

## Martial Unity 1071

### Chapter 1071: Tedious

If there was a Martial Senior anywhere nearby, it would be game over and the two of them would die in a heartbeat.

('This is going to require some finesse, unfortunately,') Rui sighed. ('I can't brute force my way through this with power or a grade-ten stealth technique. I'm going to have to be allowed in.')

Rui scoured through the intelligence that the Floating Sect had on the Graheria Kingdom's military security and anti-espionage measures.

Unfortunately, it wasn't as comprehensive as he wanted it to be, much to his surprise. He had expected that the Floating Sect would be ahead of the Kaddar Regions in the intelligence battle. After all, infiltrating the Floating Sect covertly was damn near impossible given how isolated from the rest of human civilization it was. There was simply no chink in the armor to wriggle into.

Except one. Trying to become a guardian as an initiate, but unfortunately, that was too difficult because it was impossible to disguise their prominent Martial Squires in an attempt to make sure they don't get recognized. The Floating Sect forced Martial Squires to be transparent with their Martial Art, otherwise, they would die in challenges or lose their chamber.

In order to sneak a Martial Squire into the Floating Sect that none of them recognized, they would need to break a brand-new Martial Apprentice into the Squire Realm after faking his death. Then they would need to make him secretly train from scratch and hope he has what it took to become a truly elite high-grade Martial Squire. Once they became an elite high-grade Martial Squire, they would then need to have this unheard and unseen

However, because the training for Martial Squires was not something that could be normally accelerated, this process would take more than a decade, to possibly multiple decades.

Unlike Rui, and Kane to a certain extent, reaching higher grades in the Squire Realm was not something that less extraordinary Martial Squires could do in a matter of a few years. It was simply an unfeasible plan.

The Floating Sect could infiltrate the nations of the Kaddar Region more easily, however, not too well because of the isolation and the distance, and it was difficult managing a spy network.

Rui figured that he ought to be grateful that they were able to at least supply him with this much information.

"Military complex G49," Rui murmured. "Heavily guarded military base and a research and development facility on the outskirts of the nation."

A rigorous security system requiring every person who entered the facility to show identity proof, verify clearance level, and, if necessary, demonstrate the purpose of the visit. A complex array of protocols, which was pretty standard for top secret nation security matters.

"Hmmm, the probability of a Martial Senior being in the base, or in that region of the nation is not low," Rui murmured.

He knew how fast Martial Seniors were. He recalled the matriarch of the K'ulnen Tribe crossing massive distances from the K'ulnen village to the battlefield in seconds. Senior Ceeran in turn had also swiftly crossed dozens of kilometers before Rui even learned about it. If the Martial Senior was alerted, he was not going to take long to reach the military complex.

"I really need to figure this out and make sure my plan is rock solid, or else there will be consequences," Rui murmured. "The good thing is I don't need to get too close to the package to be able to sense it."

The best part was that he could completely bypass standard military anti-espionage measures. His Riemannian Echo was unstoppable barring special gravitic environments like the Ajanta Island.

However, given how absolutely gigantic the complex was, he wouldn't be able to sense the package and gain information on it from outside the complex.

('Which means I definitely need to infiltrate and enter the military complex and get close enough to sense it properly before leaving.') Rui mused. "I ought to do some personal reconnaissance and get a good understanding of the kind of security that they have going on rather than just trusting the

intelligence of the Floating Sect, it's better for me that I have a good personal understanding of the matter before I formulate a way to enter the G49 complex."

And that was exactly what he did. He quickly packed some potions and the necessary supplies before adorning some of the typical attire of the Graheria Kingdom.

Soon enough, he left Ajanta Island heading towards the Graheria Kingdom, having memorized a map of the Kaddar Region and the Graheria Kingdom.

Leaving Ajanta Island was a pain in the ass because he needed to avoid surveillance, thus he needed to maintain a high altitude and only descend after he left the Kaddar Region. After that, he needed to circle back and enter the Kaddar Region once more before finally heading towards the Graheria Kingdom.

It was a time-consuming and tedious process that made him understand why Martial Squires didn't leave the island to complete missions.

Regardless, his work only began once he entered the Kingdom of Graheria.

The Kingdom of Graheria was a densely populated and ethnically diverse country, much to his delight. This made it easier to blend in as someone from the Kandrian Empire. It wouldn't raise any questions or make him instantly identifiable as an outsider, necessarily.

Furthermore, the population density truly was a saving grace, it meant that as long as he had his Mind Mask on, he was basically invisible.

Furthermore, the protocols at the port of entry for arriving travelers were also lax due to this, he essentially just swooped through within five minutes.

('Alright, now I need to get to the south of the nation and get a good look at area G49,')

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to speed through at top speed, not without killing people, and sky-walking attracted far too much attention, thus he simply walked as fast as he could. It wasn't too long before he reached his destination, watching it from afar.

## Chapter 1072: Analysis

Thankfully for him, the military area wasn't isolated from the nation's population, like in the middle of a desert, or something like that. It didn't stray away from the southern town of Derendal, and he could hand not too far from the military base without looking like an intruder or necessarily drawing attention.

The base was absolutely massive, almost a small town in and of itself.

('And it has rigorous anti-espionage measures,') Rui mused.

When he tried sensing the happenings of the facility using Seismic Mapping and Tempestuous Feel, he couldn't sense much.

That was to be expected, anti-espionage esoteric technology was something he had run into many times. It was necessary given that one lived in a world with Martial Squires with greatly powerful senses.

He sat in a bar not too far away from the establishment, as his Riemannian Echo kept a check of the front gate.

He quickly began documenting the details of all those who entered and exited the facility with scrupulous care, before storing and organizing them in his head.

He memorized the appearance of every person that entered the facility, giving them a codename, memorizing their attire, sex, the means of transportation they arrived by, the protocols that they underwent, and the words they exchanged. He also memorized every word that the security team uttered in the time that he spent there.

Time passed, but by the end of the day, he had an extremely large reservoir of data that he had cleanly organized into relevant fields.

