

## **Martial Unity 1501**

Chapter 1501: Expose

However, while his Martial Mind prototype was more elementary compared to what Rui was accustomed to himself, it was not necessarily wrong.

Rui did indeed have a time limit.

He also could not neutralize Senior Zenshin's approach. Even if he could, he would certainly waste more energy trying since it took more energy to generate an attack of a certain power level compared to that of close-range attacks.

However, the most impressive part of the plan was not the plan, but the raw physicality that supported the plan.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

Senior Zenshin dedicated more energy towards neutralizing Rui's enhanced raw power than he did towards progressing towards Rui. He prioritized his health over closing the distance. It was because he knew that he would gain his chance at closing the distance that he was willing to remain patient.

This was not pleasant to Rui.

'I'm blasting him with the power of Hypertrophic Surge, but the only thing I'm able to do is stop his approach. He's defending every single attack extremely well!' Rui gritted his teeth.

This was the first time that he had used Hypertrophic Surge and failed to hurt his opponent despite it. It was such an absurd notion that Rui had difficulty believing it for a second. In fact, he had hurt Senior Zenshin only a single time this entire fight, when he caught him off-guard with the transformation.

Senior Zenshin weathered every single incoming attack, dispelling it with his lethal offense. Every swing of his claws, tore apart Rui's offense like it was paper.

Even though his raw power was not extraordinarily above Rui's Hypertrophic Surge, his offense was disproportionately lethal. The sharpness of his claws allowing him to split any and everything within the Senior Realm.

Perhaps the only exceptions were hyper-defense specialists like Senior Gemu who was so durable that not even Rui had managed to actually cause damage.

Regardless, he could only work with what he had. THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

The battle raged on. The two of them outputted tremendous amounts of power. Rui poured all of it into offense, while Senior Zenshin poured all of it into defense. The sheer amount of energy from their fight spread across the surrounding lands, inflicting much damage.

RUMBLE!

The very land beneath their feet shook violently under the onslaught of Rui's power. It was a terrifying and yet beautiful sight to behold. However, while the battle appeared to be even on the surface, they both knew that Rui was at a disadvantage. Such spontaneous power was rarely ever permanent. Just the fact that Rui activated later into the battle was more than enough evidence to suggest that it had its limits.

And Senior Zenshin was right.

The Metabody System was meant to be used after the pattern recognition system was complete, not before. It was the Hypnomatrix that was supposed to fulfill the role of adaptive evolution of the mind prior to the completion of the pattern recognition. However, Rui ended up using the Metabody System before the pattern recognition system was completed.

The reason was that his opponent was too strong. He was quite proud of the Hypnomatrix. It was a set of three grade-nine techniques, that were amplified by his augmented mind, effectively functioning like grade-ten techniques. Senior Zenshin's raw power was astronomically higher than that of Rui, and these powerful techniques had managed to chop it down significantly.

However, not even that had been enough to close the gap. Rui had been forced to use Hypertrophic Surge to close the gap, but Hypertrophic Surge had a much shorter time period than Senior Zenshin's raw power.

When Rui looked into Senior Zenshin's eyes, he sensed predatory patience. The man was waiting.

He was waiting for the right moment. Although Senior Zenshin was nowhere near as intelligent as Rui was, he was vastly more experienced. More than three hundred years of aggressive combat had created an intuition and instinct the likes of which Rui simply did not possess.

That same intuition told Zenshin that it wasn't long. Rui didn't have much time left. He was right. He just needed to wait.

And wait, he did. He hadn't moved from that one spot since Rui flung him into the forest. Rui had been unable to even budge from that one spot, at most he was rotating about to face Rui as he attacked from different angles. Attack after attack crashed into the man, only to be shredded into nothing by the man's shocking piercing power.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!!!

"Ngh!" Rui gritted his teeth as he blasted Senior Zenshin with a flurry of Mighty Roar Flash Blasts. However, while it appeared that he was mindlessly blasting attacks at Zenshin, he was not.

Rui's strategy was simple.

Continuous offense.

If the man had temporarily resigned to hurting Rui, then he didn't need to worry about getting hurt for the time being. He could focus on gauging as much information on the man as possible before Hypertrophic Surge had reached its limits.

'I need to compute all possible attacks. I'll attack him from new angles that cannot be blocked by old parries, forcing him to demonstrate new parries,' Rui narrowed his eyes. 'His moves are infinite, but the combinations are numerous, they may as well be infinite.'

However, this was not a problem.

'It will allow me to learn more about the core patterns that are a manifestation of one's very identity and being,' Rui's focus intensified. 'The more you fight, the more you show me.'

The more he was shown, the more he learned. The more he learned, the better he could adaptively evolve.

Rui had already given up on trying to hurt Senior Zenshin with Hypertrophic Surge. Rui underestimated the raw power of a close-quarters monster that had lived for three hundred years. He sacrificed it to gain more information, information that the VOID algorithm greedily consumed, eating it up. It wasn't long, however, before that came to an end.

Chapter 1502: What Are You

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!!!

STEP

Rui's eyes widened as Senior Zenshin took a step forward in Rui's direction, overwhelming his onslaught. He gritted his teeth, pushing himself to output as much power from as many different angles as possible.

And yet...

STEP

STEP

STEP

Senior Zenshin began closing the gap between them once more. First, he walked. A minute later, he found himself being able to jog.

It wasn't long before he was able to completely overwhelm Rui's offense, running in the process. Rui's expression grew grave as his body returned to its original volume, Senior Zenshin grinned like a shark as his eyes glowed with bloodlust.

Time was up.

The very air curled with the sheer peril that the man radiated.

"You're dead..." His voice quivered with malice. "You hear me...?"

RUMBLE!

The very land beneath them shook.

"YOU'RE DEAD." He bellowed, leaping at Rui. He launched himself at a tremendous speed, his claws swinging down on Rui, hoping to tear him to shreds. WHOOSH!

Senior Zenshin's eyes widened as his attack completely missed Rui. Rui had simply sidestepped the attack in the brief moment before the attack had begun and after it was too late to change it.

"HRYAH!" He snarled, launching powerful swift claw swipes at Rui.

Yet none of them managed to so much as touch Rui.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH

Rui's movements continuously changed.

They flowed.

With every maneuver, his movements grew refined.

They grew smoother.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

His expression was empty, yet his mind flashed with countless thoughts.

'You prepare the direction of your offense too early.'

'Successive attacks are usually at a ninety-degree angle with the previous swings.'

'Your center of gravity always shifts to the forefront foot a moment before the attack emerges.'

'You always initiate attacks from the claw that is furthest away from the target.'

'Your range is absolutely constant, requiring you to make predictable distance adjustments before every attack.'

