

Martial Unity 1711

Chapter 1711: Unearthly Coordination

Minutes passed.

The Hammerer struggled vigorously. Yet each of his movements was hampered by Heavenly Convergence.

The technique made him feel like he was trying to move while trapped at the center of an ocean of adhesive. By the time his attack struck Rui behind him, most of the power had gone into pushing against Heavenly Convergence.

Every movement he made.

Every attack he made.

Every haymaker he threw.

They were insufficient.

He still would have succeeded in shaking Rui off even after the shackles of Heavenly Convergence if not for the second pair of shackles on not his body but his mind.

Breathing Crucifix prevented him from inhaling the air he needed to generate the power and energy he needed to break free of Rui's grasp.

On top of that, Rui's powerful arm crushed against his windpipe like a constrictor, stopping all breathing.

The man struggled.

Yet, with each passing second, his movements grew more sluggish, slower, and weaker.

His pupils dilated as his vision blurred.

The end was nigh.

WHOOSH!

Yet, Rui's eyes widened as he undid the chokehold, leaping away desperately.

SPLAT!

The Hammerer's head flew into the air, separated from his body by the precise sword swing.

"Dang, I was hoping to take both of you out."

The Thunder Viper's grin was malevolent.

His eyes were wide.

They fixated on Rui.

He sheathed his curved blade as he faced Rui once more.

One moment he was there...

The next moment, he was not.

WHOOSH!

He sped through the air at mind-boggling speeds, incinerating the air into a white inferno with sheer friction alone.

SPLAT!

"Rgh!" Rui gritted his teeth as he barely managed to get decapitated.

What shocked him was how extraordinarily sharp the blade was. It possessed an edge thinner than the claws of Senior Zenshin. It cut through his flesh like a hot knife through butter.

A deep sense of peril flashed through him as he realized that he had come extremely close to death.

"Hey, not bad!" The Thunder Viper laughed, already ready for yet another round. His grip on his blade tightened as he leaped into motion.

"Speed Void."

The assassin's eyes widened with shock as Rui's voice reverberated across his new domain.

His face stretched, blown back with an astounding amount of drag force. The sheer amount of resistance he faced from the air was unlike anything he had experienced in his entire life!

He felt like he was trying to run immersed deep in the ocean!

When he tried accelerating from zero to top speed, all of heaven and earth seemed to be doing everything in their effort to stop his acceleration!

Yet Rui wasn't done.

The assassin's eyes widened as they met Rui's.

Suddenly, the fabric of time went haywire.

Time sped up.

Everything sped up.

The turbulent drag force that opposed his speed to grow faster.

His own body movements became too fast for him to keep up, forcing him to slow down.

'Temporal Disharmony.' Rui narrowed his eyes as he successfully nailed the hypnotic technique.

It helped that Speed Void, the domain born from Project Speed Prison, had completely cut off the man's speed.

Now, he was no longer a speedster.

He may as well have been a below-average Martial Artist with a shitty Martial Body that had no strengths, only weaknesses.

Rui blurred in his slowed-down vision, appearing before him.

He peered into his target's eyes.

They were pitch black.

Greedily consuming all the light that graced it.

They bore into his.

At that moment, he felt naked.

Transparent.

Helpless.

His speed was denied.

His very perception of speed was denied.

What else did he have?

His eyes became hollow as the horrifying answer dawned on him.

'Nothing.'

CRACK!

Rui's powerful blow crashed into his jaw, breaking it.

Yet that wasn't the only thing inside him that broke.

By the time he lost consciousness, he had also escaped Rui's consciousness.

For he had bigger things to worry about.

BAM BAM BAM!

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced with pain as he leaped away from the unconscious body of the Thunder Viper, facing his new opponent.

Or opponents.

Twin sisters stood side by side.

Their cold eyes fixated on Rui.

They had waited for the moment when Rui's attention had been fully consumed by his attack on the Thunder Viper.

WHOOSH!

They flashed forward aggressively, arriving before him just a moment later.

Yet he could only see one.

She stared at him.

Where was the other one?

BAM!!!

He grimaced as a powerful blow crashed into his diaphragm.

It came out of nowhere as the second twin sister completely bypassed his senses.

WHOOSH!

In just a moment, they had already arrived before him.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!!!

Dozens, hundreds, and thousands of well-timed blows crashed one by one into Rui. An ocean of attacks blasted him at a rate beyond his ability to contend.

"Rrrrrghh!!" Rui gritted his teeth as he desperately defended against each strike.

Each strike exceeded his own.

They were incredibly heavy.

He felt his arms rattling as they crashed into him.

They were incredibly swift, as swift as one could be without being a speed-oriented Martial Artist.

Yet those weren't the most devastating part of their offense.

'It's their absurd coordination. It's even greater than the telepathic-predictive coordination Ieyasu and I had set up!' His eyes widened with shock.

To say they could read each other's minds was an understatement.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!!!

In just a moment, an uncountable number of blows had been unleashed upon Rui.

Each time he took a step back, they took two steps forward.

Each time he took a step forward, they took two steps forward.

When he tried to so much as catch his breath and breathe, they pressured him with their most powerful, lethal attacks.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

Rui gasped for breath as the sharp, piercing attacks from their elbows left light gashes across his chest. The very act of breathing became painful!

Rui's eyes widened as he realized one of them had disappeared once more!

BOOM!!!

A titanic blow crashed into his head!

Chapter 1712: Powerful

Rui leaped away, reeling from the tremendous blow to his head.

If not for a timely Flux Earther, he would have been knocked out then and there. Thankfully, his proficiency with the technique had reached a much higher stage in the past decade and a half since he had created it. He no longer needed any active interception.

He could intercept any attack passively with Flux Earther and disperse its impact into the environment.

BAM BAM BAM!

The twins never let up, bombarding him with blow after blow. It had become painfully clear that these two were definitely stronger together than the Hammerer or the Thunder Viper were individually. They were high-grade Martial Seniors in their own right, yet together, they were much stronger.

POW! POW! POW!

He gravely defended against a series of wound-up heavy blows one after the other while her twin sister rounded about, launching a series of blows against his back.

BANG BANG BANG!

None of them gave him so much as a second to breathe.

On top of that, while they were twins, their movements were not entirely identical. He had been required to create two separate predictive models on each of them, stalling his progress.

However, that wasn't all.

As he watched their thoughtfully synchronized timings and exploitations of the chinks in his armor, an even greater realization dawned on him.

'Their prototypical Martial Minds are also centered around their coordination!' Rui's eyes widened with surprise.

It was no wonder how they were able to execute such a tremendously synergetic degree of coordination.

