

Martial Unity 231

Chapter 231: Miracle

"B-Begin!" The supervisor commenced the battle.

And like clockwork, Kane sashayed out of reality with the Void Step technique.

The battle had begun.

Rui pushed his mind to the very limit as Primordial Instinct and Seismic Mapping worked overtime as they did their best to pick anything they could on Kane's movements.

This time, however, he didn't close his eyes. His eyes darted around.

Rui could sense Kane was circling around him at a distance of roughly five meters.

He simply waited.

Suddenly, there was a change.

Kane rushed in towards him.

Yet, Rui didn't react.

He had reached.

Yet, Rui didn't move.

POW POW POW

Kane threw several jabs at Rui from the side.

WHOOSH

Rui finally made a move, but only after he was struck. He threw a heavy haymaker in the direction of the attacks, but they merely hit empty air.

BAM

A jab struck his face from the other side.

WHOOSH

Rui once again swung only after Kane had struck him.

He refused to attack before Kane attacked him, attacking only after Kane had struck him.

In the eyes of everyone spectating, Rui was helpless. He was merely trying to fight Kane the same way they had all already tried.

The sighed in disappointment.

This was the final match.

This was also the match that would decide who would be chosen as representative of the Academy in the Martial Contest in the Martial Festival.

And yet, the outcome seemed to be already decided.

Rui was trying to hit Kane immediately as Kane hit him, since Kane would be close to him the moment he struck Rui.

However, this wasn't a genius strategy. All of them had tried the exact same strategy, and all of them failed.

Kane's evasiveness was simply too damn good. He could easily avoid their desperate measure to strike him, especially when they couldn't even see him.

Rui was clearly trying the same thing in their eyes, meaning that he was unable to sense Kane either, correct?

Wrong.

None of them knew Rui had mastered Primordial Instinct and Seismic Mapping. Or the fact that these two techniques together were able to crack a dent in the invincible armour of the Void Step technique.

Rui hadn't told any of them.

Furthermore, these techniques were not visually flashy. It was almost impossible to directly infer that a person had mastered Primordial instinct and Seismic Mapping simply by looking at them.

Not even Kane knew that he had mastered these techniques.

Nor did he know that Rui could constantly sense the direction he was in and get a vague sense of how far he was from himself.

Rui did not intend to haphazardly reveal this like Nel did. Unlike Nel, he was a resourceful, tactical and intelligent fighter who made use of everything he had.

He played the role of the blindsided victim who had fallen prey to the miracle of the Void Step technique like many others in this preliminary contest.

He endured all the punishment that Kane dished out. Taking all of them.

He was biding his time.

For the right time.

The right place.

He truly had one chance, and one chance only.

If he failed, his task would become immeasurably harder. Furthermore, with how much he had put to stake, if he failed, he would be far too lost to be able to turn the tables around.

Down outside the ring, their friends spectated the match with great concentration.

"Awww." Nel grumbled. "Void boy's getting pushed around by vanish boy."

The rest of them sighed, feeling a bit depressed. Kane had pushed around all of them dominantly as well, and it seemed the same was inevitably happening.

Only Nel had managed to not to lose against him.

"Shame." Fae sighed. "I hoped the match would be more competitive but..."

"Seems like Kane is set for the win." Hever noted. "Not a surprising outcome. As brilliant of a fighter as Rui Quarrier is, there are hurdles that simply cannot be bypassed by purely tactics alone. At this rate, he will be knocked down or ringed-out."

"Tsk." Nel tutted grumpily. "If I were in his shoes, I would have kicked his ass!"

People threw a strange look at Nel at those words.

"You already tried..." Fae glanced at him with a frown. "And failed to kick his ass."

"Hmph." He snorted. "That was a long time ago. A man grows."

"That was a few days ago." Hever corrected. "And you're still a minor."

"Shut up!" Nel barked, sparking a commotion.

Fae simply shook her head, turning back to the fight, staring at Rui. There was nothing else to look at. Fights with Kane were fascinating, yet they grew boring to most spectators after some time because no one had any idea what was happening.