Rui had gleaned countless patterns within the man's Martial Art. They flowed within the mind, and the VOID within consumed every single one of them voraciously.

In return, it allowed to him peer into the future. The future of his opponent.

A future he could change as he pleased.

And change, he did.

"HRYAH!" Senior Zenshin swung his claw at Rui with titanic power as the latter approached him.

BOOM!

Where Zenshin had hoped to cut Rui into four ribbons, he was struck with a powerful elbow into his ribs. The impact of the powerful Flowing Canon was now powerful enough to hurt the man's powerful flesh and muscles, but the impact permeated past the man's flesh, going in deeper before it struck his internal vitals.

"Ack!" Senior Zenshin grimaced with rage as he felt a deep sense of pain emerging from deep within.

"RARGH!"

He brought swung both claws down on Rui, they surged forward at incredible speed, threatening to split him into eight sections. WHOOSH!

BAM!!

Rui had crouched, passing through the man's legs and kicking him in the back of his head, upside down.

"Damn you!" Senior Zenshin screamed, panting, as he spun. A powerful claw swipe rushed through, threatening to tear his head off. WHOOSH!

Rui smoothly somersaulted over the man's head.

BAM BAM BAM!

A swift combo kicks crashed into the man's guard, provoking him to surge with a flurry of claw slices.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

Not a single one struck them. They missed Rui by an inch, yet Senior Zenshin could sense that they hadn't even come close to touching him. He evaded Senior Zenshin with the grace of a ballerina and the effort of a sloth.

It was unlike anything Senior Zenshin had ever seen.

A single thought reverberated through his mind.

'What are you?'

Senior Zenshin had initially thought Rui was a hyper-specialized elite high-grade Senior assassin who specialized in covert ambush assassins. These types of assassins could assassinate basically anybody below a certain level and were highly respected and feared in the Underworld.

However, these types of Martial Artists were not too proficient in direct combat, their Martial Paths were centered around covert assassinations or constituting or adjacent fields.

Yet, Rui displayed incredible long-range offense. Although Senior Zenshin had successfully torn apart the man's offense, he knew that it was quite impressive. On top of that, there was also that incredibly frustrating respiratory shackle that Rui had inflicted on him. Senior Zenshin was barely able to use a quarter of his raw power, it was an extremely tiring impediment that he was unable to break.

He displayed that strange body augmentation technique that enhanced his raw power. And now, he was displaying evasive capabilities that he could only expect to see from a specialized evasive expert.

'Just what are you?'



WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH

The attacks converged on Rui, yet none of them struck him. He didn't even step away, he merely swayed on his feet, evading every single one of them with seemingly otherworldly ease.

By minimizing the expenditure of his energy with his evasion, he could last longer than Senior Zenshin. As long as he moved the minimum, and used the fewest techniques, he could eventually gain the upper hand once Senior Zenshin was not only low on energy but also struggling to breathe due to the effects of Breathing Crucifix.

Victory was guaranteed at that point. He didn't rush his victory, he didn't rage forward with aggressive attacks trying to get a hit on a vital.

No.

It was patient, meticulous, rigorous, and surgical.

"Enough of this farce," Senior Zenshin whispered in an uncharacteristically soft voice.

Suddenly, Rui felt a deep sense of peril emerging from within his mind. His eyes widened with shock at the future that the predictive model predicted, immediately leaping away from Senior Zenshin with Gale Force Breathing and Outer Convergence.

'Veritable Tiger Fist: Hurricane of One Thousand Claws!' The man's arms spread out, one set of claws facing front while the others faced backward before he activated a breathing technique while spinning at top speed!

CRACK CRACK CRACK CRACK CRACK!

Countless gashes spontaneously emerged across an enormous expanse of the forest, shredding its targets to bits!

"Damn..." Rui muttered with a shaky voice, several hundred meters away from him. DRIP DRIP DRIP

Blood dripped out of the many cuts that had spontaneously emerged on his body.

Chapter 1503: Face-off

"Hehehe..." A wild grin emerged on Senior Zenshin's face. "Not so slick after all."

Rui had to admit that he had earned that boast. It was an incredibly powerful technique that did not send an attack traveling like how it was before. Instead, he had caused attacks to appear on their location.

That was incredibly impressive.

Of course, now that he had seen it, he had instantly figured out how it worked. It actually did not work by generating sharp shockwaves, instead, it worked on a principle of imbalance of pressure.

He generated a tremendous amount of pressure on a target with his breathing technique, then used his claw swipes to generate an extremely thin slit of vacuum amidst that pressure. The rest of the body of the target was experiencing immense pressure, pressure that had nowhere to go until he created a tiny slit of vacuum on his target's flesh with his claws, giving that vacuum a place to push through due to the zero pressure outside that area.

High external pressure was met with high internal pressure to maintain equilibrium, then that equilibrium was disturbed by a slit of vacuum with no pressure that was unable to hold back the high internal pressure.

Rui narrowed his eyes. 'He basically caused a huge imbalance of pressure inside and outside my flesh at one particular spot, causing the internal pressure to blast a hole open in my flesh from inside my body.'

To a certain extent, it bypassed his durability. It was quite the lethal attack and was much more of a sure hit than his normal claw attacks. He had most likely developed it as a solution against maneuvering experts like Rui, as a way to ensure that he got some hits on them.

Rui heaved a sigh as his wounds healed. No more than a few moments had passed in real-time as his wounds began healing at a decent pace. Thankfully, the very nature of the attack was such that it could not do more than inflict flesh wounds. It could not cause deep gashes that went beyond the flesh. Thus while he did experience a bit of blood loss, he was not in any grave danger.

His eyes narrowed as Senior Zenshin stirred ever so slightly, the predictive model foresaw yet another one of this very attack incoming.

WHOOSH

Rui surged forward, igniting the atmosphere with sheer speed. THWACK!

Rui interrupted the technique with a powerful Flowing Canon crashing into the man's guard. Yet Zenshin was hardly displeased by the interruption. 'You can't interrupt my technique without approaching me, within the range of my claws,' Senior Zenshin grinned.

Long-range techniques had greater range than close-range techniques, but they sacrificed power in exchange. They both knew that Rui's long range attacks did not have the power to throw Zenshin's technique off. After all, Senior Zenshin had withstood them even when Rui used Hypertrophic Surge, let alone without.

That meant that Rui needed to attack Senior Zenshin with Flowing Canon to stop that long-range wide-scale spinning technique. That would mean coming close to Senior Zenshin where he could be struck by the man's claws.

WHOOSH!

...SPLAT!

Rui barely avoided a lethal claw strike from Senior Zenshin, suffering a minor cut from the attack.