POW POW POW POW POW POW!

Their attacks spun one after another the way two rotating gears interwove in each other's gaps, leaving no gaps for him to exploit.

Their offense was domineering.

Yet nothing in this world was without flaws.

WHOOSH

Two extraordinary attacks converged on Rui, threatening to knock him out.

CLASP!

Their eyes widened as he effortlessly caught both attacks, cleanly halting them in their path.

'If every movement is coordinated, then I can predict each of you from the other.'

It was a pattern.

BOOM!!

He flung them to the ground with Hypertrophic Surge, causing enormous hills of bedrock to erupt from the ground, displaced by the attack.

RUMBLE!

A single attack had reversed the battle.

Yet they were far from done. The twins rushed in, looking to regain their domineering momentum against him.

Yet their biggest flaw was that they were too coordinated.

It meant that there were too many patterns between each of their movements.

They rushed in, unleashing a flurry of blows against him.

Yet all he could see were patterns.

'If your coordination leaves no holes, then I know to expect attacks where there should be holes.'

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

He calmly evaded blow after blow. Attacks that were too numerous and frequent for him were effortless now that he could predict based on the co-dependent predictive models he had made on them.

The most dominant pattern in all of their movements was alternating phases of preparation and action. When one prepared, the other attacked, followed by the attack of the one who was preparing while the second prepared.

This allowed them to ensure that there were simply no windows of opportunity for Rui to exploit and take them out.

The only time they went for simultaneous attacks was when they were attacking different parts of his body from different directions. This allowed them to ensure that they wouldn't get in each other's way.

Yet, while these minimized inefficiency in their delivery of attacks, it also necessarily formed patterns in their coordination.

The VOID algorithm loved patterns.

It gobbled them up greedily.

WHOOSH!

Their eyes widened as Rui cleanly evaded both their attacks, glancing into the eyes of one of them intently.

'Temporal Disharmony.'

This was his second time using it since he began taking on the series of assassins that were put out to take him out.

BAM!!!

A swift kick from Rui crashed into her faster than her slowed-

down reaction allowed her to contend with.

Yet even before her twin sister could process the frozen reaction time from her sister, Rui had already arrived.

POW POW POW!!

He peppered her with powerful blows, one after the other. She gritted her teeth as she did her best to block and evade his attacks. Yet even without her sister, Rui had already found the patterns in her movements in the time he had observed since the briefing and the fight.

BAM!!!

A powerful flying knee kick landed straight into her solar plexus, making her cough blood. Just as the finishing blow flew to her, it was intercepted by a flying high kick from the second twin, desperately trying to save her sister.

POW!

Rui cleanly blocked as the two sisters came back together to regain their harmony and coordination.

Yet Rui wasn't perturbed in the slightest.

He had long shattered their synergy.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

BAM BAM!!!

Looks of shock and bewilderment appeared on their faces as Rui evaded every single attack they threw while cleanly blasting both of them with blows.

Because he had selectively applied Temporal Disharmony only to one and not the other, he was completely throwing off their carefully honed coordination and disharmony. One was operating at a different speed of time than the other.

This sudden and abrupt change completely shattered their coordination.

The psychological blow was too great.

BAM!!!

A kick cleanly on the jaw of her opponent, knocking her out.

POW POW POW!!!

CLASP!

He blasted the final with several blows before swinging overhead in a perfect over-the-body throw.

BOOM!!!!!!

She, too, swiftly lost consciousness.

Yet, they had already escaped his focus and concentration.

"You have powerful domains," A voice behind him called.

Rui narrowed his eyes as he came across the familiar visage of the Suffocator. "Not going to ambush me like the others?"

"There's no need to," The Suffocator's eloquent voice replied. "You are doomed to die. You have exhausted your stamina and your wounds, while healing at an exceptional rate, are going to hold you back."

Chapter 1713: Domain Attacks

The Suffocator did not appear to be in a hurry.

Rui found this strange.

Instead, he simply noted Rui's enhanced regeneration, as mentioned in the intelligence that they received, born from the Hungry Pain technique.

"Who put you up to this?" Rui growled as he recuperated, grateful to the assassin for giving him a few seconds to catch his breath.

He may have already triumphed over the twins, but they definitely strained and stressed him out.

He even deactivated his Martial Heart. It was an extraordinarily precious resource at the moment.

"I have no idea," The Suffocator replied. "Probably someone extremely powerful. You have powerful enemies, Rui Quarrier."

His strange accent being warped through the mask left his speech to be quite different.

"Have you bated your exhaustion?" The Suffocator asked helpfully.

"...Do you mind if I drink a rejuvenation potion?"

"Even my generosity has limits," The Suffocator scoffed. "Now then. Bare your domain."

Rui raised an eyebrow. "Why would I do tha-"

"If you don't want to die, that is," The Suffocator's voice grew cold as he began bending heaven.

Rui's eyes widened as he got a good look at what he was doing.

He was creating a density of gradient vertically, then filtering out gases of a certain amount of relative density by eliminating gas across between that gradient.

Namely, oxygen.

That left a domain without any oxygen.

Rui held his breath as he leaped away, yet the man leaped along with him while also expanding the domain with him.

"What's the matter?" The Suffocator's voice called out to him. "Cat got your domain? Not confident you'll win?"

He was surprisingly fast, refusing to allow Rui to exit his domain.

Naturally, Rui could expect him to have prepared counters to escape domains by simply exiting them. One of them was simply following and taking the domain with him.

The influence of the domain followed him, spreading through the air, filtering out the oxygen.

Rui narrowed his eyes as he considered whether he ought to use Neo Godspeed to escape the influence of the domain.

'...No,' He shook his head even as his breathing grew labored.

It took too much energy and strained him far too much. He still had many assassins to survive and overcome. He needed to preserve as much as stamina as possible.

That was why he had kept his Metabody consumption to the absolute minimum.

His physical stamina was the reason that he needed to keep it to the minimum.

Rui was surprised as the man rushed forward towards Rui, launching a flurry of blows.

BAM BAM BAM!!!

His blows were surprisingly heavy.

'No...' Rui's eyes widened with realization. 'He's using a domain to accelerate his attacks!'

He was using that as well as the oxygen-depriving domain simultaneously!

Not only that, he was fighting hand-to-hand unperturbed!

"Passive mastery..." Rui murmured.

"That's right, Rui Quarrier,"

The Suffocator's voice was solemn.

"Your domains are powerful, yet you are unable to use them simultaneously. You are also unable to use them while fighting unarmed," The Suffocator's voice was gleeful. "Well then, suffocate to death. Like all those before you have."

