

Paragon 90

Chapter 90 - 90: The Test Begins [Bonus]

"Where am I?" Klaus muttered as he appeared in a dark space after putting on the helmet. His vision had gone black the moment the helmet was secured, and now he found himself in total darkness.

Suddenly, a symbol of two circles—one inside the other—appeared before him. A mechanical voice, almost lifelike, echoed through the space. "Welcome to Oracle."

Without warning, Klaus's surroundings began to shift.

"You are now in the test area for the Celestial Mountain Academy City Selection exams," the voice continued. "The test will begin shortly, but first, you must choose your weapon."

A list of weapons appeared in front of Klaus, allowing him to scroll through and pick his preferred choice. He didn't hesitate—he selected a long sword, one almost identical to the one he used in the real world.

As he gripped the sword, Klaus was surprised by how real it felt. The weight, the balance—it was just like the sword he held outside of this virtual space. His hand tightened around the hilt, and to his amazement, he felt his star qi flowing through him, just as it did in reality. This both thrilled and puzzled him.

Does this mean the system can detect other energies besides Spiritual Qi? Klaus wondered, feeling a surge of concern. He wasn't ready for this secret to be exposed just yet. But with no way to confirm his suspicion, he pushed the thought aside and steadied himself for the trial ahead.

"Remember," the mechanical voice chimed in, "if you fail to clear a wave before time runs out, you will be disqualified."

The scene around Klaus shifted once again. His vision darkened for a split second before he was transported to a new area.

Klaus now stood on a massive field stretching for kilometers in both directions. There were no trees, only a wide expanse of green grass dotted with patches of sand.

"The trial starts in 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..."

As soon as the countdown reached zero, the ground beneath him began to tremble. He gripped his sword tighter, his senses spreading out across the battlefield.

"Diamond Scale Lizards," Klaus muttered, narrowing his eyes as he recognized the incoming threat. The first wave of monsters consisted of Diamond Scale Lizards, a type of lizard known for its tough, nearly impenetrable scales.

"So this is a test of strength and knowledge," he said with a smirk, feeling the approaching horde of monsters. Despite their hard scales, Klaus knew their weakness. Anyone who studied them would know—they had low resistance to ice. Their scales, as tough as they were, could be easily exploited with the right strategy.

Klaus steadied himself as the lizards drew closer, ready to exploit their weakness and prove his strength in the trial.

It was like water and fire—one meant to destroy the other. Klaus, who thankfully knew all about these monsters, stood calmly as they emerged on the horizon. His eyes followed their movement as they drew closer. Once they were within a 1-kilometer radius, the mechanical voice echoed again, accompanied by a timer that appeared in the sky.

"You have 10 minutes to clear this wave. Failure to do so will result in disqualification."

Klaus smiled, his confidence growing. He watched the Diamond Scale Lizards advance, patiently waiting for them to reach range. He had a plan, and he knew their weakness well. This was his chance to strike.

Klaus stood perfectly still as the Diamond Scale Lizards charged toward him. He watched them close the distance—500 meters... 400 meters... 300 meters. His focus remained steady, his body calm. He didn't move an inch as the monsters neared, closing in on a 100-meter radius around him.

To an outsider, it looked like Klaus was completely ignoring the threat. But he was far from careless. In his mind, he was calculating, and analyzing the situation. He knew the area of effect for his next move covered a range of about 3 kilometers, but he intended to narrow it down to a 200-meter radius for maximum impact.

He waited patiently for the right moment, letting the 300 lizards, each one about 3 meters long, inch closer to his kill zone. His breath was steady, his eyes locked on the nearest lizard. The moment the first lizard stepped into a 50-meter radius, Klaus made his move.

His sword began to hum with power as he channeled his ice essence and star qi into the blade. The air around him grew cold, a mist forming. Klaus's gaze remained sharp, calculating the monsters' slow but steady advance. Though their scales were tough, their speed was no match for his agility.

With a slight grin, Klaus raised his sword and then drove it into the ground with a sharp motion. The moment the blade pierced the earth, a wave of ice spread out from the point of impact. The ground within a 2-kilometer radius instantly froze solid, forming a shimmering layer of ice that expanded rapidly in all directions. The 400-meter radius was rather denser with chilling ice.