'I didn't even actually touch him!' Rui's eyes widened. 'Are his claws so sharp that they don't even need to make contact with the target to cut them?!

Senior Zenshin's smile widened with bloodlust. His desire to shred Rui into ribbons with his claws was so palpable that one could almost taste it. "Hehehe..."

He took the stance for the technique once more as Rui's expression grew more grave. "What's the matter? I'm going to activate that technique again. Not going to stop me?"

Rui narrowed his eyes. 'Damn him, he's surprisingly not an idiot.'

Rui's wounds were still healing, his durability had weakened over the fight due to using Hypertrophic Surge, which fueled the growth of muscles by weakening all other parts of the body by the mechanics of the Reaper Dew poison.

He was smart enough to realize that Rui could not afford to take too many flesh wounds like he did before. "Here I go," The man's smile deepened, as he began spinning.

"Tsk," Rui raced forward with Gale Force Breathing, Outer Convergence, and Parallel Walk. His fist surged forward.

BAM!

Rui's eyes widened as his attack crashed into the man's gut unguarded. He hadn't even bothered with defense, opting to take the heavy attack head-on. Instead, his claws had already been surging at Rui.

SPLAT!

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced as deeper cuts emerged on his body. He had been a bit too slow in his evasion, leaping back. "Damn...!"

There was only one saving grace. "Ngh..." Senior Zenshin grunted with an expression of pain.

Taking Rui's most powerful attack unguarded was something that not even Senior Zenshin could shrug off. In the first place, he was not a defense-oriented Martial Artist, of course, that did not mean his defense was bad, there was a solid amount of defense that came with his gargantuan figure.

That did not, however, allow him to take a Flowing Canon to the gut with no repercussions.

"Hahaha..." Senior Zenshin's expression grew excited with bloodlust. "Let's see who can survive longer."

The two of them quickly took their stances. Rui took a maneuvering stance that was inclined towards offense and linearity, resembling the starting crouch pose of a professional sprinter.

Senior Zenshin spread his arms, his torso coiled, ready to spin at any moment. The battle had entered a new phase, having evolved into a battle of attrition and timing. No longer did they blast each other with as many attacks as possible. No, instead, both sides focused on preserving energy and power while also focusing their efforts on nailing the timing of their respect maneuvers.

Senior Zenshin needed to land his Hurricane of One Thousand Claws twice in rapid succession, while Rui needed to disrupt the execution of the technique at all costs. Both Martial Seniors stood, poised for action.

#### Chapter 1504: Opportunity

In a region of the Great Forest of Hyponarak, silence reigned as two Martial Seniors stared at each other. Their eyes were fixed on their opponents, such that they could not even see anything else.

There was silence, and then there was not.

"HRYAH!" Senior Zenshin burst into motion as his body uncoiled, springing him into a spiral.

Rui's eyes narrowed as he launched off into a sprint, his fist surging forward as he prepared a Flowing Canon. Yet when it was merely a meter away, Zenshin abandoned his technique, redirecting his revolving claws towards Rui.

Unfortunately for him, Rui's predictive model foresaw the attempt.

WHOOSH!

Zenshin's eyes widened with shock as the attack crashed into an empty image.

A feint.

BAM!!

A powerful hook empowered with Outer Convergence and Reverberating Lance crashed into the man's liver, as Rui pushed himself away from Senior Zenshin with the recoil from the attack. "Tsk!" Senior Zenshin tutted, hiding his pain. He was far from ready to give up.

"HYAH!" The man launched himself into a spin almost immediately, hoping to catch Rui off-guard. Yet Rui had foreseen that as well.

BAM!!

A powerful Flowing Canon crashed into Zenshin's guard as the man did his best to claw at Rui.

WHOOSH!

He failed yet again as Rui cleanly evaded him returning to his previous stance.

"HYARGH!" Senior Zenshin tried once more, this time discontinuing the technique the moment Rui arrived within the range of his claws, ready to tear him apart.

And yet...

WHOOSH

Rui stepped away even before his claws could have begun moving towards him, cleanly avoiding the attack. Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes with rage as he refused to give up, repeating the aggressive technique over and over again.

One of two things tended to happen. He would either continue with the execution of his technique, hoping to pull it off in time, or he would discontinue the technique, hoping to catch Rui off-guard with a surprise attack.

In the former case, Rui simply surged forward with the Flowing Canon. In the latter, Rui simply turned away, evading the attack cleanly.

However, Senior Zenshin grew increasingly frustrated as much time passed while the two of them played this game.

This was supposed to be a gamble Rui. Senior Zenshin merely needed to succeed twice in succession in order to damage him enough to gain an advantage. No matter how he looked at it, this should have been advantageous for him.

Yet, for some reason, he was unable to tag Rui even a single time. Not even once had Rui made the wrong choice, or even the right choice at the wrong time. Whenever Senior Zenshin chose to genuinely try to execute the Hurricane of One Thousand Claws, Rui unhesitatingly surged forward with his Flowing Canon, disrupting it in time.

Whenever Senior Zenshin pretended to execute the attack, Rui somehow always knew and would always avoid the trap.

Seconds, minutes, and even hours passed. Their Martial Hearts had already flickered out as they went off. These reservoirs of potent power were not endless, and their regular stamina was far greater than their normal stamina.

Yet despite all the time that had passed, not once had he managed to touch Rui despite the advantage.

"HRYAH!" He desperately spun once more, pretending to activate the Hurricane of One Thousand Claws once more. He made sure that his farce was immaculate, he genuinely executed the breathing techniques and other maneuvers as flawlessly as possible right down to the minor twitch. Rui surged forward at top speed, as always. Suddenly, Senior Zenshin halted his technique, throwing a furiously swift claw swipe at Rui.

And despite that...

WHOOSH!

Rui had long stepped away, cleanly evading the attack with ease.

'DAMMIT,' Senior Zenshin's expression crumpled with rage and frustration. 'How is this even possible? He began dodging just the briefest moment before I began attacking him.'

Every time. This had happened every time. It was as though there was no lag. It was as though his reaction time was less than zero. It was as though he knew the future itself. Despite that, Zenshin did not give up. "HRYAH!" He began executing the Hurricane of One Thousand Claws once more, going all out with the speed of the execution.

And yet, Rui had already arrived.

BOOM!!

A powerful Flowing Canon crashed into the man's back, leaving behind an ugly bruise as it threw him off-balance.

BAM BAM BAM!!



Rui blasted him with blow after blow, exploiting the opportunity to pile on immense attacks. The flow of the battle had changed now that Rui had finally managed to turn an opening into a proper opportunity.