Rui was forced to halt his combat as he began heaven-bending. He wasn't using a domain technique in particular.

WHOOSH!

No, he was just employing heaven-bending to disrupt his opponent's heaven domains.

"Good thinking," The Suffocator commented. "But unlike you, I can weave domains passively, which means..."

BAM BAM BAM!!!

Rui grimaced as he did his best to disperse the impact of the powerful blows of the man's attacks with passive Flux Earther.

Under any other circumstances, these attacks would have been quite easy to deal with, but they were particularly difficult to do so while he was doing heaven-bending.

He was truly pushed to use the Metabody System this time. Yet despite that, he still held back.

It was too early to use it, considering how much it drained his stamina.

His Martial Heart was already passively drained from taking on the first four assassins.

That was why he could not also afford to further drain it with the Hypertrophic Surge or Godspeed.

Instead, he used the stamina-preserving Metabody System with final breathing and Hungry Pain technique, allowing him to prolong his energy reserves as long as possible.

Yet that still left him with the huge problem that he was facing.

POW POW POW POW POW!!!

"What's the matter?!" The Suffocator's voice was filled with sadistic glee. "Too exhausted from previous assassins? Too concerned for assassins that are surely to come even after? Does it feel suffocating? Does it feel like you're choking? Like the walls are closing in? Like a painful death is the only foreseeable outcome?!"

The man's voice became drowned in ecstatic pleasure as he witnessed Rui's pain and suffering.

Yet, despair never entered his eyes.

No, his eyes were fixed on his opponent's.

They were waiting.

The void within his eyes unfurled.

Hungry.

Yet the Suffocator was far from done. Even as he entered what seemed to be an ecstatic and sadistic stupor, he unveiled a new domain.

Rui's eyes widened as the air around was sucked away.

The little bastard had created a vacuum around him!

Rui rushed into action!

"Heavenly Convergence!"

The target of the domain, of course, was himself.

By redirecting the vectors of force towards him, he fought back against his domain, pulling back the atmosphere as he gasped for a deep breath of air.

"Clever!" The Suffocator rushed forward to take into account the fact that Rui's hands were busy with heaven-bending.

Yet that was what Rui was waiting for.

'Breathing Crucifix.'

Yet that wasn't all.

TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP!

Rui flicked his nerves with Thunder Tap, paralyzing his diaphragm.

"...!" The Suffocator suffocated.

Rui knew he only had a few moments.

A few moments when the man couldn't breathe under the influence of two breath-crippling techniques.

BOOOOOM!!!

He fired the man with his most powerful tier-five Transverse Resonance, amplified with a temporary Hypertropic Surge.

It was a single attack.

Yet it was all that he needed.

Chapter 1714: Familiar Techniques

RUMBLE!

A small mountain erupted from within the depths of the land, displaced by the sheer power that Rui exerted.

The Roaring Dragon Blood Potion benefitted his long-range techniques the most, increasing their upper limit significantly.

"Aargrhrhrgrvghrgr!" The Suffocator's unintelligible screams echoed through the air.

CRACK CRACK CRACK!

The gear that surrounded his torso, that attached to his mask broke down.

Rui's eyes narrowed as he recognized what the contraption was. "Just as I thought. You avoided your own domains by having breathing cylinders feed your air through your mask."

In other words, he was using a special artifact contraption to mitigate the shortcomings of his own techniques.

Rui's mouth curled with contempt. "You're a disgrace of a Martial Artist. You will never become a Martial Master."

"Kugh!" The man coughed a bout of blood. "Hehehe...you maybe right. But I won't be the one dying here today.

Before Rui could finish him off, he felt a surge of peril behind him.

FLICK!

SPLAT

It was a simple nick, yet Rui's eyes widened with alarm when he saw the color of the woman's skin and nails that drew his blood.

'Poison,' He cursed as he leaped away.

His eyes narrowed with severity as he made a painful decision.

SPLAT!

A piece of the chunk that had been inflicted with the toxin was cleaved off his shoulder with some precise heaven-bending as he immediately activated Weaving Blood, regenerating the missing chunk of his shoulder.

He glanced at the severed piece of his flesh with a grave expression.

SIZZLE

It had already begun rotting at an alarming rate.

"Your regeneration is far better than the intelligence reports indicated," The woman's course voice reached out to him. "Yet it will not save you next time."

WHOOSH!

She lunged forward towards him as her nails were poised for action, ready to inject their venom and turn him into a rotting corpse.

Her deadliness and lethality exceeded even that of Senior Zenshin.

His eyes narrowed as time slowed down to a crawl.

He had several courses of action.

Firstly, he could activate Gale Force Breathing, put distance between and bombard her with distant attacks.

Secondly, he could employ Neo Godspeed as he ran circles around her trying to knock her out.

'My goal is to take her down with as little energy as I can get away with,' His eyes narrowed. 'In which case...'

The third option was the best.

His flesh grew thicker and denser, growing darker in shade.

He rushed forward, activating Nemean Blossom.

CRACK!

The poison assassin's eyes widened as her nails cracked against his flesh, breaking into pieces.

Yet, he wasn't done.

BAM BAM BAM!!

They were simple straightforward blows that crashed against her guard.

Yet...

"AAAAAARRGHRGRH!!!!" She screeched as each blow caused excruciating, mind-melting pain the likes of which she had never experienced since the Squire evolution breakthrough procedure.

Her flesh like it was melting off.

Her muscles felt like they were being blow-torched.

Her bones felt like they were being systematically pulverized.

'Phantom Pain,' Rui fixated his eyes on hers as he cast the third technique of the Hypnomatrix.

POW POW POW POW POW!

He bombarded her with short and swift strikes.

Yet each one of them was nothing short of horrific torture.

CLASP

She grabbed Rui's shoulders with tears of pain in her eye, before leaning forward and exhaling in his face.

HISSSSS

A green gas exited her mouth spraying all over her face.

Yet the gesture created blindspot below her.

One that Rui did not forgive.

BAM!!!

A powerful flying knee kick crashed into her jaw. The sheer pain that it caused triggered the brain's emergency shutdown, causing her to collapse then and there.

Yet her effort had not been in vain.

"Cough...cough...." Rui fell down to one knee as he felt a distinct bout of weakness. "A muscle relaxant? Damn..."

Yet, he didn't have any time to relax whatsoever.

Primordial Instinct warned him off an incoming attack.

WHOOSH!

BOOM!

Even though he evaded direct impact, the sheer force from the explosion caused enormous explosions that erupted across the entire battlefield.

He didn't know what became of the many injured assassins across the entire battlefield.

He didn't care.