('Interesting,') Rui murmured once he tabulated the data. ('All people who entered the facility had to show proof of identification and verification of security clearance, except for the coachmen who drove the carriage into the facility. Their identities were never questioned, nor were they stopped.')

It meant that there probably were special arrangements for all the coachmen of the carriages and other aiding employees of the various people who entered the facility. That was one possible avenue of infiltration that Rui could explore.

He had considered the possibility of sneaking into a carriage, but unfortunately, the security check-ups were not light. The carriage was thoroughly checked to make sure that there were no problems. Sneaking into the facility by hiding in a carriage was not possible. A sensory Martial Squire scanned the carriage with his senses every time to make sure that there was nothing off about it.

This was one issue that Rui had to confront, among others.

After heavy consideration, he temporarily ruled out faking authority or impersonation. He didn't have the means and tools for that. In his evaluation, it had a particularly high chance of failure if anybody went an extra step to try and fact-check him.

Furthermore, if he entered with authority, he would most certainly have to deal with someone else in authority, who would most certainly know he was full of shit.

It would only work if he was highly familiarized with everything that he needed to know in order to make sure that the facade was maintained.

Furthermore, if he didn't ensure that the Martial Squire that vetted the carriages was incapable of sensing Rui's true status as a Martial Squire. That was the biggest issue at the moment. It was too risky to just pray for the best and hope that the Martial Squire didn't sense his true power.

He needed to confirm that he could even survive being scanned by the Martial Squires vetting the carriages that passed through.

('Tsk, it's a shame, but I'll need to take a few small risks,') Rui tutted. He wasn't fond of it, but it needed to happen.

However, for the time being, he was content just observing and gaining more data. It wasn't until the third day that he found something new.

('Oh?') Rui raised an eyebrow. ('It seems that there are those other than private coachmen who can get in without too much scrutiny.')

It appeared that low-level manual labor employees had a more basic check-up. Furthermore, delivery carriages also passed through without too much inspection by the deliverer. Partially because the deliverer wasn't really allowed to go anywhere besides from wherever the shipped supplies would be unloaded and stored.

Still, it was something that Rui could consider as a way to get in, but he wasn't sure how far he would be able to get in using this method.

('I don't have multiple attempts either, most likely,') Rui mused. ('I will probably be recognized, or at the very least the risk is too high.')

He needed some form of identity that would get him as deep into the military complex as possible but without putting him in a position where he could potentially expose himself as a spy at the moment.

Over the next few days, he thoroughly ruled out the possibility of impersonating regulars, the probability of failure was too high, he also completely ruled out the possibility of faking authority and clearance, the means by which he would obtain convincing fake documents was too tricky.

Most nations used some form of esoteric uniqueness in such documents in order to verify that they were real, which means he would most likely need to come into contact with someone that can get him such documents nonetheless and is willing to purchase them.

('Such a person would be deeply entrenched into the underworld of the Kaddar Region, unfortunately,') Rui sighed.

He had no intention of going that far and undertaking a potentially dangerous solution. What he needed was a less risky, less demanding solution with fewer prone to risks.

It was unfortunate but the simplest of means were also the least promising in so far as how close to the mysterious package purchased by the Graheria Kingdom.

"Hmmm..." Rui narrowed his eyes. "All I need is intelligence on the package, and I'm set. Being able to sense the package directly definitely helps but I also will need context on what it is, which requires me to gain information from the documentation on it, or from people within revealing what it is."

### Chapter 1073: Reconnaissance

A few days passed as Rui continued gathering as much data as possible. Although the first day more or less gave him everything he wanted, it was still better to get a sense of the routine before he made his move. He had evaluated all possible means of entry and had segregated them by the probability of success.

The least viable solutions were forceful entry either via brute force or stealth. He explored all possibilities, and it just didn't work.

Falsifying authorization was also too murky. He would need to somehow gain authentic documentation and security clearance. Furthermore, if they had any rigorous verification protocols, he would be screwed. Fooling those protocols was above his pay grade and far too removed from his capabilities as a Martial Artist.

He also considered kidnapping someone who would know what it is and interrogating them. However, it was quite likely that the military followed a need-to-know basis, there were probably very few people that had access to such intelligence if the transaction was that important. Furthermore, if the information disseminated, then the Floating Sect would have probably learned of the information by itself

Thus, he had settled on disguised infiltration as his means of infiltration after considering all his options, he did not want to bother with trying to interrogate people. It was quite likely that the only people who knew were heavily guarded, and it would probably take him force to kidnap them, and he had already decided against that.

That left him with infiltrating as a coachman, however, that would probably require a bit of authorization falsification to a small degree, albeit nothing major.

('But before I can even focus on all of that, I'll need to verify that my Mind Mask is not detectable by any of the Martial Squires on carriage vetting duty,') Rui noted.

If they could see through the Mind Mask, then there would be no point in trying to even attempt the operation.

He got up, leaving the bar he was in near the G49 military complex. His way of testing their senses was actually quite easy. He simply approached the front gate straightforwardly.

The Martial Squire guards immediately focused on him as he approached them. They were fully on alert, maintaining a sharp watch on their surroundings. They tensed up a little as Rui approached them straightforwardly, drawing their attention.

He did that on purpose, of course, he needed to test their senses while they were paying attention to him, otherwise, it wasn't reliable, it was possible that he could slip their senses when they weren't paying attention, but couldn't do that when they were.

In that case, when he did actually pose as a coachman, he would be instantly seen through. That was the problem with his current approach.

"This is a restricted area," One of the growled.

"Ah, I am aware," Rui smiled. "I'm not a threat to Martial Artists, I just wanted to inquire which way the local post office was."

"It's right around the corner near....."

Rui nodded his head as looked the man in the eyes, gauging his reaction and studying his every expression frame by frame.



A minute later, he walked away with a smile. ('Worked like a charm.')