"HRYAH!" Senior Zenshin turned out swinging his claws at Rui. Yet this time, Rui had no intention of letting the opportunity go and returning to the existing deadlock.

TAP TAP TAP!

"Hng!" The man froze, choking as he felt jolts of electric current passing through his solar plexus and diaphragm. His eyes widened as he made a shocking discovery.

He couldn't breathe.

At all!

Before, his breathing was greatly labored, significantly hampering his raw power. However, this time, he was unable to breathe whatsoever. The combination of Lightning Tap and Breathing Crucifix had a synergetic collusion. Rui had greatly hampered his breathing mentally through hypnosis, while Lightning Tap had temporarily hampered his breathing physically.

For a few moments, Senior Zenshin suffocated, the shock and the inability to supply needed oxygen to sustain his expensive energy expenditure together completely halted his movements.

This was perhaps Rui's one and only opportunity to end the fight with a decisive victory.

"Rgh!" Rui strained himself to the absolute limit as he unloaded the mother of all beatdowns on the suffocated Zenshin. Eyes, throat, liver, testicles, and even his diaphragm. With Outer Convergence supplying the raw power, Adamant Reforging increasing the quality of the collision, and Reverberating Lance permeating the impact deeper into the vulnerable depths of the vital regions, he managed to inflict immense damage on Senior Zenshin over these areas.

Chapter 1505: Arrival

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!!

"Rrrgh!" Rui gritted his teeth as his body began hurting under the sheer strain of the effort that he was exerting. Blow after blow crashed into Senior Zenshin's body as the man's condition rapidly declined with all the damage he incurred. The successive blows to his diaphragm hampered his breathing even more, albeit temporarily.

Of course, it didn't take long for Senior Zenshin to regain his wits. He abandoned defense entirely as he swung both claws at Rui.

But alas, not even that could reach Rui.

WHOOSH!

Rui stepped away briefly as he evaded the attack, yet the battle had already tilted in his favor. Ugly purple and brown bruises had already formed across Senior Zenshin's entire body. He had been bleeding profusely from multiple open wounds and orifices. His breathing had not entirely recovered to even its previous state which had still been horribly hampered due to the Breathing Crucifix technique.

The multiple shocks that his diaphragm had sustained in addition to the continuous damage it had suffered due to the permeation of impact from Reverberating Lance made it so that he truly struggled to breathe, making every single movement extremely labored, heavy and sluggish.

Rui had no intention of remaining passive anymore.

'I don't have much time left,' He noted as even his breathing had begun to grow labored. He had been fighting for a long time, and even though he had purposely designed Breathing Crucifix as a high-stamina technique to last for a long time, it still put a strain on his mind and consumed his mental energy continuously.

If he let things continue for too much longer, the battle would become even again.

WHOOSH!

Rui surged forth one more time.

Senior Zenshin staggered unstably, haphazardly swinging his claws in Rui's direction in a desperate attempt to ward him off.

But even if Rui was too exhausted for continuous extravagant maneuvers, the pattern recognition system was still far too powerful to allow him to be tagged so easily.

WHOOSH!

Rui smoothly shifted a foot, avoiding the haymaker claw swipe with minimal effort while cleanly surging in with a powerful Flowing Canon.

BOOM!

A powerful blow to the solar plexus with the full might of Outer Convergence caused the man to vomit blood.

BAM BAM BAM!!!

Three blows to the man's jaws caused a bout of dizziness, yet the stubborn warrior refused to fall unconscious. He swung his claws, wandering about, hoping desperately that they struck Rui.

His offense was so lethal, that even in this state, he could still cause fatal damage to Rui.

But alas, such a thing never happened.

Rui cleanly avoided each blow as he surgically bombarded Senior Zenshin with blow after blow.

Yet the man never fell.

He staggered, he coughed blood, he shuddered in pain, yet he stood his ground, swinging to the very end. Not once did the fire of vengeance in his eyes ever snuff.

Rui could not help but feel an immense amount of respect for the man, even if the latter would have loved nothing more than to skin Rui alive with his claws. The sheer fortitude and perseverance that the man displayed was something that he ought to have been proud of.

Rui had no doubt that Senior Zenshin could have easily fallen into a bout of despair and emptiness and could have broken psychologically the way Senior Marna did. Yet despite the sheer degree to which Rui adaptively evolved to overcome his Martial Art with a much weaker Body and Heart, he still did not give in.

His spirit never broke even to the very end.

BAM!!

A powerful high kick crashed into the man's jaw. His skull shook violently as his eyes rolled back. A critical threshold had been crossed as the blunt force trauma to the brain caused it to shut down.

THUD

The gargantuan body collapsed, unconscious. Rui fell to his knees as he finally dispelled the Breathing Crucifix technique, catching his breath.

"That was close..." Rui panted. "Far too close."

He had lost count of the number of times that he had almost lost an arm or a part of his limb against Senior Zenshin.

Even with the Hypnomatrix, Metabody System, and the pattern recognition systems of the VOID algorithm, he had still needed to squeeze everything from all his techniques to all his tactics and strategies to edge out a decisive win at the end.

'The VOID algorithm and the various upgrades that I have made to it are impressively powerful, however, they are usually compensating for massive gaps in raw physical parameters between myself and my opponent,' Rui heaved a sigh, pulling out a rejuvenation potion. Even in the Squire Realm, his Martial Body had been substantially behind those of peers of the same rank, although it was far stronger than Martial Artists his age. His Martial Body had been grade seven or eight when he was a grade-ten Martial Squire.

That gap only widened when he broke through to the Senior Realm. Here were Martial Seniors that had been around for more than a century with Martial Bodies that had grown significantly in that time.

Then there was the gap in Martial Hearts, which further increased the gap in raw power between himself and other Martial Seniors of his grade. These were not small gaps, and even with the VOID algorithm, it was truly difficult to compensate and overcome such a large gap.

'I definitely need to fix this issue somehow,' He shook his head. 'I'll put it on the list.'

Meanwhile, some distance away in the human domain, a single carriage had pulled up to the Gereign base of the Carnil Mafia. A single middle-aged woman stepped out of the carriage, frowning as she inspected the great damage that had erupted as a result of the battle between Senior Zenshin and Rui.

"What happened here?" She called out, with an amplified voice.

One of the managers in charge widened his eyes as he immediately scurried to the woman, bowing his head deeply.

"Apologies for the delayed welcome, Master Haishi."

Rui heaved a sigh as he stepped forward to Senior Zenshin's body, having consumed several rejuvenation potions.

"Rgh..." The man beaten-down man stirred, waking up from being knocked out. He opened his eyes, dazed, turning to Rui who stood beside his body.

Normally, Rui killed his victims when they were unconscious, but this one had managed to wake up.