He immediately faced the direction that the projectiles came from with a wary expression.

He had been fighting for a while now, and he was starting to feel the impact on his stamina.

His breathing grew labored. His movements had become weaker and sluggish.

On top of that, the wounds that he had sustained across the entire battle were not low. He had taken considerable damage from each of them, barring the Hammerer.

On top of that, the damn poison lady had slipped him a poison that made him feel even weaker.

He was far from his peak.

On top of that, each assassin that came started off in their prime.

It meant that he was forced to hold back and defeat them with just a portion of his full power.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

BOOM BOOM BOOM!

Rui evaded wind attack after wind attack, ensuring that he never once took a direct hit.

He directed his senses deep in the direction of the attacks, eventually coming across his target within the jungle.

The man had planned himself many kilometers away, acting like the typical sniper as he shot attacks at Rui from a great distance away.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

He evaded five wind attacks, not thinking much of them as they passed him.

That was a mistake.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!!

They converged onto him immediately after, clashing into him.

"Rgh!" He gritted his teeth as he did his best to disperse them with heaven-bending, the remaining impact was negated with Adamant Reforging and Flux Earther.

His eyes sharpened gravely. He recognized this field of techniques, it was the same niche specialty that Master Ceeran specialized in.

It meant that dodging was no longer an option!

He needed to take down the assassin before he bled to death.

Chapter 1715: Price

The memory of Master Ceeran's trajectory manipulation techniques was distinct. It had been the first time that he had seen a Martial Senior fight. Back then, he was a simple mid-grade Martial Squire. Today, he was stronger than Senior Ceeran had been as a Martial Senior.

Yet he didn't have time to mull over old memories.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

He evaded three wind blasts, yet his eyes narrowed as they turned around, converging on

BAM BAM BAM!!

He gritted his teeth, yet this time, he managed to minimize the damage even further.

Yet, his assassin was just getting started.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

Rui evaded five more as he watched them converge on him once more.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

Rui intercepted each of the wind blasts with sonic bullets, canceling out their momentum. By then, however, several more were already fired.

'This is not a feasible path to victory,' Rui's eyes narrowed. 'If I go down this path, I'll be drained by the time I'm done.'

He still had other assassins that he needed to deal with. If he didn't deal with this sniper soon enough, he would be far too drained to keep up with any other assassin. He couldn't fight so symmetrically where they drained identical amounts of energy.

'I need to completely close the distance, but...'

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM!!

Rui gritted his teeth, glaring at the sniper from afar.

Unfortunately, this assassin was a lot more refined than Rui had expected. He had completely gained a good grasp of Rui's circumstances and priorities.

His attacks were focused on keeping Rui busy and forcing him to drain his energy. Once Rui was completely exhausted, the assassin would still have more than enough energy to begin the true assassination.

'My first few battles have made a strong impression on all assassins,' Rui narrowed his eyes.

His dominant performance had highlighted just how tremendously strong he really was. Having taken numerous prominent assassins down in a dominant fashion had alerted the rest of the assassins to the threat that he represented.

Each of them was starting to understand just why their employers had gone through the trouble of hiring so many Senior assassins to take down just a single Martial Senior.

It was not overkill, not at all.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

Rui weaved through the wind blasts with remarkable quickness. Alternating between Gale Force Breathing and Wind Breathing allowed him to maintain a good balance between speed and agility.

Yet this particular assassin was no slouch.

RUMBLE!

The very earth shook as he launched a powerful onslaught. Each attack of the many that flew towards Rui possessed the power to level hills to rubble.

They converged on him.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

Rui gritted his teeth as the attacks converged on him.

BOOM!!!

An enormous wind blast explosion erupted from him at the epicenter, covering more than a dozen kilometers.

WHOOSH!

Yet when the dust settled.

Rui Quarrier was nowhere to be seen.

The assassin situated deep in the woods shook as he realized Rui had completely disappeared. He double took as he scanned the entire battlefield with his senses, completely bewildered.

Losing sight of his target was a rookie mistake that he hadn't made in more than two centuries!

CRACK!

The assassin's eyes widened as the world flipped upside down. It had bizarrely done a complete one-eighty-degree flip!

He wasn't even able to scream.

He felt a distinctly sharp pain in his neck.

It was only when his vision began blurring that he realized what had happened.

The world had not flipped upside down.

His head had been flipped upside down.

The last thing he saw was Rui glaring at him upside down, having forcefully twisted his head a hundred and eight degrees.

THUD

"Huff...Huff..." Rui panted, gasping for air as he struggled to catch his breath. He glanced at his body.

It was battered, bruised, and cut all over. The sniper assassin had done a real good number on him with that final onslaught. Although it had served as a good cover for Rui to use Greater Phantomind Void and sneak up on the assassin without anyone noticing, it had been extremely painful to allow that final barrage to strike him.

It was the price he paid.

He needed the cover the explosion provided, unfortunately. He could not use Greater Phantomind Void out in the open. He was reluctant to reveal this technique since the Voidreaper had used it as well, but alas, he had no choice but to use it. The probability of being suspected was extremely low since he had used it as discreetly as possible.

At the very first moment of the explosion, the energy flux around him in the atmosphere was extremely high, high enough to jam any and all sensory techniques for just a single moment.

At that moment, he had activated Greater Phantomind Void. Of course, this was merely precaution, there were other measures he had taken.

Master Reina was an extremely good persona and body mimic; she had done such a good job mimicking Rui's micro-

expressions that he felt like he was looking at the true Voidreaper.

As long as she was there, the very question of Rui being the Voidreaper should be absolutely absurd and asinine in the minds of all people involved.

WHOOSH

Rui's eyes sharpened.

His expression grew grave.

Primordial Instinct redundantly warned him of yet another danger. He knew that he was far from done with the series of assassins.

Yet he was already quite tired. Although the duration that he had spent on each assassin was only ten minutes on average, he had faced so many that his combat power was falling by the minute.

He had accrued many wounds, his special healing factor was compromised, and his stamina was greatly drained.

He didn't have much left in him.

Yet he still had to take down the last few assassins before he could call himself victorious.

The battle against the assassins had entered its twilight as Rui was entering the most difficult phases of the struggle.

He didn't have much time before he was completely drained, and his opponents had entered the battle entirely fresh.

Chapter 1716: Paralysis Poking

"...How many did you say?" A stunned voice escaped Princess Ranea's mouth.

"Seven, Your Highness," Sierra calmly informed him.

Prince Randal's expression grew severe. "We have underestimated him. No, everybody has. He's far, far stronger than we had expected. I don't think there are Senior assassins out there who actually possess the ability to kill him."