"Which one do you think will win?" Squire Dylon asked as his sharp eyes followed Kane's movements effortlessly.

The Apprentice-level version of the Void Step technique was an almost invincible technique in the Apprentice Realm. Yet the powerful minds of the Martial Squires could resist Kane's misdirection entirely.

"Hard to say." Squire Kyrie replied passively.

"Oh come on." Dylon complained. "Don't be a spoilsport. I put ten coins on Kane winning."

"As do I." Squire Helen chirped, sparking several more Martial Squires to follow suit.

"Hmph..." Squire Kyrie. "Then I'll bet on Rui."

"Huh?" Dylon tilted his head in confusion. "Really? Rui? Have you grown dull over the years?"

"I guess we'll find out." Squire Kyrie replied unperturbed as she gazed straight at Rui.

His eyes held an unyielding determination beneath his façade. This was not stubborn perseverance, nor resigned resistance.

Those were the eyes of one who believed they could win. Those were the eyes of one who was willing to do anything to do anything to win.

She did not want to bet against those eyes. Her instincts told her that the fight was not over, and that the outcome was far from settled.

Although she bet on him, she was curious as to why she felt that way, and how the battle would unfold.

What kind of miracle would that boy conjure up this time?

Chapter 232: Exploit

POW POW POW

WHOOSH

Kane peppered Rui with many strikes, evading a wild haymaker smoothly. On the outside, it seemed as though Kane was furiously punishing Rui, determined to win.

Yet unbeknownst to anybody, perhaps even Rui himself, Kane was rather melancholic. He truly hoped Rui had a way to defeat him, but it seemed this wasn't the case. It had been quite some time since the match had begun, yet as time passed by, the odds of victory of Rui seemed to grow dimmer and dimmer.

Rui soon abandoned offense and focused purely on defense, being pushed to the edge bit by bit. Although his defense was solid, not being able to engage in any proactive defense because he couldn't see Kane's attacks meant that even Kane's meagre offense was able to push him back and secure more and more space over time.

BAM!

Kane hit Rui with a powerful pushing kick, shoving him to the edge of the ring.

Kane sighed to himself.

It was time.

He rushed towards Rui from an unconventional angle with a charged attack and a heavy attack.

Every detail of this fight would reach the ears of his family, one way or another, they had too much influence.

How could he possibly justify not taking this juicy opportunity?

He couldn't, especially when he exploited such opportunities in all his previous matches, and the fact that it was, frankly, common sense.

He sighed inwardly. It was a shame. But he didn't intend to blame Rui. He had done his best and it was unfair to expect more than that.

Suddenly, a chill went up his spine as he reached Rui. Kane's eyes widened as he saw the briefest of grins crack from Rui's mouth.

Suddenly Rui crouched launching an incredibly swift sweeping kick towards Kane, aiming to trip Kane.

Kane immediately understood. He was moving so fast that losing his balance while moving towards at the edge of the ring would instantly mean he would fly out of the ring. Rui's crouching sweeping kick seemed to be aimed at ringing out Kane or at least a simultaneous ring-out with both of them for a draw.

But how did Rui know when and where to land this attack?

He didn't know.

But it didn't matter.

Kane leapt high into the air, dodging the attack cleanly. The easiest way to avoid a committed sweeping kick.

Yet what happened next shocked him.

WHOOSH

The attack disappeared.

It was a feint!

Rui hadn't moved much, just enough for a feint.

Kane's eyes flew wide open as his he stared at Rui, who stared right back at him with an ecstatic grin.

PEW!

Rui's right toe soared, cutting through the air as Rui propelled forward as fast as he could.

This was his goal!

Even if Rui was vaguely aware of Kane's position at all times, it wasn't enough. Kane's evasive skill and capability was so high he could easily avoid Rui's attacks even if Rui knew where he vaguely was at. This was obviously true, Kane was capable of avoiding Rui quite well even when Rui could see him, there was no contest when Rui couldn't see him.

So, what could Rui do?