While they were alert, it was simply the default standard alertness that they had as guards at the front gate of a military complex. They certainly did not act as though they were standing before a powerful Martial Squire, he was not a threat in their eyes.

This meant that they could not sense his power past the Mind Mask technique.

The reason for that was because of Rui's powerful mind more than the grade of the technique. Although the grade of the technique was not too high, it was something that was boosted by his mind. It would take powerful senses to sense him despite the technique, not even a Martial Senior had been able to gauge his true strength, although the Martial Seniors of Vilun Island were not the most well-rounded Martial Seniors.

He had verified that his plan was feasible, now all he had to do was ensure that he could fake being a coachman.

He also needed to find a good carriage to be the coachman of.

('Unfortunately, I can't be the coachman of a private carriage,') Rui sighed. Those coachmen were privately hired by their employers, and even if he knocked them out and took their place he would be recognized in a heartbeat.

Instead what he needed to do was to take the place of a delivery carriage supplying shipments to the military complex.

('I can intercept the carriage midway en route to the military complex and then pose as the coachman after I take his place. Though I will need a fake license,') Rui mused.

He had paid a lot of attention to the coachmen that entered the complex, and the only thing that they needed to show was the shipment documentation, that the one he would be knocking out and replacing would have, and a license that showed them that they were indeed the designated coachman.

He already knew that there were designated locations and provisions for coachmen that were required to wait for their employers to return, they were probably strictly prohibited from stepping out of their carriages.

However, as a delivery coachman, Rui did not intend to stick around after supplying the shipments.

('For now, I need to find the next shipment to the military base and get a fake coachman license. The Floating Sect can probably help me with this.') Rui mused.

Neither was too hard to get as long as one had a basic intelligence network set up in the Graheria Kingdom, unlike the details of the package that the Graheria Kingdom purchased from Frigga Industries.

He quickly left the Graheria Kingdom as he made his way back to the Floating Sect through the tedious route before finally returning back to Ajanta Island. A familiar immense sense of heaviness and pressure pressed on him the second he stepped back onto the island.

#### Chapter 1074: Preparations

"Where did you go?" Kane asked as soon as he met up with Rui.

Rui had purposely left behind his comms device, it was too risky to carry it with him if he ever got stopped and searched in the Graheria Kingdom while he was playing as a normal human. Thus, he had been out of contact with Kane for the past few days.

"Just working on a mission," Rui replied. "How did yours go?"

"It was actually kinda fun. I ended up winning the race," Kane smirked.

"Race?"

"Yeah, we had a race to see who could get to the destination first, because were bored," Kane shrugged. "I avoided the projectiles and attacks better than any of them, allowing me to get ahead of them."

"Well, as long as you had fun, I suppose," Rui chuckled, sighing.

He was glad that Kane seemed to be able to get along with his newfound acquaintances.

"So what mission are you working on?" Kane asked, curious.

"An espionage mission, I need to gain new information on this shipment that Graheria Industries sold them for a great sum of money," Rui explained.

"That sounds right up my alley," Kane knitted his eyes.

"Not this time, it's a bit too risky."

"Riskier than the Shionel Dungeon?"

"Yes, actually," Rui mused. "The Shionel Dungeon was never truly a threat to us, with our capabilities, no one stood any chance of sensing you, and no one stood a chance of hiding from me. It's just best not to rely on brute force stealth this time around."

Rui quickly convinced him that it wasn't worth it.

He quickly left him behind as he headed to the mission affairs department, seeking help.

"A coachman license matching the name of the coachman that will be driving a coachman at some point in the future?"

"That's right," Rui nodded.

"We can procure this intelligence and service for you, but you need to purchase it unless it's for the sake of a mission," The staff member informed him.

"It is the latter, actually," Rui explained. "Mission code C48n139."

She quickly referred to the code that Rui was talking about, before pausing abruptly. "I'm afraid this mission is beyond my clearance level."

"Hm?"

"You'll need to speak to deputy director Feric Franmonth," She informed him.

Rui frowned. "Can you not just fulfill my requirements?"

"I'm afraid not, sir." She replied. "Do you want me to book an appointment soon?"

Rui sighed. "Please do."

He did not want to delay the process much, but he could not do anything about it for the moment. He definitely needed some help from the Floating Sect.

Thankfully, it wasn't too long before the deputy director was sitting across from him in his office.

The man was a refreshing breath of fresh air compared to the rest of the island, the entire office was part of the human wing with standard human conditions, so Rui had to quickly readjust.

"So then," guardian Falken," The man smiled. "I heard you took on mission C48m139."

The man gave off a different vibe from the rest of the island, almost like he didn't even belong. If anything, his vibe reminded him of the merchants of the Shionel Confederation.

"I did," Rui nodded. "I require a coachman license with the name being the same as any coachman driving carriage to deliver a shipment to the military complex."

"We can provide that..." He nodded. "But the military complex has sophisticated anti-espionage technology. The recent supply of esoteric substances that can jam energy flux really well from the Shionel Dungeon has caused a spike in anti-espionage measures. You won't be able to gain any information just by infiltrating as a coachman, they won't let you go anywhere."

"I'm aware of that," Rui simply replied. "I have my plans, I just need assistance over this one matter, I do hope the Floating Sect can provide what I'm looking for."

"Interesting, so you have a means of intelligence gathering that can evade anti-espionage measures," The man concluded with an expression of curiosity.

Rui simply stared at him.

"Don't worry, the Floating Sect will provide you with everything you need. However, if you do employ the help of the Floating Sect, then you better succeed, guardian Falken."

The man promptly got up, prompting Rui to follow suit. "Good luck."

Rui shook his hand before leaving his office. Now he just needed to wait.

His plan was to knock the coachman out and drug him for a while before proceeding to drive the carriage to the destination, the documentation was legit, so there were no problems. It would have the name of the coachman, which he would verify with his fake license. Once that check-up was through and they failed to notice his status as a Martial Squire, he would immediately blast off his Riemannian Echo and figure out as much about the package as he could.