"...Any last words?" Rui asked in the Kandrian language. The man's eyes widened, narrowing. "You bastard... You're from the Kandrian Empire, not the Republic of Gorteau."

"That unsubstantiated confidence is precisely the reason you're in this situation, among others," Rui replied.

"Why do this? Who sent you? Was it the Aggragor Syndicate? Any of the other mafias?"

Rui didn't respond, having simply activated his Martial Heart, ready to kick at the man's head and put him to rest. That was when he felt the oppressive pressure crash down on him. His eyes widened with shock as chills crawled up his spine. Shivers went down his skin. He recognized this pressure. It was the same kind of pressure he felt when Master Uma had ambushed him and Master Deivon.

His eyes widened as realization dawned on him.

"So, you're the assailant that has caused us immense trouble, hm?" Master Haishi asked, standing beside.

Rui hadn't even been able to react to her approach. 'Dammit, I didn't expect them to not only bring a Master but also be able to hide this information from the Beggar's Sect.'

"I'm going to have you come with us," She remarked. "You're going to regret having antagonized us. We're going to squeeze every ounce of information you have on you, then we're going to take our time killing you and everyone you love."

"Heh..." Senior Zenshin grinned vindictively. "I call first dibs."

Master Haishi narrowed her eyes at his words.

BOOM!

"Rgh!" The man grimaced in pain as she swiftly lifted and crashed her foot on his injured body in a powerful drop-kick.

Yet the fear he felt overwhelmed the pain. He shivered as he felt the pure fury that Master Haishi radiated.

"You dare make claims after the mess you've caused?" She gritted her teeth with rage. "You dare? Your fate isn't going to be too much better than his."

Senior Zenshin shook at those words, his expression growing grave. "...I accept responsibility."

"Hmph, you will, whether you like it or not. Still, perhaps you have some saving grace. I'm going to train you to your bones"

She turned towards Rui. "Now then, go to sleep. It'll be your last peaceful one."

Her hand balled into a fist as it blurred, surging forward at blinding speeds, disappearing from his vision.

Yet it never landed on him.

It froze just inches away from his jaw.

Master Haishi's expression grew alarmed as she stared at her frozen hand. It refused to move. It refused to obey her commands.

It was as though her body had been stolen from her command.

Rui didn't understand what was happening.

"Hohoo...?" A familiar elderly voice emerged from behind him. "A foreign Martial Master dares to enter my domain."

Master Haishi's eyes widened in shock, still struggling to control her body. "You..."

"Your presence is well hidden," He remarked, studying her with interest. "Furthermore, I see you're armed with esoteric substances that sabotage the subconscious mind's senses. I see, so this is why you were so confident in coming to the Gereign Region. You thought that these measures would be enough to disguise your state as a Martial Master..."

"...Well, you were right. They were enough. I hadn't sensed a thing! Hahaha!" Master Zeamer guffawed as the mental pressure he exerted plummeted. "Frankly, you would have been able to reside in the Gereign Region without me noticing, as long as I never directly focused on you. Yet you made one crucial blunder..."

His smile grew a hint more perilous. "You attacked my pupil...The moment you did that, you earned my personal attention. You see, I'm quite possessive of my things, especially from my peers."

Master Haishi gritted her teeth, struggling to move her hand. "Pupil...? This kid?"

She glared at Rui, who was finally spurred out of his reverie, leaping away as he joined Master Zeamer's side. The air grew taut as the two Masters stared at each other.

"Master..." Rui began, clenching his fist. He knew how bad things would have gotten without his intervention. It would have been hopeless. "...I'm truly gra-"

"Don't mentioned it," He remarked. "Stand back, things are going to get just a little rough. Just a little."



Those words pricked at Master Haishi. She gritted her teeth, narrowing her eyes as they glowed, activating her Martial Heart, finally freeing her body. "You..."

Both Zenshin and Rui flinched. The sheer amount of pressure that she was unleashing prickled at their minds. Pure fury seemed to reverberate from deep within her being, inspiring primal fear within them.

Yet Master Zeamer simply stared at her with a mundane expression.

Yet Rui recognized his displeasure. He had come to learn in the past two years that it wasn't the best idea to become the source of Master Zeamer's displeasure.

"First, you send your disciple to sabotage our operations. Next, you actively antagonize me, a Martial Master of the Carnil Mafia..." Her voice was laden with bloodlust as her eyes flashed with fury. "You dare provoke the Kandrian Underworld? You? A single Martial Master?"

"Hah..." Master Zeamer snorted. "Why wouldn't I? There's only one person in the Kandrian Underworld who can overcome me."

"Arrogant..." She murmured. "That's the third time you've provoked us. Know that your death is yours to blame."

An aura of power that surged far beyond the Martial Heart seemed to radiate from her.

"Hohoho..." Master Zeamer chuckled. "Scary. But I like that. I'd let you go since it would be a shame to kill such a feisty woman. But there is something that not even being female can excuse."

His Martial Heart blazed into power, shining like the sun. "Like messing with my pupil."

"Enough talk," She snorted. "I'll show you just how small you are."

"Hah," Master Zeamer smirked, activating his Martial Mind. "That's what she said."

## Chapter 1507: Shadow Credo

A maelstrom of pressure had engulfed the entire Gereign Region. Every animal, monster, human, and Martial Artist felt a mind-churning pressure crash into them. True terror sprung up within their hearts, crippling them.

Many froze, paralyzed.

Others shivered in horror.

Many simply fainted then and there, despite the enormous distance between them and the source of the great pressure that they experienced.

Rui and Zenshin gulped as they stood up behind their Masters, trying to maintain their composure as much as they could. Senior Zenshin in particular, struggled as he did his best to resist the mental pressure crashing into him.

Rui was a lot calmer, yet even he felt a tingling nervousness. The battle had begun sooner than he had expected. One moment, the two Martial Masters were standing right before them, and the very next moment they disappeared.

Rui and Zenshin grew startled, glancing at each other. The very next moment, they felt blood-curdling pressure.

Every cell in their body screamed danger.

A peril unlike anything they were accustomed to washed over them. Every instinct in their body wanted them to run away.

The skies seemed to shiver as the two Martial Masters bathed it in their Martial Embodiments.

Master Zeamer's very existence seemed to morph into an entirely different entity. He turned into the rotating dichromatic spiral that Rui had come to grow familiar with in the past two years, having fully activated his Martial Mind.

"What a paltry Martial Embodiment." Master Haishi's voice echoed across the skies from all directions. "Allow me to bear mine!"

Master Zeamer raised an eyebrow as a vast mist wrapped around the hypnotic spiral, obscuring it and everything around it.