The answer was simple, either outmaneuver Kane's evasiveness with brute speed or restrict Kane's evasiveness.

The former was frankly impossible. Perhaps if Rui could see Kane he might have managed with a well-timed combination of Blink and Phantom Step, but if he could not see Kane, then Blink was completely useless.

One of the few solutions he had managed to think about via the VOID algorithm was the very solution he had employed.

If Kane was mid-air, then his evasiveness was almost entirely useless. He had feinted a committed sweeping kick, where he threw everything into it, meaning it would be hard to do anything else. This gave Kane the confidence to leap to avoid it, especially when he was under the impression that Rui couldn't locate him.

This was his blunder.

He was mid-air. He couldn't really avoid attacks.

The Stinger was normally not a threat to Kane. Even Nel had avoided them, Kane could avoid them comfortably.

But, that was when his feet were on the ground.

His eyes widened as he realized that this must have been part of Rui's plan from the very start. Everything that had happened so far had happened because Rui was waiting for this very moment!

Kane threw up his guard

POW!

The Stinger plunged into his bicep, digging deep. Rui, of course, had no idea where the Stinger had landed on Kane's body. He simply struck in a way that would cause as much damage as possible.

Unfortunately, the bicep was not a vital.

Kane immediately retreated, but the damage was already done. Even if the bicep wasn't a vital, the damage done was quite significant.

The pain and shock the Kane experienced broke his Void Step technique, which required delicate execution. Rui refused to let go of the opportunity.

BAM!

He managed to get in at the very least one more jab, before regaining his bearings and reusing the Void Step technique.

But the damage was done.

His movements weren't as easy as before. His right arm was largely incapacitated, making it harder to use it help with balancing his weight which was very necessary in maneuvering. Furthermore, there was the blood loss. Perhaps if he had time to minimize the blood loss and tie up the wound with a piece of his uniform, he might have been able to minimize the loss to his combat prowess.

However, Rui did not let up.

He threw the charade up in the air, and hounded after Kane. Now that he had already revealed that he could sense Kane, there was no point in playing dumb, furthermore, now was not the time to be passive, he needed to exploit the opportunity he had finally generated. Constantly chasing after him prevented Kane from having time to gather his bearings and consolidate what could still consolidated.

Only if he fully exploited the potential he had created, could he possible win!

Chapter 233: Outcome

Not a single person spectating was unperturbed.

One moment, Rui was on the verge of defeat.

The very next moment he successfully lands his trump card on Kane, inflicting serious damage with Stinger!

They all gaped in amazement.

How did Rui land that attack on Kane at all?

No one understood.

The sheer manner in which he landed the attack made it absolutely clear it wasn't dumb luck. That was absolutely impossible.

Furthermore, with the way Rui was running around the ring aggressively, it was clear that he was chasing Kane.

What had changed?

Did he develop a new way to sense Kane in the middle of the fight?

"No... That's impossible." Fae murmured. "But... that means he was able to sense Kane... from the very start?"

Her eyes flew wide open in amazement.

This revelation was unbelievable!

But what amazed her even more was that instead of using this from the very start and hounding after Kane, he held it in as a trump card and used it at the very right moment and place. If Fae was able to sense Kane she would not have used it in such a manner, she would likely have abused it from the very start and tried her very best to get a hit in on Kane.

This is what most of them would have done. None of them would have allowed themselves to get bullied by Kane ever if they could avoid it.

Yet Rui not only allowed himself to get bullied by Kane, but even used to his advantage to create an opening against Kane and gain a huge advantage.

The blood drops scattered across the entire floor was testament to Rui's to this!

The only person to inflict a wound on Kane was Nel, and that was a minor wound that was born largely out of raw physical prowess and luck rather than the quality of his decision making.

Now, Rui was winning!

He chased and chased and chased.

He wasn't particularly bothered by the fact that his attacks still missed and he hadn't touched Kane since the Stinger and blow immediately after.

He knew that as long as he didn't blunder, it was only a matter of time. Kane was no Milliana who would have been able to drag on the fight even in his condition forever until Rui ran out of gas.