Once he got in, the risks were considerably less, the only risks were at the entry of the military complex. That was why he was inclined to be most careful at that moment. He was prepared to instantly shoot off and escape if the plan failed.

Of course, he was quite confident that it wouldn't but he was not someone who didn't take precautions.

He had already scoped the area and figured out the most optimal path of retreat. Running away at top speed would actually just draw attention. His escape plans involved running to crowded areas and blending into the crowds after putting on a Mind Mask, making it extremely difficult to single him out across the entire crowd.

With that out of the way, he mostly everything covered, he had an external map of the entire complex memorized, and had taken measures to ensure that he would be able to maximize the amount of time he would spend in there to gain the maximum amount of data.

Soon enough, all his preparations were complete and he was ready to execute his plan.

#### Chapter 1075: Execution

Soon enough, the Floating Sect delivered. His fake license went by the name Frenklun, and that was also the name of the coachman that was scheduled to deliver a shipment.

Rui had already memorized a map of the entire city, so he had already planned out at what points he was going to intercept the carriage.

It was a remote street where there were hardly any people. He had also made preparations with the Floating Sect on what to do with the real Frenklun.

Soon enough, it was showtime.

Rui had long descended from Ajanta Island as he made his way to the Graheria Kingdom through the tedious route yet again.

He positioned himself at the interception point well ahead of time, waiting.

And soon enough, the time came. A carriage turned into the remote small alley street, being pulled by two horses.

Rui appeared in front of the carriage, stumbling, before collapsing to the ground. Frenklun hurriedly stopped the horses before opening the door to his carriage.

TAP

Rui gently bopped his hand against the man's neck. Yet even that little effort shook his brain enough to cause enough blunt force trauma to the brain, knocking him out in the process.

('Sorry about this, but I'll need you to go to sleep,') Rui felt guilt once he drugged the man. Soon enough, a Martial Apprentice arrived.

"Guardian Falken,"

"Take over," Rui nodded as he handed him the man. "Make sure you don't hurt him."

Rui felt guilty about hurting innocent people who didn't consent to being hurt in an implicit fashion.

He had far fewer qualms about doing the same against Martial Artists, the second they chose to stand and fight when they could lose their life, being fully aware of that, then Rui didn't feel guilty.

But hurting innocent random civilians was not something that he enjoyed doing. He quickly put such thoughts out of his head for the time being before he got into the carriage and started the horses moving once more.

Although he had never once driven horses pulling a carriage, he had memorized all the actions that coachmen did when they drove the horses to do various actions. He was glad that he wasn't experiencing any difficulties with that part, that would be quite embarrassing.

Rui scanned the storage carriage as he drove it, looking to gain a good understanding of what was there.

('Esoteric mineral and organic supplies,') Rui mused.

He recognized several popular esoteric substances and compounds that were ubiquitous in many industries for very basic and fundamental technologies.

His knowledge base from getting a journeyman scholar degree in general sciences meant that he gained a decent foundation on more commonly used esoteric substances.

Soon enough, he had arrived.

The guards walked up to him. "Papers."

Rui handed over several sheets, which they thoroughly checked through and even verified were legit.

"License."

Rui fished out his fake license handing it to them nonchalantly, a minute later, he got both of them back.

"Open the doors,"

The two of them spent some time running their senses through the luggage and the goods.

It was a minute before they were done and the gates were finally opened.

"Go right ahead,"

Rui heaved a sigh of relief as he giddied the horses, setting them forward on a trot. He immediately blasted off his Riemannian Echo the deeper he got into the establishment. He knew that the storage docking section was deep enough into the establishment and compound that he would be within the



range of things that he ordinarily wouldn't get to be within the range. The military base was so large even with his range he only got to see a small part of the whole complex.

That was why he had entered recording mode as he recorded every frame that his mind took before inputting it into his Mind Palace. He didn't have time to consciously review what every person was saying in real time otherwise he would miss out on some data that he was too preoccupied to think about.

"Record first, think later," Rui's eyes sharpened as he sucked in information like a black hole.

His mind became a computer as it systematically sucked in information about his environment. The infrastructure, the technology, and more importantly the words being exchanged by people.

Thankfully, because the military base was so big, it took quite some time for him to reach his destination. And throughout every inch of that journey, he had absorbed it all. As he reached the destination, his senses came across something interesting.

A gigantic testing facility that went deep underground. It was almost outside the sensory range of the Riemannian Echo technique. It was the one and only such underground structure that he had come across thus far.

Naturally, it drew his attention even if he did document all the information on everything. After all, why was such a place built if the entire military base as a whole was highly inaccessible and had great measures in place?

That was why he continued paying attention to it even when he reached his destination.

There were people within the underground facility, however, they were far scarcer than the people in the other buildings, sections, and infrastructure.

Based on their attire, Rui surmised that they were either extremely important military officials or scholars of sorts, based on the lab coat attire that many of them had on.

"Open the back!"

Rui was jolted back as he immediately complied with them. Much to his dismay, the men began removing and storing all the supply shipments in the storage facility at a quick pace. It wasn't even ten minutes before all the supply shipments were quickly stored in the storage facility.

"Tsk," Rui tutted. ('This is too quick. I need more time.')

He quickly thought of several possibilities. The first was to simply knock them out and wait.

('No,') He shook his head.

Surveillance was not low and he would be caught quickly, he needed some other way.

Chapter 1076: Discovery

He couldn't display Squire-level techniques, or he would certainly be caught. Knocking them out also would definitely put him on a clock as they would certainly be noted to be missing sooner or later.

He made a split-second decision.

CRACK

One of the wheels of the carriage cracked a bit once Rui got onto the carriage. He timed the damage with a flick of his foot to make it look like the wheel had already been damaged prior and broke when he stepped back in.

"Tsk, the wheel..." Rui murmured as he got off.

"What happened?"

"Seems like the wheel of the carriage has broken down a bit," Rui replied as he took a good long look.

"If your carriage has issues, then you should report them," The man growled. "We don't have anything here to help with that."