The Gereign Region was shook, both physically and mentally. The two Martial Embodiments captured the totality of the sentience within the entire region...

...before breaking it.

"AAAAAARGH!" "HELP- HEEEEELPP!!!"

"W-WHAT IS THAT?!"

"HELP- HEEEEELPP!!!"

Countless people had already collapsed. Many were conscious, yet broken. Their eyes were hollow, as if the very sentience within them had been disabled. Others had died on the spot, having experienced heart attacks.

Many simply collapsed unconscious.

Countless bodies were strewn across the Gereign Region.

Those that were conscious did not have it better. In fact, many would argue they had it worse. The sheer horror they experienced from seeing what was the fabric of their world turning into a horror movie in addition to the mental pressure that the Martial Embodiments inflicted upon them was too much.

"AAAAAARGHRR!" Many fell to their knees, holding their heads as they shivered in bone-chilling terror.

Yet the two forces that caused such havoc and mayhem did not deem it fit to take any measures to hold back.

Their battle had begun, and they cared only to fight each other. Master Zeamer stood in the air, expanding his senses across the skies of the Gereign Region. 'I can't sense her. But this isn't misdirection either, so this is physical stealth and not mental stealth.'

He knew that she wasn't relying on misdirection to hide her presence. There were no Martial Masters capable of misdirecting him without him noticing it, furthermore, he had instantly sensed that she was not a mental Martial Artist. "What's the matter, having a hard time sensing me?" Her voiced echoed across the heavens. A hint of sadistic amusement colored the tone of her voice. Just hearing that voice had caused hundreds of thousands of people to experience mental breakdowns, tens of thousands to collapse, and thousands to die.

Martial Masters had ascended to a higher state of life, such that merely the weight of the Martial Mind behind their voice could collapse human civilization.

Yet, it was ineffective against a fellow Martial Master

"..." Master Zeamer didn't bother replying.

They were just feeling each other out at the moment, despite the apocalypse that they caused within the Gereign Region.

The true battle would soon commence.

And it did.

**BAM BAM BAM!!!**

An onslaught of titanicly powerful strikes landed across his entire body from all directions. The sheer power and speed of strikes were on a level of power and speed that Rui couldn't even comprehend!

Each blow possessed the power to reduce mountains to dust. They flashed forward at speeds that far exceeded even lightning itself. Such was the power of the Master Realm.

Yet despite the sheer titanic power that Master Haishi generated, not a single one of those blows generated environmental spillage.

The very skies seemed to prostrate in her presence as the air seemed to deliberately part away from the path of her attacks, unwilling to impede her.

Not a single spec of heat sparked.

Not a single vibration of sound ensued.

Not a single gust of wind emerged.

Nothing went to waste. Every iota of energy that her Martial Heart generated was dedicated one and only one target.

Her opponent.

**BOOM BOOM BOOM!!!**

Master Haishi's sadistic grin widened as she blasted Master Zeamer with every ounce of her raw power. "What's the matter? Where did all that bravado go?"

Master Zeamer narrowed his eyes, remaining calm. Yet wounds had begun piling on to his Martial Body.

"Your Martial Body is oriented to aid your mind, I'm sure your brain is enhanced well. You probably have a greater reservoir of mental energy than anybody else in the Master Realm, but that means that your body is much weaker!"

BOOM BOOM BOOM!!!

Master Haishi grew ecstatic as she continued bombarding Master Zeamer with blow after blow. "Hahahahaha! You're so weak! Or am I just too strong? I can never tell!"

Yet despite her apparent irrationality, her mind raced with thought.

'Martial Mind: Shadow Credo First Degree. Sense of mind, vision, hearing, spatial sense, sense of touch, sense of smell, sense of taste. That is the order of intensity intensity of his senses. His sense of mind is more powerful than the rest of them, so I need to allocate even more energy to eluding it. I'll allocate decreasing amounts of energy in ascending order of their intensity,' A remarkably sophisticated thought process sprung about in her mind.

#### Chapter 1508: Unfolding

Master Haishi's Martial Path was active stealth brawling. She simply eluded her opponent's senses through various physical principles instead of misdirection, allowing her to fight head-on and directly without fearing attracting her opponent's attention.

Most misdirection-centric stealth users could not maintain stealth while also directly engaging their targets in combat. Engaging targets in combat attracted attention to them which worked against misdirection. It was intrinsically contradictory.

There were very few exceptions to this rule like Kane, because he had mastered the grade-ten Void Step which relied on combat maneuvering itself to misdirect his target, and Rui, whose misdirection was so powerful that it could work even if he directly engaged his target head-on.

Some especially powerful mind-oriented Martial Artists could also do the same, but the number was highly limited.

Physical stealth that relied on physical principles to elude senses did not have such a shortcoming. Master Haishi could completely fight head-on and go all out without having to worry about sabotaging her own stealth.

She further improved her elusive ability with her Martial Mind; the Shadow Credo. It was a methodology by which she applied her energy and physical resources to ensure that her stealth was optimized in its probability of fooling her opponent. She would secretly test her opponent's senses subtly to evaluate the quality of their senses, and then alter the configuration of senses that her stealth was focused on.

Her stealth would grow stronger against her opponent throughout the fight even while she bombarded them with her powerful attacks.

It was precisely this framework of thought that had allowed her to break through to the Master Realm.

Had Rui been qualified to be able to witness her Martial Mind in work he would have instantly recognized the element of adaptive evolution in her Martial Mind, but alas, he was hardly able to even perceive the battle.

He was only able to behold the mist increasingly oppressing the hypnotic spiral. His expression grew grave at the sight.

"Hehehe..." Senior Zenshin. "Master Haishi is a direct executive of Lord Carnil himself. She is particularly powerful. As powerful as the Hypnomaster is, he can't compare!"

Rui glared at the man momentarily, turning back to the raging fighting in the skies. Although killing Senior Zenshin and running away was probably the most prudent option, he decided against it. He did not want to run away.

He did not even want to look away from the fight anymore.

'This sensation...' Rui felt his nerves tingling. 'This is the power of the Upper Realms.'

His fists clenched. 'I want it. I want it with every ounce of my being.'

His heart ached with desire. It had been a little under five years since he became a Martial Senior, and yet his ambition to achieve even greater power had already overtaken him. Meanwhile, the battle between those with the power he sought had already escalated in intensity.

"Rgh!" Master Zeamer coughed blood as he panted heavily. Bruises and cuts scarred his entire body as he bled profusely. His Martial Embodiment fluctuated.

"Honestly..." Master Haishi heaved a sigh, putting a hand on her waist. "I'm disappointed. All that hype. All that notoriety. All those legends and tales of the great Hypnomaster."