Kane began flickering in and out of everyone's vision.

The wound was taking its toll.

Rui was also taking his toll by forcing him to go all-out with his speed. It was not easy maintaining top speed along with the Void Step. And it had become ten-fold harder with pain and blood loss.

Soon, the odds snowballed against Kane.

Pain, incapacitation and exhaustion had begun exacting their toll.

POW

Rui landed his third strike on Kane as he slipped up on Void Step technique.

The jab struck his nose just barely, but the immediate pain and disorientation that came from it collapsed his concentration on the Void Step technique complete.

BOOM!

Moment later, a powerful Flowing Canon crashed into his wound, causing him excruciating pain. Kane was not a defensive fighter, the Flowing Canon attack ravaged his arm.

Rui had used Blink and Phantom Step to land the strike in his disoriented state. This caused even more disorientation, especially when he wasn't a defensive fighter.

It had snowballed too much.

BAM BAM BAM

It was over.

Kane collapsed, unconscious.

He didn't move.

Everyone was shocked. Many people had already written Kane as the representative of the Academy. His ability was simply too perverse.

Yet Rui overcame him with a brilliant tactic as well as formidable sensory prowess!

This outcome made one thing very clear to all of them.

Rui Quarrier now held the position of the strongest!

Although there were several close shaves, ultimately, he had a perfect win streak.

Seventy-eight victories.

Zero draws.

Zero losses.

Not a single person could avoid losing to him!

"Winner; Apprentice Rui Quarrier!" The supervisor declared loudly, his voice echoing across the silent facility.

Rui closed his eyes, exhaling.

He had arrived.

The profound weight of the realization reverberated through his entire being. He absorbed the impact, the waves of ecstasy and relief, as well as the excitement of participating in the Martial Contest.

He would represent the Hajin branch of the Martial Academy in one of the highest levels of contest. He would go on to face fifteen of the best Martial Apprentices in his entire generation!

He quivered slightly. He was unable to contain his excitement!

The other fifteen representatives of the remaining Martial Academies were also among the very best of their Academies.

What kind of monsters would Rui run into? What kind of Martial Art would these Martial Artists practice?

Would he be able to win?

He wanted to know.

He wanted to find out.

He clenched his fist, controlling himself.

"Fuuu..." He exhaled, calming down. He waited patiently as the medical team healed Kane. He didn't want to leave without his friend.

"Hmm..." He groaned as his eyes opened, disoriented. "Wha...?"

"Hey." Rui drew his attention to himself.

"Rui...?" Kane's eyes flashed as he immediately recalled what had happened.

"Ah..." An expression of relief and gratitude flashed across his face. "Congratulations, and thanks."

"Don't mention it." Rui dismissed. "How are you feeling?"

"Groggy." He said, getting up. "Man, that last combo hurt like hell."

"Heh, thanks." Rui smirked. "I enjoyed finally punishing you after you bullied me the entire fight."

"Jerk." Kane grumbled, but his smile betrayed his emotions. He was truly happy, and truly proud. For the first time, he was actually excited for the Martial Contest.

The two bantered as they met up with their friends.

Rui was immediately bombarded with a flurry of earnest congratulating wishes.

"Thanks guys." Rui smiled. "Much appreciated, really."

Suddenly, a voice called out to him.

"Apprentice Rui Quarrier?" A staff member called out to him.

"Hm?" Rui turned to her.

"The headmaster has summoned you." She informed him. "Please head to the Headmaster's office immediately."

Chapter 234: Names and Sects

"I wonder what Headmaster Aronian wants from you..." Fae pondered out aloud. "Probably not going to be as simple as superficial congratulations and pep talk."

"I'll find out soon enough." He shrugged. "I'll catch you guys later."

He left after they bade him goodbye, heading towards the Headmaster's office.

It had been a month since Rui had spoken to him, he had consulted him once before the preliminary contest had begun and now, he was visiting him as the representative of the entire Academy.

He had arrived.