Princess Rafia's expression was blank, as always. "Even if that were the case, it doesn't matter. Seven may have failed, but they have undoubtedly wounded and exhausted him, significantly reducing him below his peak. The later assassins will have a much greater chance."

"Still, this is surprising," Prince Raemina eyed the brief report with interest. "Do you think he's the strongest Senior in Kandria?"

"Definitely not," Prince Randal shook his head. "He's got endless potential and is definitely far and away with the most talented and driven. But he's not on par with the Gatekeeper."

That name hung in the air.

Prince Ranea shook her head. "I'm more concerned about the operations. Since we have committed to this, we need to see it through."

She turned to Sierra. "How is the progress going?"

"We do not have any real-time footage or surveillance," Sierra replied calmly. "We barely have one distant scout using long-range surveillance artifacts to ascertain the bare basics of the operation. We cannot allow anything to be traced back to us. When the anomaly is investigated, we cannot have any proof that we were involved."

That was why the task force sacrificed information for the sake of staying hidden.

The place that the operation was taking place in was mostly deserted and remote with almost no settlements or human presence anywhere within a hundred kilometers of the battlefield.

This was what allowed the Martial Seniors to go all out, as long as it was one by one, without immediately alerting the Martial Union.

On top of that, the Great Jrava Mountain Range had its own beast population that occasionally caused a ruckus that would be ignored until it started affecting people.

"Don't worry; the next assassin will surely get him. He's too exhausted to get away with any shocking victories," Prince Randal asserted, almost trying to convince himself.

He was wrong.

BOOM!!

"Sonic Singularity."

Rui's voice reverberated through his new domain as he unleashed the domain born from Project Malevolent Kitchen.

The domain unleashed sound waves toward the epicenter of the domain.

An avalanche of sound.

A tsunami of vibrations.

Suddenly, they converged.

They converged upon a single point.

A single man.

BOOOOOM!!!

"AAAAGRGRGRGGRGEGREGGR!!!" The gargantuan man bellowed in agony as Rui unleashed the third domain technique of the Yggdrasil System.

His skin grew red as his entire body began heating up, and his hair and clothes incinerated from the sheer heat that he was giving off.

"RRRRGHHH!!" The man gritted his teeth.

The Martial Body, particular when reinforced from the enhanced metabolism from the Martial Heart, was not nearly as easy to incinerate.

STEP

He centered himself, crouching as he took a sumo stance.

"Bring it on!" The man roared.

THUD!

He struck his foot against the ground in defiance.

"Why are you even an assassin?" Rui scoffed.

Yet he never let up on the domain.

The grappling Martial Artist was dangerous. If Rui got caught by him, it would have been game over. He was so large and gargantuan that not even Hypertrophic Surge would have been enough to overcome him in grappling.

Thankfully, Rui didn't need to maintain the domain forever.

HSSSSSS!

The man's flesh started sizzling and smoking.

His eyes had become a deep red.

He staggered before losing consciousness.

THUD

He collapsed, dead.

"Huff...Huff...!" Rui fell down to one knee as he desperately gasped for air.

He glanced at his broken hand. It had been incredibly difficult to bend heaven with a broken hand, but alas, he had no choice.

Normally, he would have never allowed such a giant assassin to have sneaked up on him and caught him by surprise, but his exhaustion had truly been catching up to him.

'Only...a few more to go,' Rui barely caught his breath when he suddenly detected the familiar sense of peril from Primordial Instinct.

BOOOM!!!

15:18

He barely managed to evade a tremendous impact with Gale BOOOM!!!

He barely managed to evade a tremendous impact with Gale Force Breathing as he got a good look at his next opponent.

The man had a well-balanced body frame, not unlike Rui's. He had especially long arms relative to his body, giving him an enormous wingspan. Rui was unable to gauge exactly what his Martial Art was just by looking at his body.

"Honestly, I didn't think I'd get a turn," He smiled. "You've done well to last this long. But time's up!"

WHOOSH!

He lashed out against Rui at tremendous speeds. His arms blurred as he launched them into action.

POW POW POW POW POW

Rui expected short, swift, heavy blows, yet he only received soft finger pokes. Yet, his eyes widened with surprise as his arms couldn't move.

'Paralysis!' Rui gritted his teeth.

BAM!!!

The man launched a heavy kick against Rui's ribs, dealing a painful blow.

"Rgh!" Rui gritted his teeth as he leaped away, struggling to regain control over his arms. The degree and duration of the paralysis far exceeded that of his own Lightning Tap, which was only partial and momentary.

The man's grin widened as he blasted off a large variety of kicks, one after the other.

WHOOSH!

Rui ducked, evading a powerful upper kick as he finally regained control over his arms.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

The man leaped back, taking back a stance that emphasized his arms.

'I see,' Rui narrowed his eyes as he formed a basic model of the man's combat system. 'His Martial Body is such that his arms were evolved purely to disable while his legs are meant to batter his opponent while they're paralyzed. In most cases, he would be able to take them down very quickly if he had the element of surprise. Fitting for an assassin.'

The man rushed forward, ready for round two.

Chapter 1717: Preparatory

Rui winced.

He knew what he had to do.

Yet, the thought of doing it in his current state was painful, to say the least.

Yet he did it nonetheless.

'Temporal Disharmony,' His expression grew strained as he employed the Hypnomatrix yet again. Yet that wasn't all.

"Speed Void."

With both anti-speed hypnotic and domain techniques, the man's very existence had been downgraded to a lower plan of speed. He appeared to be a sloth and a tortoise rolled up in one.

BOOOOOM!!!

Rui blasted his body with the most powerful Hypertrophic Surge-enhanced Flowing Canon he could possibly muster. Just a moment before the impact, he breathed in tremendously, dispelling the domain in the process but giving him a huge surge of power at the moment of impact.

It was the principle of Fire Breathing.

Rui had come to decode this powerful breathing technique naturally over the many years he had been practicing breathing techniques.

The resulting impact was the single most powerful punch that Rui had thrown in his entire life.

BOOM BOOM BOOM!!

The assassin was propelled across the forest, creating enormous gaping hill-sized craters. Because his perception of time and speed were hampered, he was unable to defend in time. Rui knew that his passive defense and durability were minimal at best.

Now, his condition was at least as bad, if not worse, than Rui's.

'I'd be dead without the Hypnomatrix, Metabody, and Yggdrasil System,' Rui mused as he prepared himself.

The three systems intersected in the VOID algorithm while also being their own groups of techniques, and they had saved Rui many times in this battle. While the VOID algorithm was still the most flexible and powerful, it also required the most amount of time and preparation.

