

## Paragon 88

### Chapter 88 - 88: Day of the City Selection Exams

Days passed in a blur, and before Klaus knew it, the day of the City Selection exams for Celestial Mountain Academy had arrived. In the days leading up to the exams, Klaus had spent most of his time preparing. He had been informed that the exams varied each time, but there was a strong possibility that they would include a written test.

Klaus was grateful to Nia for the information and dove into studying, eager to absorb whatever knowledge he could find. Lucy, looking for any excuse to spend more time with Klaus, had offered to help him with his studies.

The white-haired youngster accepted her offer without hesitation. Having been teased by Ohema over the past few days about his budding relationship with Lucy, Klaus decided it would be smart to take her up on her offer to study together. Plus, he couldn't deny that he enjoyed her company.

Ohema had somehow found out about his and Lucy's time together, and although she teased him relentlessly, Klaus could tell she wasn't upset. Instead, she seemed to find the whole situation amusing. He did his best to endure her jokes, focusing on preparing for the exams instead.

Klaus and Lucy spent many hours in the library, where Klaus diligently studied everything he could get his hands on. Lucy was amazed at his ability to retain information after just a single glance at the pages. She was often left speechless as Klaus quickly absorbed books on history, geography, and recent events since the start of the apocalypse. His memory seemed almost photographic.

After a few days of intense studying, Klaus found himself running out of material to read. So, for the last three days before the exams, he and Lucy decided to take a break from the books and enjoy some time together.

They explored the city, taking care to disguise themselves to avoid unwanted attention. They spent their days wandering through hidden parks and quiet streets, taking pictures, and even sharing a few kisses when they found themselves alone. It was a blissful time, filled with laughter and a sense of connection that only deepened as the days passed.

But time waits for no one, and soon enough, the day of the City Selection exams arrived. Klaus woke up that morning with a smile on his face. He felt prepared—both mentally and physically—for whatever the exam had in store for him. As he stretched and got out of bed, the memories of the past few days flooded his mind, making him feel confident and ready.

Klaus quickly got dressed and made his way to the kitchen, where his mother had already prepared breakfast.

"Today's the big day," she said, placing a plate in front of him. "I know you'll do great, Klaus."

"Thanks, Mom," Klaus replied, sitting down to eat. "I'm ready for this. I studied everything I could, and I'm feeling good."

His mother nodded, her expression softening. "You've always been smart, Klaus. Just remember to stay calm and trust yourself. No matter what happens, I'm proud of you."

Klaus smiled and ate his breakfast in comfortable silence. He felt a calm confidence wash over him. After finishing his meal, he hugged his mother, promising to return with good news.

After kissing his mother on the cheek, Klaus left the house with a light heart. Kofi, the family's trusted driver, was already waiting for him outside. The ride to the exam site was quiet.

As soon as Kofi parked the car and Klaus stepped out, he was greeted by a sight that left him momentarily stunned. Hundreds of thousands of young people were scattered across the vast open space, each one radiating confidence and determination.

He couldn't help but smile to himself and shake his head. So many confident faces, and so much eagerness. Yet, Klaus knew the harsh reality of the situation—only 200 would be selected to join the prestigious Celestial Mountain Academy. The sheer numbers made the whole process feel incredibly cruel. Many dreams would be shattered today.

Klaus observed the sea of confident faces, scanning the crowd for a bit longer before deciding to shift his attention to his phone. He dialed Anna's number, knowing she was already there but still sitting in her

car, avoiding the chaos. Anna wasn't the type to dive into a crowd like this; the moment she stepped out, she would undoubtedly be swarmed by onlookers and admirers.

After a few rings, Anna picked up. "Are you here already?" she asked in a soft voice. Klaus nodded.

"Yeah, where are you parked?" Klaus asked.

Anna gave him the details, and without wasting any more time, Klaus headed toward her location. He was wearing the sunglasses and the hood that Nadia had made for him, a special outfit designed to help him blend in.

It wasn't foolproof, but unless someone looked at him closely, they wouldn't recognize him. It was a good thing, too—everyone around was too busy either calming their nerves or psyching themselves up for the exams. No one had time to pay attention to him as he made his way through the crowd.

With quick strides, Klaus soon found himself standing next to Anna's sleek car.

When he got closer, Henry rolled down the window and offered him a polite smile. "Master Klaus, the young miss is inside," Henry said calmly.

Klaus returned a small nod, but he couldn't help narrowing his eyes for a moment, trying to figure out if there was more to Henry's smile than what it seemed. Letting it go, he opened the car door and stepped inside.

The interior of the car was cool and quiet, a welcome contrast to the chaos outside. Anna was sitting in the back seat, her eyes lighting up the moment Klaus entered. She looked calm and composed, though there was a certain tension in her posture.

"You're early," she said, her lips curving into a smile.

"I could say the same about you," Klaus replied, settling into the seat next to her. He took a deep breath and leaned back. "Nervous?"

"Not really," Anna said with a small shrug. "I just didn't want to deal with the crowd yet. How about you?"

Klaus chuckled softly. "Nah, I'm good. It's a little crazy out there, though."

Anna nodded, her gaze shifting out the window for a moment. "Yeah, I figured. It's always like this during the exams. Too much pressure, too many expectations." She paused, then glanced back at him. "Thanks for coming."

Klaus smiled, pulling his hood down slightly. "Of course. I wasn't going to miss it."

For a moment, they sat in comfortable silence, the noise from outside fading into the background. Klaus felt at ease, his usual confidence unwavering despite the challenge ahead. Anna, on the other hand, seemed more pensive than usual, her thoughts clearly elsewhere.

"So," Klaus said after a beat, breaking the silence, "how do you think it'll go?"

Anna sighed, running a hand through her hair. "It's hard to say. There are a lot of talented people out there. But I'm prepared. I've trained for this."

Klaus nodded. "You've got this. Just remember what you're capable of."

Anna smiled again, this time with a bit more confidence. "Thanks. I needed that."

Klaus grinned and looked out the window. "Ready to step out? Or are we staying hidden in here forever?"

Anna let out a small laugh. "Let's give it a few more minutes. I'm not quite ready to face the storm yet."

Klaus nodded in agreement, and they sat together in the quiet car, stealing a few more peaceful moments before diving into the whirlwind that awaited them outside.

After a while of sitting in the peaceful quiet of the car, Klaus and Anna noticed the movement outside shift. The once scattered crowd began to gather and head toward a large, imposing building that stood wide and tall in the distance. The gates, which had been locked earlier, were now open, signaling that it was time for everyone to head inside.

Klaus and Anna exchanged a quick nod, their silent understanding clear. It was time. Klaus reached for the door handle, glancing over at Anna as she did the same.

"Ready?" he asked, his voice steady.

"As I'll ever be," Anna replied with a small smile, her confidence returning.

They both stepped out of the car, and luck was on their side. With the crowd so focused on hurrying toward the building, no one paid attention to the pair emerging from the sleek vehicle.

Everyone was too busy making their way inside, their minds on the upcoming exams. Klaus and Anna held hands and slipped seamlessly into the flow of people, unnoticed and undisturbed.

They headed toward the building, which looked to be over a hundred floors tall and large enough to hold hundreds of thousands of people.

After passing through the gate, they arrived at the base of the building. From the outside, it was clear that this was an assembly hall, and everyone was heading inside.

Klaus and Anna followed the crowd. Soon, they were all inside.

"Welcome to the City Selection exams for Celestial Mountain Academy. The exams will begin soon, but first, I will explain the structure and the rules," a voice announced. A holographic projection of a beautiful woman appeared as the voice spoke.