"That's fine, I have a spare wheel and some necessary tools, it will take me a bit, but I can definitely fix it,"

The workers glanced at each other before looking back at him. "Make it quick."

"Will do,"

Rui happily got to work as he took his own sweet time slowly elevating the carriage to a fixed position while patiently inspecting the wheel.

Meanwhile, his mind was busy listening to all the information he could get from the underground area.

"Sir, the quality checks have been..."

"The royal family has invested..."

"The Felmakgium stabilizer will be functional as soon as..."

Rui worked on his wheel as he documented all of the conversations. He also paid a good amount of attention to the layout, the infrastructure, the instruments, objects, and machines. He didn't bother analyzing their words, for now, he only made sure that he documented everything.

That was until he heard something that drew his attention from his menial wheel replacement task.

"The king has personally informed me to make sure that nothing goes wrong with the production process. This weapon is the key to taking down the Ajanta Island, and destroying the Floating Sect."

Rui paused for a moment as he processed that, still keeping up the documentation. Yet he couldn't help but focus on that for a minute.

('It seems I underestimated how important this purchase from Frigga Industries was.')

He knew that the nations of the Kaddar Region were determined to take Ajanta Island down, but he had thought that for the most part, they had given up because their hands were tied.

After all, there wasn't much they could do. If they tried destroying the island, it would only bring about their own destruction since the debris would split up and rain down on the Kaddar Region in an unstoppable hail of meteorites. The destruction would be incalculable.

The only way they could get rid of the threat was by taking control of the island and gently moving away from the Kaddar Region, before destroying it, but the Floating Sect refused to allow that to happen.

Although there were skirmishes from both sides, both sides avoided an all-out war because it would cause too much damage to the island.

They were basically unable to do anything.

('Yet it seems that they haven't given up,')

Whatever this weapon was, it was something that was supposed to allow them to be able to deal with this issue.

('Persistent, aren't they?') He tutted to himself as he fitted the new wheel.

He could understand why they were, of course. He had heard that the economy of a nation often hit a bit of a slump whenever the island passed over it. The reason for this was that the citizens were paranoid about the debris falling from the island.

Apparently, this was not infrequent. The island bottom often dropped rocks of varying sizes on nations, that had, in the past, resulted in anywhere from merely injuring a person to massacring schools of students. Although given the diminutive size of the island compared to the nation, it could not rain debris across the entire nation, it did not matter to the citizens. An understandably deep phobia and paranoia had developed in the hearts of the citizens despite the governments of the Kaddar Region taking measures to ensure debris didn't reach the ground.

('It's not just a hypothetical possibility of the island dropping and wiping out the nations of the Kaddar Region,') Rui realized. ('There's a very detrimental impact it has on the nations even if it never falls.')

With that in mind, he could see the Graheria Kingdom going out of its way to purchase some kind of superweapon from one of the biggest weapons manufacturers across the continent to deal with the island once and for all.

('It isn't just the Graheria Kingdom,') Rui realized as he picked up more from the conversations of the people in the underground facility. ('It's the Kaddar Treaty Organization as well,')

The Kaddar Treaty Organization was an organization that was formed around the Kaddar Treaty signed by all seventeen of the nations in the Kaddar Region to put an end to the collective existential threat of Ajanta Island.

"Hey, how long are you taking?" One of the workers growled.

"I'm almost done," Rui replied as he fitted in the last screw. "There we go."

"Good, now get going, you've already been here for far longer than authorized!"

Rui quickly got onto the chariots before setting the horses into a trot as he delved into his own mind and reviewed everything that he had just learned.

('The Floating Sect will likely undergo tumultuous times in the future,') Rui narrowed his eyes.

For a brief moment, he considered leaving the island. If the superweapon was some absurdly powerful laser that vaporized the island without leaving anything behind, then he did not want to get caught up in it.

('It's unlikely it's something like that.') Rui mused. ('I don't even know if Martial Master has attacks that erase the island out of existence. They might be able to destroy it with a single attack, but it would still cause too much collateral damage.')

Chapter 1077: Spar

He highly doubted that the Kaddar Region possessed the wealth to purchase a weapon that powerful, given that the nations weren't exactly economic powerhouses in a broad sense, they probably did not have access to the means to build or acquire such a super weapon.

Since that was the case, Rui was inclined to stay. The benefits of the Floating Sect were great, he hadn't even been there long but he felt as though his body had grown stronger after being strengthened and nourished under extreme conditions.

One of the reasons he was especially determined to make the best of the Floating Sect was because of the reveal of the breakthrough to the Senior Realm. He now knew that one of the conditions for reaching the Senior Realm was having a body capable of withstanding the power of the Martial Heart.

Blood did not glow naturally, it had no ability to glow, yet the Martial Heart caused it to glow. He couldn't even imagine the sheer amount of energy that was pumping along with the blood for it to glow in that fashion.

If the body could not withstand that power, then it would just explode under all that power. Although he knew the Martial Heart improved durability with the power supplied to muscles and flesh, it could not allow the body to sustain the power of the Martial Heart by itself.

The body needed to grow to a certain degree and mature allowing it to withstand the full power of the Martial Heart.

Ajanta Island was definitely a place that could greatly accelerate what would otherwise be a lengthier process, which was Rui had grown a new-found appreciation for the location. The extra gravity forged his body into something stronger. The longer he spent there, the stronger he grew, the closer he reached the threshold of being able to withstand the power of his Martial Heart.

('Guess we'll just have to weather through and fight for our chance to stay there,') Rui mused.

He didn't mind that.

Soon enough, he was well away from the military area. He simply stopped his carriage some distance away, before simply leaving. It was half a day before he finally returned to the Floating Sect.

STEP

The moment he returned, the familiar sensation of crushing gravity, and liquid-like atmosphere returned to him.

He quickly headed to the intelligence department of the Floating Sect, hidden away deep in the human environments of the island.