These three techniques could be executed instantly and oppressed his opponents very hard, allowing him to take them down incredibly swiftly by relying on openings created by the hypnotic techniques and domains while he exploited them to the fullest with the Metabody System.

On top of that, most Martial Artists had a healing factor that was only a fraction as good as his, they could not recover from extremely damage the way Rui could.

'Three more to go,' He fell to one knee as he panted heavily trying to conserve his stamina.

The umpteenth sense of peril arrived out of nowhere.

Yet his exhaustion made him too sluggish.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced as painful gashes appeared across his entire body despite a last-second Nemean Blossom.

He glanced up at his new opponent.

A tall, hooded woman stood before him.

Her arms were raised before her.

Her hands were open, and her fingers were spread, wriggling in a specific manner.

She resembled a sorcerer more than she did a Martial Artist. He hadn't even understood what she had done to inflict cuts on his body. He couldn't even see how she did it.

But he did hear it.

SZZZZZZZZ

A distinctly familiar sound rang around the forest they were in.

His eyes widened. "Wires?"

"You're more resilient than any of my previous victims to have survived them."

He immediately reduced the range of his senses, focusing on detail as he noticed thin strings all around him in the entire forest.

Yet, not all of them were small.

Her hands and fingers burst into action abruptly, alarming him.

SZZZZZZZZ!

He barely managed to pick up several strings converging on him from all directions!

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!!

He fired off several attacks, trying to curb as many as he could.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

He gritted his teeth as his eyes bore into hers.

'Breathing Crucifix.'

Since the strings could converge on him omnidirectionally, he could not avoid them. If he was going to avoid them, then he needed to ensure that the damage the attacks did were minimal.

"It's useless."

Her voice rang in his ears as several more layers of strings lashed out at him.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced with shock as he realized that the string attacks had not lost an iota of power.

In fact, they had grown stronger!

If not for some defensive-heaven bending, Flux Earther, and Nemean Blossom, he would have long been cleaved into thin strips!

'Somehow, her wire attacks are immune to any impediment to her brea-'

His eyes widened as realization dawned upon him. "Your Martial Art...it's already fought the battle."

It sounded like an extremely bizarre thing to say. Yet his assassin's eyes twinkled with appreciation even as her hands and fingers worked even faster than before, releasing new sets of attacks.

"Very good. Rui Quarrier. The reputation of your intelligence precedes you. In all the decades that I have spent shaving people into ribbons, you are the only one who has seen through the truth. However..."

Her tone grew cold. "Knowing will not help you. You will die, ignorant or knowing."

Pure peril radiated from her.

Bloodlust flashed in her eyes.

It wrung the atmosphere taut.

Rui's eyes narrowed gravely. He had understood why Breathing Crucifix was ineffective against her. She was not employing any power at all. The only reason she was using her Martial Heart was to keep up with him in speed.

'She's not employing raw power now, but she did before the battle began,' He gritted his teeth.

Her Martial Art was not just about wielding strings. It was also about preparing string set-ups. The strings that converged upon him were those that had already been stretched taut and set in place long before the battle began!

This preparation phase was when she employed her Martial Heart. During preparation, she stored the energy of her Martial Heart in the strings. Using her Martial Heart, she stretched the strings as far as she could, converting her physical power into potential energy in the strings.

Once the battle began, she would simply release the super-

stretched strings, causing them to snap back with the potential energy she gave them, attacking her opponent with tremendous power!

Her Martial Art was not active.

It was a Martial Art centered around preparation.

'Her Martial Path is something like preparatory wire system manipulation.' Rui's expression grew grave.

The peril in the air was palpable.

As were the wires that converged upon him once more.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

Chapter 1718: Sympathetic Solution

"Rgh!" Rui cursed as several wires converged onto him, inflicting even more wounds on him.

He leaped away, putting distance between them, yet she had already prepared for that evidently.

SZZZZZZ!

Several more wires converged to intercept his escape.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

He warded them off using several Mighty Roar Flash Blasts.

Or at least, he tried.

SPLAT SPLAT!!

Some managed to sneak through on account of their size, inflicting superficial wounds on Nemean Blossom.

'If I cannot effectively defend against them, then I need to ensure I take you down faster than you do me.' He gritted his teeth as he stretched a hand out at her.

"Sonic Singularity."

Heaven and earth bent to his will, curving to form a domain.

The very next moment, a tsunami of sound was unleashed from all directions.

It converged upon a single point.

A single person.

Yet it never reached her.

SZZZZZZZZZ!!!

Rui's widened with surprise as a wide net of wires flashed, instantly interweaving with each other to form a netted barrier.

VMMMMM!!!

The sound released from his domain could only be converted into heat if it converged into the target.

Otherwise, it was just sound. Whatever her strings were made up of, they could withstand the pressure from the sound.

"Did you think I wouldn't prepare defenses?" Her contemptuous voice reached him even as she furious released several more attacks.

Rui narrowed his eyes.

An idea had struck him.

His hand reached out again.

"Sonic Singularity."

VMMM!!!

The array of her netted wires disrupted the sound.

"Vain desperation."

SZZZZZZ!

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

Rui bore the impact, grimacing as he did his best to minimize the damage.

Yet he never once disrupted the domain.

VMMMMMNNNNNNUUUUUUOOOOOOEEEEEEEEAAAAAAA!!!

The frequency of the sound kept changing, altering the pitch of the sound. It continuously changed by the second.

"Smiling in the face of death. Perhaps I should praise you," She snorted after a wide grin appeared on Rui's face. "I've had enough of this. Now die!"

The air grew perilous.

The atmosphere grew electric.

Danger was afoot.

Her expression grew murderous as her hands and fingers spread wide.

"Stringing Executioner Style." A whisper escaped her voice as she triggered the psychological trigger for her technique. "Strings of Death!"

SZZZZZ!!!

Numerous strings converged onto Rui.

Yet he didn't so much as move.

Two words escaped his mouth.

"Too late."

Shivers crawled up her skin.

She felt a deep sense of danger even as she precisely guided her killing string attacks on him.

VMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!

The sound from the domain crashed into her wires one more time.

This time, they bypassed the strings like they didn't even exist!

VMMMMMMMMMM!!!

An avalanche of sound converged onto her after effortlessly bypassing her strings.

A sonic singularity formed.

At a single point.

A single person.

BOOM!!!

"AAAAARRRRRGRGRGRHH!!!" Her screech of agony echoed throughout the forest.

Immense heat caused unfathomable pain. Yet it wasn't just the heat that caused had caused the pain.

'Phantom Pain!' Rui's eyes flashed.