Her head tilted up as she looked down on him with unfiltered disdain. "You are a disappointment. You're so weak. You must have hypnotized normal people and used them to spread false rumors about yourself, right? No wonder even the Beggar's Sect was fooled. Truly disappointing." The very heavens curved under the weight of her bloodlust. "Just looking at you infuriates me."

Her Martial Heart began shining even brighter as her rage skyrocketed. "I will end this farce now."

She flashed forward at a speed that beggared the mind, crossing the distance between them in a microsecond.

BOOM!!!!

SPLAT!!!

Both her palms surged forward blasting two holes in his chest. Her arms buried themselves to the elbow.

"Rgh...!" The man vomited blood as his eyes widened with shock.

"Die, fraud," She commanded.



CLASP!

Her eyes widened as she felt two hands on her buttocks, groping them.

"Hoho..." Master Zeamer leaned forward, burying his face in her ample bosom, rubbing her breasts with his cheeks in glee and excitement. "Hohohooo...!"

RUMBLE!!!

The land of the Gereign Region began shaking violently as a Richter-eight earthquake seemed to erupt out of nowhere!

Pure raw disgust emerged on Master Haishi's face. "You filthy disgusting lecherous animal."

The skies began to shake with her fury. "DIE!"

CRACK CRACK CRACK!

...SPLAT!!!

Rui's eyes widened as he barely managed to spot what was happening at the epicenter of Master Zeamer's Embodiment.

"She...split him in half?" Rui choked with shock.

"Hahahahaha!" Senior Zenshin cackled. "My Master defeated yours! Now it's your turn for a world of hurt.

Up in the skies, Master Haishi's face was still crumpled with disgusted rage. "I feel dirty. I should prepare a long nice bath. At least I disposed of that living human filth."

Suddenly, she froze.

'Wait a minute...' A wave of pure terror erupted from within her. 'If he's dead, then why is Martial Embodiment still active?'

Not only did the hypnotic spiral not disappear, it grew even stronger.

There was only one answer.

"Because I'm not dead," Master Zeamer's voice emerged from behind her.

A profound sense of peril radiated from him. A deep feeling of horror overtook her heart as she struggled to maintain her composure. "H-How...?"

"You still don't get it?" Master Zeamer chuckled. "This entire fight...everything that has happened up until now...has happened inside your head."

She turned around, leaping away from him with a fearful expression. Her eyes widened as she beheld his Martial Body. There wasn't a single scratch anywhere on his body. All of the bruises, cuts, broken bones, not to mention the two gaping holes that she had blasted in his chest had disappeared.

Even the clothes she had shredded in the process of beating him up were gone.

"It was quite entertaining to watch you run around the sky punching and beating up empty air like the little fool you are." Master Zeamer chuckled. "But, I've gotten bored of it. So let's put an end to this."

He closed his eyes, before flashing them wide open. They glowed with power.

'Astral Abyss Style: Armageddon.'

## Chapter 1509: Death

One moment, Master Haishi was simply standing in the sky, staring at him warily and cautiously.

The next moment, every cell in her body spontaneously died. Life transitioned to death in just a moment.

The mist that covered the skies disappeared, leaving only the hypnotic spiral rotating in the sky. She plummeted from the air, free-falling until she collapsed into the crowd. BOOM

Just like that, a Martial Master perished.

Senior Zenshin was stunned. "M-Master...?"

BANG!

...CRACK

Before he could even process his Master's death, Rui had already activated his Martial Heart, killing the man on the spot. He had almost lost the chance earlier, and he wanted to make sure that nothing went wrong this time.

"Huff..." He heaved a relieved sigh, glancing back at the figure that descended from the sky gracefully. "Master Zeamer..."

The elderly man landed before Rui wordlessly staring at Rui with an expectant expression. "Thank you for saving my life," Rui bowed his head. "I would have been dead without you."

"Hoho...Don't mention it, my young disciple. T'was but a trivial matter," He said with a smug expression. Rui glanced at the corpse of the Martial Master. "...What was that?"

"Hm?" Master Zeamer glanced at the Master Haishi's cadaver. "Ah, that was one of my trump cards, Armageddon. It's a grade-ten Master-level technique that I created."

"...How did it instantly kill her? Is that even possible with hypnosis?" Rui asked him warily.

"Generally, no. But it is possible for someone of my caliber," He remarked blandly, staring at the corpse with cold eyes. "The hypnotic technique works by convincing the subconscious mind that the person is dead. And the subconscious mind follows suit..."

Rui's eyes widened with shock.

"It is the subconscious mind that maintains and monitors the body. Convincing it is dead is no different from killing the person on the spot. It is a hypnotic technique that harnesses death itself." Master Zeamer remarked. "It takes a very powerful and trained mind to even possibly resist the hypnosis, and clearly she didn't have it in her."

Rui wasn't even sure what to say. This was such an absurdly lethal and powerful technique that killed so easily that Rui wasn't even sure if such a thing was even allowed. A death-dealing hypnotic spell that killed in a heartbeat sounded incredibly dangerous.

Rui made a mental note of never getting on Master Zeamer's bad side.

"Well then, I've finished what I came here for," Master Zeamer remarked, walking away. "Good fight. It was quite entertaining to watch."

"You were watching?"

"Of course, I always am. This is my domain. I'm glad you didn't die, though there were several close calls."

"What would you have done if I was going to die or did die?" Rui wondered.

"Nothing at all," Master Zeamer replied nonchalantly. "Losing a fight that you provoked against a fellow Martial Senior peer of yours is completely on you. I don't meddle in quarrels between children."

Rui smiled, that was about what he had come to expect from Master Zeamer. He made one last bow. "Thanks again, Master."

"Stay sharp, my entertaining disciple."

When Rui glanced back up, the man had already disappeared. It appeared that he wasn't interested in bidding Rui a second farewell. Rui was sure that he just wanted to return to his harem as soon as possible.

He heaved a sigh, putting the old Master out of his mind before returning to his situation.

"Now then, what should I do?" Rui wondered.

He glanced at the two corpses that were strewn about. "I've killed all my targets, not a single Martial Artist above Squire-level exists in the devastated Gereign base. On top of that, the Martial Master is also dead."

Rui glanced back at the human domain. "Not to mention, the Martial Embodiments have killed, broken, or damaged every single normal human in the Gereign Region. So even the surviving employees, if that's what they are, of the Carnil Mafia are severely damaged."

Essentially, the Carnil Mafia lost everything. Rui took out all their Martial Seniors.

Master Zeamer killed one of their precious Martial Masters.

The two Martial Embodiments either killed or crippled all of their people.