"A mission report, is it?" The staff member at the counter replied to him, before pulling up some documents. "You can fill it out here."

He was familiar with this process, the Martial Union had a similar albeit more sophisticated system going on.

However, he certainly flustered the staff as he continued writing endlessly. He requested extra paper every five minutes.

He was there for three hours.

"Phew..." He huffed. ('That took forever, but at least it's off my shoulders now. The Floating Sect isn't incompetent enough to fumble the bag after the clear-cut information I've provided them.')

It wasn't long before he finally left, immediately heading for the chambers.

"You're finally back!" Kane exclaimed. "That must have been one hell of an investigative missions.

"Most of the time went into travel," Rui grumbled. "Because the Kaddar nations are so hostile to us Martial Artists, they indiscriminately force us to go through tedious paths."

"Tell me about it. Deliveries are nightmares."

They chatted about it a bit more, before Rui inquired about his attire. "You're going somewhere?"

"Yeah, the sixth class' sparring sessions with Senior Xanarn are about to begin," Kane replied.

"Ah," Rui's eyes lit up. "Right, we get to watch. I'm definitely coming for that."

The two of them quickly made their way to the arena. Rui could feel the pent-up power within the relatively small area. Dozens of Martial Squires, and one Martial Senior.

('They're all strong for sure,') Rui noted as he eyed the Martial Squires of the sixth rank. They possessed a sense of very solid power, the kind that would not budge easily. Rui wasn't too confident whether he could many of the strongest ones.

"Align yourselves," Senior Xanarn instructed simply.

She wore simple Martial attire, her appearance was ordinary, barring the fact that her eyes were perenially closed.



Yet she was without a doubt the strongest person there. Her power eclipsed all of them, and Rui subconsciously tensed up when he tried peering at the depths of her power.

The Martial Squires arranged themselves quickly. Close-range Martial Squires were just meters away from her in every direction, while longer-range Martial Squires put considerable distance between themselves and her.

Unlike duels, she allowed them to choose whatever distance they were most comfortable with.

After all, it did not matter, they couldn't beat her.

"Take your stances."

The tension in the room grew higher as all of the Martial Squires got ready for battle. Yet, Senior Xanarn still stood in place nonchalantly.

"You know what this reminds me of?" Kane asked.

Rui thought for a moment, before smiling. "Back when we were Apprentices in the Academy, training with Squire Kyrie."

"Nailed it," Kane grinned. "Good old days."

The nostalgia from the memories was heavy, he hadn't thought about those training sessions in a long time, yet they bore an unmistakable resemblance to what he was currently witnessing.

"Begin." She instructed them, and all hell broke loose.

Ten Martial Squires rushed in towards her as the longer-ranged Martial Squires took to the air to bombard her with attacks from above.

Yet none of them reached her.

She breathed deeply, employing a breathing technique as she gestured a powerful wave of sound with her movements alone!

The close-range Martial Squires looking to land some strikes were completely swept away by the attack!

They tried their best to resist, yet none of them could. The long-range Martial Squires began bombarding her from across the arena. Yet she gracefully evaded all of them as she began targeting all of the hapless Martial Squires one by one.

#### Chapter 1078: Nuances

Barring the first attack which gave her space, Rui found that she actually fought remarkably reserved. That made sense, there was no point to a training session if she simply blew them away with the power of her Heart.

('In fact, she doesn't even seem to be using her Heart.') Rui's eyes widened.

That was incredibly impressive in his eyes. It meant that she was severely restricting herself to ensure that she didn't devastate them with a single attack.

Rui had wondered how strong Martial Seniors were without their Martial Hearts. After all, the power of the Martial Heart was the defining condition that separated the Squire and the Senior Realms. Did that mean that a Martial Senior without their Martial Heart was merely as strong as a Martial Squire?

('Surprisingly, that doesn't appear to be that far from the truth,') Rui realized as he watched Senior Xanarn fight. ('She's holding back by fighting without her Martial Heart, yet with the limited power that she had availed to herself, it doesn't appear to be too easy.

Her movements were sharp and her expression was taut. She certainly was not at a lower hand, which meant that she was probably operating at grade-ten Squire-level power or perhaps quasi-Senior level power.

Rui thought back to the Root, which was a quasi-Senior level threat. She definitely wasn't operating at that level right now, given that she had sealed her Martial Heart. It also showed Rui that the Martial Heart was an overwhelming proportion of the power of Martial Seniors. Unlike when Squire Kyrrie restricted her movements, this wasn't as much of a restriction of her normal power, but a complete absence of it due to the Martial Heart not being activated.

Squire Kyrrie retained her toughness and reaction speed even when she held back because she could not hold those back.

Yet Senior Xanarn could hold those back to a much greater degree.

('Interesting,' this is so different from the power of the Apprentice and Squire Realms,') Rui mused as he studied her movements with interest.

The power of the Apprentice and Squire Realms were inducible, the core source of power never dissipated. The cognitive enhancements to the brain gained by discovering the Martial Path were permanent, barring extreme cases. The Martial body was certainly not something that could go away, it was a permanent change.

Yet it appeared that the Martial Heart was different. It was almost closer to a techniques as opposed to a Realm, in a sense. Rui found that to be quite interesting, he wondered if the same was the case for the higher Realms.

('It seems that every Realm has something or the other that's unique in the power that it gives to the Martial Artist.')

He watched Senior Xanarn's movements closely. The total amount of force she had exerted was not all that great, yet she exerted them with a level of efficiency that could not be underestimated.

He wasn't too interested in the Martial Squires. While it was true they were powerful, he had seen many powerful Martial Squires, it was far from a novelty at this point in time.

Instead, he focused on her movements as his mind rushed into work.

He was building a predictive model.

He abstained from doing so against guardians because he did not want to become dependant on pre-preparation to defeat people he ought to be able to defeat without preparation like fellow Martial Squires, and because he didn't want to get a position that he couldn't defend without preparation.

Neither of those reasons were relevant here, since he was dealing with a Martial Senior who he could never possibly defeat in the Squire Realm, and since this was sparring training and not an official match.