"AAAAARGHRGHRGRHRGR!!!!!" A deathly howl of pain reverberated through the forest as she completely abandoned her attack.

SZZZZZ...

The release of potential energy was abruptly disrupted, halting the attack.

HISSSSSSS!

Her hair began smoking and burning as her flesh and skin turned red and black.

Rui mercilessly ensured that the sound followed her pained, erratic movements, never once letting her off.

She was not a defensive Martial Artist.

Durability and endurance were not her strengths.

Not ten seconds later, her agonious screeches had subsided.

THUD

Her lifeless roasted cadaver fell.

For a moment, Rui didn't move.

THUD

The very next moment, he fell to his knees, panting heavily as his strained healing factor did its best to heal the many flesh wounds that she had inflicted on him.

'That was close...!' He grimaced.

His strategy to victory was on the ball, yet he had almost died!

'Thank god for sympathetic resonance...' His eyes narrowed.

As soon as he saw that she relied on strings as a barrier for defense, the possibility of bypassing them using sympathetic resonance entered his mind.

He just needed to find the right innate resonance frequency of the substance the strings were made up of.

It was not that difficult either, and it was far easier than doing so for a human.

The strings were made up of a single substance, while humans were chemically diverse in their constitution.

That was why it had taken him merely minutes.

He continuously changed the frequency of the sound released by the domain to rather swiftly go through all the possibilities before he arrived at the right solution.

He dealt the killing blow sooner than she did, narrowly evading death.

He glanced at the dead corpse.

He would be lying if her Martial Art didn't fascinate him. He had never seen a preparation-based Martial Art before. It was incredible how she was able to leverage preparation to completely replace active effort.

Such a model had both advantages and disadvantages to it. The disadvantages to it were that there were no limits to the preparations that could be made, allowing her to exert far more stamina than her opponent in battle.

It could allow her to perform at extraordinary levels far surpassing what someone of her raw power and techniques ought to be capable of.

The disadvantages were also quite pronounced. She could never not prepare for a fight. Without preparation, she was probably the weakest Martial Senior out there. Perhaps even quasi-Senior level at worst. She undoubtedly was a rare example of a more thought-oriented Martial Senior, much like himself.

The only difference was that Rui could not afford to have a Martial Art that was fundamentally preparatory, in order to be able to adaptively evolve to anything. He needed to make sure that he could take everything thrown at him at any time.

Yet he could not afford to think about it now; he would have to save it after he successfully survived this series of assassins.

He was in a particularly dangerous spot at the moment.

Chapter 1719: A Tale of Ugliness

He was physically tired.

He was wounded. Bruised. Cut.

He was mentally exhausted.

Yet he pulled himself together when he felt yet another surge of peril with Primordial Instinct.

WHOOSH

The assassin was stealthy.

Rui could feel the misdirection even as he approached.

Unfortunately for the assassin, Rui's mind was extremely difficult to misdirect. On top of that, his senses were extremely powerful. On top of that, Riemannian Echo was indirect sensing.

He was so resistant to being misdirected that Kane had stopped bothering to use Void Step when sparring against Rui. It was simply useless. At this point, he doubted whether any misdirection in the Senior Realm could even affect him.

Unfortunately for the assassin, the reports that the M had given them did not entirely capture how resistant to misdirection Rui was.

That was why he was waiting.

Waiting for one of the assassins to finally use it against him.

All so that he could pretend to fall for it and launch a trap at the opportune moment.

WHOOSH!

Rui evaded an assassination technique at the last moment, meeting eyes with him.

'Phantom Pain!'

BAM BAM BAM!!!

Caught off-guard, Rui managed to pound him with several blows.

"Rrrgrhh!!!" The man grimaced under the sheer pain from the technique.

Ordinarily, he would have retreated and immediately opted for guerilla warfare tactics. Yet the sheer pain from Rui's blow almost caused him to vomit what he had eaten for breakfast!

He shivered, trying to break out of a pseudo-paralysis caused by the ungodly hellish pain.

Yet he was a beat too late.

BAM BAM BAM!!!

Rui pinned him to the ground with a mounted position.

Murderous rage radiated from him, sending chills down the assassin's spine.

He didn't even bother going for a chokehold to finish it off as cleanly as possible.

BAM!!!

His fist crashed into the assassin's face.

CRACK!

"AAATRGRAHRGWGHR!!!!" The assassin howled with excruciating agony as his nose was crushed under a single blow.

He shivered and shuddered with pain. His eyes flashed around, rolling backward as he tried struggling discordantly.

"I'm not a sadist."

The air grew perilous.

A deep, dark wave of bloodlust erupted from within Rui.

It was suffocating.

"I'm not a sadist..."

Rui's expression was murderous.

"...But your suffering does bring me joy."

Rui conjoined his hands into a single hammer fist, raising it high into the air.

"No..." Fear entered the assassin's eyes.

BAM!!! BAM!!! BAM!!!

SPLAT! SPLAT! SPLAT!

Fire Breathing. Hypertrophic Surge. Outer Convergence. Reverberating Lance. Adamant Reforging.

The weight of these five techniques drove his fist down with titanic power.

BOOM!!!

BOOM!!!

BOOM!!!

Soon enough, the howls of pain ceased. Perhaps it was because the man's vocal cords had snapped with all the screaming.

Perhaps it was because the man couldn't breathe, drowning in his own blood.

BOOM BOOM BOOM!!!!

Each impact caused a visible reaction in pain.

Yet, with each impact, they ceased.

BOOM!!!

The man's fingers twitched.

His face...he no longer had a face.

Where his face was was now a bloody, crumpled layer of flesh.

"Huff..." Rui panted heavily when he was done. His expression grew ugly as he beheld his own handiwork.

Yet he felt much better, having vented his frustrations at recent happenings on the hapless assassin, beating him within an inch of death.

It was cathartic. It also brought him back to his senses.

He was exhausted from the bottom of his body.

BADUMP...

His Martial Heart had dimmed tremendously since he started fighting. He had less than ten percent of his reserves left. It was to be expected. Not even he could fight off so many high-

grade assassins without using everything that he had to offer.

Suddenly, something changed.

The air changed.

He felt a deep sense of danger.

Deeper than any of the others he had faced thus far.

A whiff of a strange scent entered his nose.

A profound odor tickled his nose.

It was not ordinary.

His eyes widened as his pupils dilated.

His body grew excited.

A primal masculine urge flushed through his mind.

The blood pumping from the tachycardia of the Martial Heart was redirected to his groin as it swelled up, standing stiff and taut.

A gentle feminine whisper graced his ears.