The infrastructure of their base had been entirely destroyed or greatly devastated by the initial clash between Zenshin and himself.

"Yeah, that Carnil Mafia can't afford or rather will choose not, to expend all the resources needed to replace all of that," Rui figured, running through variable possible scenarios based on the data that the Beggar's Sect gave them. "The probability that they'll fix this mess is just really low. SO mission accomplished, I suppose. Time to go tell the Beggar's Sect."

Rui's eyes widened as he realized the Beggar's Sect undoubtedly suffered immensely from the battle. He had known them well enough by now to know that their people had most certainly deeply infiltrated pretty much any and every organization and force. The Gereign Region undoubtedly contained many of the spies of the Beggar's Sect, and there was no doubt that they had suffered heavy losses and casualties.

"Damn..." Rui scratched his head.

There was only one thing he could do about that. "I'm going to have to blame it all on you, Master Zeamer," He was sure that the Master was listening. "It is your fault, so I'm not even wrong."

He shrugged. He wasn't avoiding responsibility since he didn't cause all this widespread damage. 'More importantly, I've finally finished my commission payment,' Rui heaved a deep expectant sigh.

It did not take a short amount of time. He had spent more than four years since he began his commission payment.

'Of course, most of that time has gone into training with Master Reina and Master Zeamer,' He heaved a sigh. 'Still, it has been long. Time to finally get the information and intelligence that I need. After that...'

His eyes narrowed. 'After that, I can finally take that asshole down.'

As he walked across the human domain of the Gereign region, he had to admit, the damage was more extensive than he expected. Everybody was seemingly hurt, thus there were very few able-bodied people. Although the two Masters caused even less physical damage than Martial Seniors, the actual losses they caused were far more devastating.

## Chapter 1510: Acknowledgement

The Gereign Distribution Center which served as a base of the foreign affairs department of the Beggar's Sect was not doing too well, but still far better than the rest of the Gereign Region.

There were many able-bodied men and women who were working furiously on all kinds of duties and tasks. "Move!" One woman shouted at him as she shoved past him, carrying a stack of documents. The fact that they didn't even bother deferring to him the way they normally did Martial Seniors showed just how dire of a situation they were in. Not that Rui minded, he didn't care about such meaningless matters.

'I do hope I can meet Ferm,' Rui sighed. That was the executive who was his point of contact within this base of the Gereign Region. "I'm here to speak with Executive Ferm," Rui approached a staff member at the reception counter. "He's busy," She replied not even glancing at him while she furiously fiddled with her terminal.

"I'm willing to wait."

"You're going to have to wait a while."

"I don't mind," Rui replied turning back, taking a seat on the crouch.

It turned out that she wasn't kidding. He did have to wait for quite a long time. He spent most of his time reflecting on his battle with Senior Zenshin.

Out of all the Martial Seniors he had ever faced or even seen, Senior Zenshin was definitely the strongest. The second strongest was probably Senior Ceeran, while the third strongest was Senior Marna.

He had managed to defeat the strongest Martial Senior he had ever met, though it truly took him everything he had, and he almost died. 'His raw physical parameters were leagues above mine. Especially his lethality, it's unlike anything that I have,' Rui sighed. "My ability to inflict damage is somewhat limited. I need Hypertrophic Surge, and even then he's far stronger than I am, and more lethal in his offense."

Rui heaved a sigh. If not for Breathing Crucifix, not even the pattern recognition system would have been in enough. It wouldn't even have made it in time. Although he was glad that the upgraded VOID algorithm with the Hypnomatrix and the Metabody System was powerful enough to bridge such a large gap, he was not pleased that such large gaps existed in the first place.

When it came to his Body, Heart, and even the techniques that harnessed the power of Body and Heart and employed it, he was behind in all aspects.

He pondered about the details of the fight deeply, it was a good way to spend the time.

"Sir?" An exhausted assistant approached him. "Executive Ferm is ready to meet you."

"Finally," Rui muttered. The assistant led him to the man's office, leaving him inside before closing the door.

"Senior Falken," The man addressed Rui without much of a smile. "We have much to speak about. Please have a seat."

"I have completed the mission that the Beggar's Sect gave me," Rui remarked. "With this, the Carnil mafia will surely not return after their operations have experienced a catastrophic failure. Even if they did, they have earned the ire of the Vale Syndicate and will face even greater pressure. The years worth of reconstruction due to the sheer distance, the general chaos of the Gereign Region, and the losses they have already incurred, the inevitable delay to their plans. It's simply not worth it anymore."

What especially sealed the deal in his mind was the loss of a Martial Master. That was very painful even for the Carnil Mafia.

Executive Ferm simply stared at him with a neutral expression and perfect posture, considering his words. He hid it well, but Rui could tell that he was running on fumes.

"It is true that you have completed the operation we gave you. But a side consequence has been the clash of Martial Masters that caused immense damage to us," Executive Ferm replied.



"I do not control a Martial Master's actions," Rui shrugged. "I did not summon the Hypnomaster, and I certainly did not summon the other Master. In fact, had the Beggar's Sect informed me of Master Haishi's impending arrival, I would have done things in a very different way, if at all."

Executive Ferm simply stared at Rui. Unfortunately, it was true that Rui could not be held responsible for a battle between two Martial Masters that essentially crippled the Gereign Region.

"Your statements are accurate," Executive Ferm sighed. "As per the clauses of the commission contract, we will fulfill our end of the deal. Unfortunately, our operations, both external and internal have ground to a halt. It will take quite some time for us to procure what we are obligated to give you."

"You seem to be doing fine," Rui remarked. "In fact, I've noticed a lot of people in this building are."

"Core internal staff have undergone rigorous mental fortitude training, as have executives like myself. We are specifically trained to resist mental pressure from Martial Artists like yourself. Thus, while we have suffered immense stress, we have avoided suffering damage or breakdowns." The man calmly replied.

"Oh?" Rui raised an eyebrow. "I didn't know that that was a thing."

"It's not a custom exclusive to the Beggar's Sect," The man remarked. "Most people in power have undergone varying levels of mental fortitude training. People in positions of power cannot afford to be mentally intimidated by the average Martial Apprentice or Martial Squire. The more power one wields, the greater the mental fortitude training."

Rui grew intrigued by the man's remarks. He recalled that Guildmaster Bradt had personally signed a deal with a Martial Sage, of all people. He was willing to bet that the Guildmaster too had undergone some pretty severe mental fortitude training himself for him to carry himself in a manner befitting his power before a Martial Sage.

"Huff...Well, putting that aside, let us conclude this matter quickly. This is a statement of acknowledgment of the fact that you have fulfilled your agreement," Executive Ferm sighed, sliding him a stamped and signed paper.