't something he would have guessed, but the results were undeniable. The Moon Slash became sharper, and more destructive, without draining him so much.

As he continued experimenting, Klaus discovered another important insight. The timing was everything. If he released the Moon Slash at just the right moment, when his spiritual qi and elemental essence were perfectly in sync, the attack was not only more powerful but also faster. It sliced through the air like a hot knife through butter, leaving no room for the monster to react.

He also learned that positioning made a huge difference. By adjusting his stance and the angle of his slash, he could direct the crescent moon with greater precision, targeting weak spots on the monsters. This meant he could take them down with less effort, conserving his energy.

"One more to level up," Klaus muttered to himself, glancing at his progress. Satisfied, he stored the mountain bull's body and started moving deeper into the forest. Even though he was still in the outer section, the atmosphere became increasingly ominous with each step. The trees grew thicker, the shadows darker, and an unsettling silence filled the air.

Roar!

Just as Klaus was leaping over a slab of stone, a deafening roar echoed through the forest, shaking the ground beneath his feet. The sound was so powerful that it made his heart skip a beat.

"Gotta run," Klaus whispered, spinning on his heel. But before he could move, a sudden wave of cold washed over him, freezing him in place. His breath caught in his throat as ice began to creep up his legs, locking him down.

"This... it's a Tier 2 Alasbaser Ice Jade Python. How unlucky can I get?" Klaus felt a surge of dread. "But this is still the outer area—how is there a Tier 2 monster here?"

The pressure bearing down on him was immense. The very air around him felt heavy as if the forest itself was closing in. Klaus struggled to move, his body fighting against the icy grip that held him. Panic started to rise, but he forced it down, trying to focus. He knew that losing his cool would only make things worse.

The python slithered out from the shadows, its jade scales shimmering with a deadly beauty. The creature's eyes locked onto Klaus, glowing with a cold, merciless light. It was huge, easily towering over him, its body thick and coiled with raw power. The temperature dropped even further as it drew closer, frost forming on the ground around it.

Klaus felt the weight of the python's presence pressing down on him. Every instinct screamed at him to flee, but his legs wouldn't budge. The cold was seeping into his bones, numbing his senses. His mind raced, trying to figure out a way out of this. He had faced Tier 1 monsters before, but this was something else entirely. The power difference was overwhelming.

The python didn't wait. It struck, its massive head darting forward with terrifying speed. Klaus barely had time to react. He forced his body to move, throwing himself to the side just in time to avoid being crushed by the python's jaws. The ground where he'd been standing exploded into shards of ice, the sheer force of the impact leaving a crater.

Klaus rolled to his feet, panting heavily. The frost had spread across his body, making his movements sluggish. He knew he had to fight, but he couldn't let this battle drag on. The longer it lasted, the more the cold would sap his strength.

Drawing on his spiritual qi, Klaus tried to shake off the cold, focusing on the elemental essence within him. He summoned the energy into his blade, the familiar icy glow of the Moon Slash starting to form. The python hissed, sensing the power gathering in Klaus's weapon, but it didn't back down. Instead, it coiled tighter, preparing to strike again.

With a burst of effort, Klaus launched his attack. The crescent-shaped slash flew through the air, aimed directly at the python's head. But the creature was fast—too fast. It twisted its body, dodging the attack with a fluid motion that seemed impossible for something so large. The Moon Slash grazed its scales, leaving a faint mark, but nothing more.

Klaus cursed under his breath. The python retaliated immediately, whipping its tail around in a wide arc. Klaus tried to block, raising his sword to defend himself, but the impact was too strong. The force sent him flying backward, crashing into a nearby tree. Pain shot through his body as he struggled to get back up.

The python didn't give him a moment to recover. It lunged at him again, jaws wide open. Klaus knew he couldn't afford to take another hit like that. He quickly rolled to the side, narrowly avoiding the python's strike. The tree behind him splintered under the pressure, falling apart like it was made of twigs.

Desperation kicked in. Klaus couldn't keep dodging forever. He had to find a way to turn the tide of this battle. He focused his energy, trying to channel as much elemental essence as he could into his next attack. The cold was still there, gnawing at him, but he forced himself to push through it.

Summoning every ounce of strength, Klaus prepared to launch another Moon Slash. This time, he aimed lower, targeting the python's exposed underbelly. The creature hissed, sensing the danger, but it was already mid-strike, committed to the attack.

"Die brute" Klaus released the slash with a shout, sending the crescent arc toward the python's vulnerable spot. The energy surged through his sword, more powerful than before. The slash connected, cutting deep into the python's flesh. The creature let out a deafening roar, writhing in pain as blood sprayed from the wound.

"This feeling..." Klaus murmured, just as his stamina hit rock bottom. He felt a sudden warmth spreading from his stomach, seeping into every part of his body. His strength began to return, and the fatigue and stress that had weighed him down started to fade away.

Klaus's eyes narrowed as he watched the python's wound begin to heal, the deep gash slowly closing up. "I have to kill this brute before things take a dark turn," he muttered, determination burning in his gaze.

With renewed energy, Klaus pushed himself off the ground. The warmth flowing through him felt like a second wind, and he wasn't about to waste it. He focused his spiritual qi and elemental essence, channeling them into his blade. The icy glow returned, stronger than before.

The python hissed, sensing the change in Klaus. It lunged at him with renewed fury, but Klaus was ready this time. He sidestepped the attack with surprising speed, his movements no longer sluggish. As the python's head

whipped past him, he slashed his sword across its side, aiming for the same spot he'd hit earlier.

The Moon Slash cut deeper this time, tearing through scales and flesh. The python let out a pained roar, its massive body thrashing wildly. Klaus didn't let up. He kept attacking, striking at the creature's weak points, each blow more precise than the last.

For a moment, it seemed like he was gaining the upper hand. The python was weakening, its movements slowing as it bled from multiple wounds. Klaus could feel victory within his grasp. But just as he was about to go for the killing blow, a new sound reached his ears—a low, rumbling growl that made his blood run cold.

From the shadows of the forest, a massive figure emerged. It was a beast, covered in thick, dark fur with eyes that glowed like embers. Klaus recognized it immediately—a Tier 2 Shadowmane, a predator known for its speed and ferocity.

Klaus's heart sank. Fighting one Tier 2 monster was hard enough, but now there were two. The Shadowmane growled, its gaze locked onto Klaus, and he knew he was in serious trouble.

The python, sensing the presence of another predator, turned its attention toward the Shadowmane. For a brief moment, Klaus thought they might fight each other, but that hope quickly vanished. The two monsters seemed to come to an unspoken agreement, both turning their focus back on Klaus.

"Great, just what I needed," Klaus muttered, gritting his teeth. He was already struggling with the python, and now he had to deal with this new threat. The odds were stacked against him, but he wasn't about to give up.

"If I don't kill you two brutes, I will change my name," Klaus said swinging his sword in a weird arc.