That was why he went all out as he observed the patterns in her movements and quickly recorded them into his Mind Palace.

('Her movements are pristine,') Rui admitted.

She evaded attacks with just the necessary amount of effort, and nothing more. She exerted a level of efficiency that was truly impressive.

('She's a sound-oriented Martial Artist,') Rui mused.

Yet she wasn't ordinary, her production and manipulation of sound far surpassed Rui's Sonic Bullets.

She used sound for offense, defense, and even maneuvering!

Furthermore, it did not even appear that she was strictly using specific Martial Art techniques. It was as though her intuitive understanding of sound was so great that she no longer even needed strict Martial Art techniques to manipulate them!

('Is this what becomes of Martial Art when one traverses to higher Realms?') Rui wondered. ('Do techniques cease to have form and simply become concepts and principles?')

He wasn't sure, he lacked too much insight into the higher Realms for him to be able to come to that conclusion.

THWOOM!

She swept several Martial Squires across the floor with strange motions that generated pulses of sounds. Rui found her motions to be mesmerizing, almost, so much so that he almost forgot to memorize her movements.

"She hasn't opened her eyes even once," Kane murmured.

"She's blind," Rui replied. "She primarily relies on her hearing."

"That's incredible," Kane remarked. "I wonder why she chose that kind of Martial body."

"She lost her vision even before she became a Martial Artist," Rui informed him. "She adapted so well to her disability, that it ended up giving her her strength and even defined her Martial Path."

"She lost her vision before she became a Martial Artist?" Kane murmured with widened eyes. "That's... incredible."

Although Martial Artists could cope without vision as long as they learned sensory techniques or trained existing senses well, the same was not true for normal humans. The fact that she became a Martial Artist despite having lost her vision was definitely shocking.

Rui even guessed that the reason her Martial Path was related to sound was because of her blindness, it was an instance of traumatic and significant events having an impact on one's Martial Path when they did end up discovering it.

Chapter 1079: Tokugawa Ieyasu

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

She hopped through the air as she evaded waves of attacks one after the other. Her graceful movements reminded Rui of a ballet dancer. Every step she took produced melodic notes, winding into an orchestra of sorts as she maneuvered across the arena.

('She's using sound to propel herself forward,') Rui admired her footwork.

While the other Martial Squires were at a loss as to how she was doing that, Rui had already figured out the mechanism. Acoustic propulsion was a concept that already existed on Earth, although he wasn't too familiar with it since it was something he had glanced over back when he was doing his degree.

The very atmosphere was nothing more strings of a guitar for her to play her melody over.

('Furthermore, she uses this trait to her advantage to produce sounds that actually impair her opponents!') Rui winced as a painful frequency of sound bombarded his ears.

It produced a neurological response that would get in the way of combat. It meant that even as she dodged, she was attacking her opponent!

('This must be the first evasive-offensive attack that I have ever seen.')

Rui gaped. He had never seen an attack produced by avoiding an opponent, although had seen evasion and offense simultaneously, this was different.

Some Martial Squires had already fallen to their knees, clutching their head as they shivered in repulsed pain.

The stronger ones managed to weather through partially while they still retained combat effectiveness.

('I bet she could easily destroy their eardrums and knock them out unconscious, if not kill them if she wanted, but that would be going overboard, and it would be of no benefit and antithetical to the point of a joint sparring session as this,')

WHOOM!

All Martial Squires leaped back, grimacing as she spun on her toe, radiating sound like the sun did light.

('Furthermore, there's no doubt that Ajanta Island is her home court!') Rui realized.

After all, the atmosphere of Ajanta Island was like an ocean due to the extreme gravity pulling down on the air, making it as dense as a light liquid!

It also meant that the speed and intensity of sound were much greater, and it was easier to produce sound through the atmosphere on the island than on land.

('She's in her element,') Rui realized. ('Even if she isn't the strongest Martial Senior of the Floating Sect under normal circumstances, she's probably extraordinarily powerful on the island and unrivaled by fellow peers.')

Rui felt more confident about the prospects of the Floating Sect's survival with Senior Xanarn keeping a watchful eye on it.

('I wonder who would win between Senior Ceeran and Senior Xanarn,') Rui's mind delved into the interesting hypothetical scenario.

Senior Ceeran was without a doubt the strongest Martial Senior he had ever seen under normal circumstances, he was a high-grade Martial Senior who was working his way to the Master Realm. He fought off two grizzled Martial Senior warlords who had spent their entire lives waging life-or-death wars and decisively won against both of them.

He did not believe that any of the Martial Seniors he had ever seen were his equals. However, Ajanta Island was an overwhelming battlefield advantage for Senior Xanarn, she was an absolute nightmare to her peers, and he doubted whether Senior Ceeran would be able to win without a grueling fight.

"It's a shame she isn't going to show her Martial Heart," Rui murmured as she began dowsing the final flames of resistance from the various guardians.

"I did," Kane smugly responded.

"Hm? I'm guessing she did a demonstration of it that I missed? Shame."

"No, actually," Kane shook his head. "She did it in the middle of a sparring session against the first class of Martial Squires."

"What?" Rui frowned. "She said she wouldn't use her Heart."

"Yeah, but she broke her word," Kane replied.

Rui raised an eyebrow, turning back to the fight. "Well, the first class must comprise of the most powerful grade-nine Martial Squires and the veteran grade-ten Martial Squires, still, it's incredible that they managed to force her to use her Martial Heart."

"Actually, they didn't."

Rui turned back to Kane, perplexed.

"The guardians of the first class were incredibly strong, and they definitely pushed her extremely far, based on how much she was strained. But she beat almost all of them without using her Martial Heart."

"Then...?"

"It was the guardian of the first chamber, Tokugawa Ieyasu, that forced her to use her Martial Heart, all by himself."

Rui's eyes widened in shock. "You're telling me one man forced her to use her true power?!"



