Chapter 16 Battle Royale

The results had arrived, and immediately a crowd had formed around the board. Fortunately, the notice board tall, and the rankings were boldened so that the crowd would not be able to block others from reading them. Rui and Kane had already gone closer to get a better look.

('So the results are ranked in ascending order of points, those with the highest points at the top. Each ranking has name, ID, points and whether they passed or failed.') Rui noted. The board had also mentioned the average number of points per applicant, which in this case was 347 points.

He began searching for his name rigorously, there were thousands of names, so this would take a while. The problem was he was reaching the end of the 'passed' section. He still hadn't found his name.

('Dammit, did I fai-')

"Hey, found your name. You passed." Kane told him.

Rui jerked. "Where is it?!"

"Woah chill, it's right there, see?" Kane pointed towards at the top of the first section.

"See, you got ranked ninth." He told Rui blankly.

"..." Rui stood there gaping as he beheld his ranking. He thought Kane was trolling him when he said ninth, but unless his eyes were also trolling him, it was the truth!

"What...?" He mumbled in disbelief. He'd scored 706 points. Putting him above ninety-nine percent of his competitors.

"But how...?" Rui was confused, even after he teamed up with Kane, and even after he applied his tactics, he still got hit more than half the time. Less than fifty-percent was generally a horrible score according to his academic sensibilities, but apparently the exam was so difficult for everybody that even this low score was quite remarkable.

Rui sighed, trying to reign in his shock.

"Hey man, don't feel bad, ninth isn't a bad rank." Kane comforted him with him consoling smile. "Cheer up, okay?"

Rui stared at him with a slack jaw. This kid...

"What's your rank?" Rui took the precaution of asking before he decided how to retort.

"Fourth." Kane replied with a relieved tone.

"...!" Rui threw him a shocked look, before quickly verifying his rank.

('Amazing, this kid is something special alright. But...')
"But why don't you look happier though?"

"Father said that if I didn't get into the top five, my play time would become be replaced with more training. So I just barely made the cut." He replied with a tinge of relief and defiance.

('Seems being part of a famous martial family comes with its own fair share of tribulations. I trained out of my own free will. How could someone force a child to train so rigorously?') Rui wondered. Another thing he noted was that Kane implied his father already knew what the test was, as well as about the evaluation method and passing criteria.

"I see. Sounds rough." Rui offered.

"It's a pain in the ass."

Rui turned back to the board once more. From what he could see, roughly sixty to seventy-percent of the applicants had failed. All around him applicants seemed to be either relieved or disappointed. Large droves of applicants exited the facility until a much smaller population remained, having their wounds tended to or simply waiting for the third and final round.

Rui glanced around at those who had passed and remained in the facility. These applicants were both determined and resolved enough to pass the first round, as well as talented and skillful enough to pass the second round.magic

('These guys are the real deal. They possess both the drive and qualifications to become Martial Artists.')

Everyone in the room could sense that too, each one of them could see that everybody else was not ordinary. Rui once more drew eyes towards him than usual, not just because of his odd hair and eyes, but more so due to his ID, which belonged to the top ten. There were many who had looked for those applicants that managed to get into the top ten, after all, depending on what the third round ended up being, it could be of great help remembering the most dangerous applicants in here.

"Congratulations on passing the second round of the Martial Entrance Exam. Before I divulge details of the third round, each of you will be provided with a badge with your score from the second round, you may not cover or store the badge. The third-round is similar to the second round in that in that your objective is to obtain as many points as possible. The means by which you acquire points however, will be different. It's very simple. The number of points you possess by the end of the round will be equal to the sum of the points of all badges in your possession."

A spark of understanding flashed through the applicants.

"You may accumulate points by obtaining the badges of your fellow applicants, through any means whatsoever. Once again; your goal is to accumulate points. Only half of you will pass the exam. You will be evaluated on your performance."

('So basically, the final round will be a Battle Royale.')

Rui quickly realized this was bad for him.

('The people who scored the highest will become the biggest targets, obviously. They're the ones with badges of the highest score. Among the top ten, I'm almost certainly the weakest in actual combat. I have no formal training in Martial Art whatsoever, my experience in combat is negligible, my physical prowess is inferior to all other applicants, Kane included.')

The only combat training Rui had done in the past three years was basic kickboxing practice. For punching and jabbing he would put himself through standard boxing training from Earth; Bag work, slip bad, pad work etc. These were common boxing training exercises. Of course, he didn't have actual equipment, he had to be a little clever and resourceful. He'd used rice bags in place bag equipment, cloth wrapped think planks of wood nailed to trees etc. But he did this only so that he could familiar himself with the sensation of striking. It was by no means actual experience, or even substitute for sparring.

('This is going to be genuinely rough. I'm going to become a complete target. I can forget about trying get other applicants' badges, I don't need them anyway with my high score. I need to everything I can to ensure that my badge doesn't get stolen.')