"You've fought well."

STEP

She arrived before him.

There were no red lines streaked across her Martial Body, yet her Martial Heart was very much active. Her Martial Heart magnified the passive and active seduction-hypnosis techniques. It massively empowered the pheromone-

production metabolism of her body, producing enough to seduce an entire town of men instantly.

And it was effective.

Her dark skin was luscious. Her voluptuous bosom and hips. Her well-endowed Martial Body. All of it, designed to enchant the male gaze, hypnotized men who beheld her. Literally and metaphorically.

"You are tired."

Her feminine angelic voice was soul-soothing.

"You are hurt."

It was addictively comfortable. Men could lose themselves in it forever.

Many men had.

"It's ok," A seductive smile bloomed on her face as she reassured him, putting a hand on his chest as it slowly lowered to his hips.

Her touch was electric.

It was the trigger.

The trigger to commence her assassination.

Rui stumbled forward with widened eyes as his hands reached forward, cupping her beautiful face and her wide hips.

He stared into her beautiful golden eyes, leaning in.

Yet he didn't kiss her.

A single remark escaped his mouth.

"You're ugly."

Her body shook with shock.

Her eyes widened, stunned.

An expression of pure bewilderment appeared on her face.

Not once in her life had anyone ever uttered those words to her.

Yet she was unable to get angry.

The reason for that was simple.

She was too dead to be angry.

SPLAT!

"...Eh?"

She grew confused as the world suddenly lowered before spinning.

It was only when she saw her headless body standing before her assassination target's arm extended to his side, covered in her blood, that she realized what happened.

He had beheaded her with a single swing of his arm.

Chapter 1720: He Died

One of the things that Rui had prepared the most was a counter to the Maneater. He knew that she was definitely the biggest individual threat to him. In fact, if they had a random encounter, Rui definitely wasn't confident he could defeat her.

He had spent the most amount of time developing a powerful counter to her.

The solution was more simple than he had expected, however.

He simply had to hypnotize his perception of her.

Over the two weeks that he spent preparing himself to fight her, he hypnotized himself to alter his perception of her.

It was a hypnosis technique that he designed to be passively triggered by her appearance. His mind would warp her beautiful appearance into the ugliest woman he could possibly imagine.

This would curb her hypnosis and stop any visual psychological manipulation.

What he had underestimated, however, was how beholden the male brain was to odor and sound. The second he smelled her pheromones and her painfully sexually arousing voice, he almost lost control despite his self-hypnosis technique.

'That was close...!' A cold sweat had overtaken him.

Yet despite her death, her odor still lingered in the air, causing all sorts of... awkward, undesirable outcomes that slathered mud on his dignity.

Yet, he wasn't eager to complain, considering he had almost died yet again.

Of course, he had almost died against many other assassins after he grew more tired and hurt.

And if he had to choose, he would rather die at her hands than any of the other assassins.

On the exterior, he appeared to grow even more alert and paranoid.

After all, he still had one more assassin left to survive.

...!

THUD

Rui fell to the ground, seemingly lifeless.

It was as though he had dropped dead out of nowhere.

WHOOSH!

STEP

A hooded figure appeared out of nowhere.

Had any of the other assassins been alive and conscious, they would have recognized the hooded figure.

The Voidreaper.

An assassin of assassins.

The most feared figure among assassins of the Lower Realms across all of Panama.

A distorted voice identical to the one that the Voidreaper had had during the briefing escaped from his mask.

"Mission complete."

The Voidreaper had struck again.

He never failed.

He never missed.

Everybody he set in his sight died.

Rui Quarrier had been set in his sights.

And just like all those that came before, Rui Quarrier, too, died.

"...Is what the scout surveilling with the long-range sensory artifact from the distant town says," Sierra calmly informed the four tense royals. "The operation has succeeded. Rui Quarrier is dead."

Yet the four royals were too stressed to celebrate immediately.

"Unbelievable..." Prince Randal whispered. "He almost succeeded. He almost got away. He almost survived despite running into all those assassins!"

"This must be part of why the Martial Union valued him so much," Princess Ranea narrowed her eyes. "He was extraordinary. In every sense of the word. If he hadn't died today...I can't imagine just how far he would have gone. Just what heights he would have reached."

A tinge of regret could be detected in her voice. "Our nation has lost a precious asset."

Princess Rafia nodded. "It is not a cause for celebration."

"I beg to differ," Princess Raemina narrowed her eyes.

"As do I," Prince Randal snorted. "He should have lowered his head and stayed low."

Princess Raemina heaved a sigh, shaking her head. "Enough about this. We need to ensure that the Martial Union never finds his body. As long as the body is not found, the Martial Union will know that he was involved in the tiny skirmish outside of the Great Jrava Mountain Range. They won't even know he's dead. He'll be put on the missing Martial Artist list."

This was what the royals were hoping for. As long as they could hide the fact that he had even died, then the probability that the Martial Union would find who killed him was extremely low.

After all, one wouldn't look for the murderer of a victim if one still believed that the victim was alive.

In this manner, they could very effectively evade the Martial Union's scrutiny.

More Martial Artists went missing than they died.

This was because Martial Artists possessed an extraordinary ability to travel; thus, a whimsical decision could easily land them tens of thousands of kilometers away in a matter of a week at a comfortable pace.

"On top of that, Rui Quarrier has a history of unannounced departures," Sierra calmly remarked. "Has done so multiple times in the past. Thus, the tracking department of the Martial Union will not instantly assume the very worst."

The four royals nodded, relieving themselves.

"What of the Voidreaper?" Prince Randal asked. "Has he retrieved the body? Is he heading to our location?"

"Yes, sir," Sierra nodded. "On top of that, we have taken extreme precautions that nobody is tailing the Voidreaper. We have ensured that no Martial Master or Senior is tailing him. Our analysts have paid a lot of attention to ensuring that he has not betrayed us by tattling. The fact that he completed the assassination itself is the biggest proof that he has no intention of using it against us."

After all, the fact of the matter was that Rui Quarrier had indeed died. He had indeed been murdered by the Voidreaper.

If he, for example, tattled to the Martial Union or the Kandrian government in some sort of malicious scheme against the royals, he would suffer just as much as they did.

Now that he had actually physically killed Rui Quarrier, he was complicit. Anything bad that happened to them would also be extended to him. Thus, he had no reason to harm them in any way.

The reverse, however, was not true.

Prince Randal glanced around the room at the sixteen Martial Masters. The second the exchange of the final deal was completed; Rui Quarrier's body for their true identity, they would kill him on the spot.

The Voidreaper would meet the same fate as Rui Quarrier.