"Yeah, it was unbelievable," Kane sighed. "He waited for her to deal with all of them, and then fought her one-on-one. Her attacks that wore down dozens of grade-ten Martial Squires could not push him back. I did not know someone could be this strong while still being in the same Realm as me."

Rui's mouth opened, dumbstruck, as he listened to Kane issuing some serious praise!

"By the end of it, he came this close to beating her, but then her body lit up with those red lines and it was over."

"That..." Rui almost cursed himself for having been on a mission. "Damn."

His curiosity spiked. Now he wanted to know everything about this Tokugawa Ieyasu.

('That sounds like a Japanese name, I feel like I've heard it somewhere back on Earth, to be honest,') He considered it before putting aside the idea. ('If he's that strong, I can see why he's the number one.')

WHOOM!

A widespread soundwave from Senior Xanarn blew away the few remaining guardians fighting, putting an end to the sparring session.

She wiped some sweat off her forehead as she undid her hair. First aid teams immediately swarmed over the guardians at her instructions quickly healing the Martial Squires one by one. Many of them were merely injured and exhausted, though many were knocked out and some were even seriously injured.

Chapter 1080: Summon

"What was his Martial Art like?" Rui asked Kane, as the question popped into his head.

"Funnily enough, it was eerily similar to that of Senior Xanarn's," Kane remarked. "Actually, it was extremely similar to Senior Xanarn's now that I think about it."

Rui furrowed his eyebrows in response.

That was indeed an odd coincidence, he wondered if Tokugawa was a disciple of Senior Xanarn. Perhaps he had inherited a good portion of her Martial Path that explained why his Martial Art resembled hers.

He wasn't sure if that was the case though. How could a disciple surpass the master when they weren't even of the same Realm? Although it was technically possible that the man had absorbed Senior Xanarn's teachings in a very brief period and then quickly surpassed her after learning everything, that was far more than just a little unlikely.

Once the sparring session finished. Senior Xanarn spoke with all the guardians one-on-one to give them tips and areas of improvement, that was the true yield that the Martial Squires were looking for. The insights of a Martial Senior were the reason that they chose to partake in this sparring session.

Rui smiled with excitement, he couldn't wait for her to reach the tenth class, and he looked forward to sparring against her with everything he had.

"Sir?" A messenger from the management department addressed Rui.

"Hm?" Rui turned towards her. "Yes?"

"The deputy director of the intelligence department wishes to speak to you," She informed him. "Please head to his office as soon as possible."

Rui had expected as much, nodding.

The intelligence that he provided to the intelligence department on the superweapon that they had commissioned from Frigga Industries was sure to attract a lot of attention. The only reason he hadn't been summoned immediately was that the report needed to undergo processing by an analyst of the department before it would be categorized or organized by the protocols of the system.

He suspected that the deputy director had immediately been alerted of the intelligence that Rui had supplied the second that the analyst had finished processing them.

('It's quite fast and speedy of them,') Rui mused as he got up.

"Are you in trouble?" Kane raised an eyebrow.

"No," Rui chuckled. "I'll catch you later."

He threw one last glance at Senior Xanarn before leaving the battle arena.

It wasn't long before he arrived at the office of the deputy director.

A large and prominent board featuring the name 'Feric Franmalth' was on the door, greeting Rui.

KNOCK KNOCK

"Who's there?"

"Squire Falken, sir," Rui replied. "I believe you called for me."

"Ah..."

The door opened. Immediately, Rui was greeted by Feric, who was sitting at his table with a document that looked like the one that Rui had filled his report in.

He glanced at the two guardians that were in the room at the door, guarding it.

This was one of the duties of the guardians, providing general security by taking on such roles every once in a while.

Rui could immediately tell that they were grade-nine Martial Squires which meant that they were most likely in the higher ranks of the Floating Sect, perhaps the third or fourth.

"Come in, guardian Falken, take a seat," The man ushered Rui in, having him sit down before him.

"I was just going through your report here," He remarked as he skimmed through the many pages, before finally closing it and taking a good long look at Rui.

His mouth curled in a smile, but it didn't reach his eyes. "This is quite the report. You can imagine why I called you here."

"To verify the veracity of the report, to gain more details, and to potentially employ my services on the matter to gain more information," Rui replied.

"That's... actually exactly why I called you here," The man smiled. "Since you already know why you're here, I will cut to the chase. Your report, if true, is of great importance to us. You have warned us of a significant threat well ahead of time, potentially even saving the Floating Sect, but..."

He paused for a moment. "If false, it would be disastrous, we cannot afford to prepare for a war that isn't going to happen."

Rui understood where the man was coming from. A lot rode on the intelligence report being true, and currently, the only existing confirmation came from one low-ranked guardian who had very recently joined the Floating Sect.

The deputy director would be a fool to take this report at face value without any skepticism. Even if Rui wasn't a planted agent with malicious intent, he could still just be wrong, and that would be nonetheless bad.

"Let us talk about the means by which you obtain this intelligence," The man began.

Rui immediately knew that he wanted to know more about Rui's sensory technique that allowed him to spy on conversations happening deep within a military complex armed with anti-espionage tech, from the outside.

"It's a powerful high-grade sensory technique that can entirely bypass anti-espionage technology," Rui explained. "It has good range too."

"And how exactly does this technique function?"

Rui paused for a moment as he considered whether he wanted to divulge. On one hand, he didn't like divulging his hand, on the other, he kind of needed to if he wanted his work to be valued by the Floating Sect.

He had a decision to make, and he made it quickly.

"It works by sensing through gravity," Rui sighed.

Although the Riemannian Echo technique was one of his greatest techniques, its relevance to combat in a day-to-day context was rather limited. He didn't lose much by revealing it.

"Gravity?" The man's eyebrows rose. "I've heard that only Martial Masters are able to do such a thing. Do you take me for a fool, young man?"

Rui's eyebrows furrowed.

This was the first time he had heard such a thing, he had inadvertently learned more about the value of his technique, and unexpected boon.