The charging lizards had no chance. One by one, they were caught in the icy blast, their bodies frozen solid in mid-motion. Not a single one managed to escape. Within moments, all 300 monsters were completely encased in ice, immobilized in their tracks.

Klaus stood there for a moment, admiring the frozen battlefield. Then, with a confident smirk, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers.

At the sound of the snap, the ice shattered instantly, breaking into countless shards. The frozen lizards crumbled along with it, their bodies disintegrating into nothing more than icy fragments scattered across the field. The entire wave of monsters was gone—defeated in a mere 15 seconds.

Klaus took a deep breath, his energy still pulsing through him. He smiled to himself, satisfied with the result. The first wave had been wiped out, and he hadn't even broken a sweat. This was only the beginning, but Klaus felt ready for whatever came next.

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In a large room filled with glowing screens, a group of powerful figures sat observing the progress of thousands of participants in the Celestial Mountain Academy Selection exams. Among them was the lady who had made the initial announcement. She kept her eyes on the screens, her expression neutral, until something caught her attention. One of the screens shimmered blue, signaling something unusual.

"Zoom in on that one," she said quickly.

The projection enlarged, revealing a cleared battlefield with shattered ice and no signs of monsters left. The lady's eyes widened slightly in surprise. "Someone has already cleared the first wave."

The others in the room turned their heads toward the screen, murmuring in shock. One man, dressed in a dark robe, leaned forward with a look of disbelief.

"It's him. The kid who made it onto the Union chart," he said. His voice carried surprise, but his eyes held something deeper—an unreadable expression.

The lady nodded, her lips curving into a slight smile. "So, the rumors were true," she mused softly. "He really does have the ability to make it onto the charts."

Her smile caught the attention of some of the others in the room. A few glanced at her, intrigued by her reaction, but none dared to ask what was on her mind. Instead, they turned their attention back to the screens as the projections continued to shift.

"Another one has cleared the first wave!" a man called out. He pointed to a different screen, where the battlefield was filled with frozen lizards, their bodies transformed into intricate ice sculptures. At the center of the icy scene stood a young woman, her staff glowing with power.

"That's Anna Ross," one woman in the corner said. "She's the sister of the Vine Queen, Lucy Ross."

"They both awakened the ice element," another person added, clearly impressed. "Such a powerful element... It runs in their blood."

The lady who had been smiling earlier watched Anna's screen for a moment longer before returning her gaze to the first boy's screen. "Interesting," she muttered to herself, her eyes gleaming with curiosity. "Very interesting. I guess my coming here won't be wasted"

Shortly after, some more screens started shimmering, indicating some more people had cleared the first wave.

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In the virtual world, Klaus found himself in a dense forest. The trees intertwined overhead, forming thick canopies that blocked out most of the light. The air felt heavy, almost oppressive, and something about the place felt off. Klaus couldn't quite figure out what was wrong, but his senses told him to stay alert.

Moments later, his instincts kicked in. He picked up the faint sound of movement—scurrying, skittering. He smirked as he recognized the new threat.

"Annoying Clingy Spider Monkeys," he muttered. He had read about these creatures. They were fast and aggressive, with six spidery legs that clung to their prey. If they managed to latch on, they would tear off patches of flesh before you could shake them off.

Klaus quickly readied his sword, knowing the danger he faced. But just as he prepared to strike, a thought crossed his mind. He glanced around at the towering trees and the dense canopy above. A plan began to form.

"Trees hold water," he mused to himself, "and water is a natural conductor." He glanced up at the network of tree branches, already envisioning his next move. "This place is perfect for creating a dome of ice."

With a grin, Klaus walked over to one of the trees and placed his palm against the rough bark. He felt the water within the tree, the life essence running through its roots and branches. The spider monkeys, known for their strong grip but weaker bodies, were already closing in on him.

"Freeze," Klaus whispered, channeling his energy through the tree.

Instantly, a wave of ice surged out from his hand, spreading rapidly through the network of trees. The ice raced up the trunks, along the branches, and across the canopies, freezing everything connected to the trees. The spider monkeys, still clinging to the branches, were caught in the surge.

In less than a second, they were frozen solid—trapped mid-leap in perfect ice sculptures. Klaus watched the frozen monkeys with a smile and then snapped, making them shatter into pieces, unable to withstand the cold.

He smiled to himself. Another wave of monsters was defeated in mere seconds. "Too easy," he muttered, his ego inflating.