The large doors to the Headmaster's office opened.

A large office came into his view as he gazed at the figure seated at the headmaster's table.

"Headmaster." Rui bowed deeply, partly because of the great awe and respect he had for vaunted Martial Masters, partly because the sheer weight of Headmaster Aronian's mind pushing down on Rui, compelling him to bow.

Every time Rui encountered him, he was reminded about how deep the Martial Path extended, and how shallow his own depths were. Any arrogance one might have incurred as a result of winning the preliminary contest would certainly be thoroughly dispelled.

"Rui Quarrier." He spoke, stroking his flowing beard. "Come in."

Rui walked in as the doors closed behind him.

"First." He said, flashing Rui a smile. "Allow me to congratulate you on your victory in the preliminary contest. Congratulations on being chosen as the representative of the Hajin branch of the Martial Academies in the Martial Contest."

"Thank you, Headmaster." Rui bowed once more.

"Not at all, young man." He said dismissively. "You have truly earned it."

Rui simply smiled at those words.

"The reasons I summoned you, however..." Headmaster Aronian continued. "...are more than just merely congratulating you."

Rui simply listened, waiting for Headmaster Aronian to elaborate.

"There is some paperwork that goes into being the representative, nothing burdensome rest assured. However, there are several personal details that need to be submitted. The one I want to bring to your attention is the fact that every representative generally submits the name of their Martial Art." Headmaster Aronian. "We will be requesting one from you, as well."

Rui's eyes flashed at those words. He knew that Martial Artists named their Martial Art at some point. However, he had never paid too much attention to it. The VOID algorithm had always been his Martial Art in his mind.

"As I'm sure you're aware..." Headmaster Aronian told him. "We generally don't hasten this process, which is why it's never brought up in the Martial Academy by your instructors. The process of naming one's Martial Art is rather profound, important and even sacred. The name you name it must truly resonate with you on a fundamental level. After all, the name of your Martial Art affects not just how others perceive your Martial Art, but also how you yourself perceive it. Such is the nature of the human mind. Names have power."

Rui nodded, engrossed.

The name of his Martial Art.

Could he just call it the VOID algorithm? Perhaps.

"There exist naming conventions in the Martial Community." Headmaster Aronian informed him. "Generally, the names of Martial Art begin with the actual core name of your Martial Art, followed by nouns that encapsulate how you view your Martial Art. Many view their Martial Art as an Art, and call it as such. Many view their Martial Art as styles of combat, and thus name it as such. Many wish to emphasize on particular elements of their Martial Art and thus name it as such. So on and so forth."

Rui nodded. "I understand."

"I wished to inform you before you filled the paperwork." Headmaster Aronian told him. "Lest you be caught off-guard and hastily choose a name, and you'll likely end up regretting it in the future."

"Thank you for your consideration."

"Not at all." Headmaster Aronian.

Rui thought to himself.

The name of his Martial Art.

From the way Headmaster Aronian spoke about the matter, it certainly wasn't going to be a light issue. He wanted to be careful about the matter. If names affected the way in which one viewed one's Martial Art, then it wouldn't be a stretch to say that an unsatisfactory name may even negatively affect one's journey down their Martial Path.

Which meant this wasn't a light decision to be made.

"Do I have to decide now?" He scratched his head.

"Oh no, not at all." Headmaster Aronian denied. "Frankly, you have the right to refuse if you really want to. Refusing is a much better outcome than just hastily coming up with a name and regretting your choice later. Anything but the latter is fine."

Rui nodded. "Then I will take time and make a decision on the matter."

"That you should." Headmaster Aronian stroked his beard. "Make sure you're truly satisfied with the name, and if you aren't satisfied, then there's no need to rush it. But your Martial Art has matured to the point where you may already possess a name you're satisfied with. I get the sense that you've tread deeper than most of your peers in your generation."

"You flatter me."

"Hoho... Am I?" He threw a knowing glance at Rui.

Rui didn't reply, simply wryly smiling. Frankly, he wasn't sure what to name his Martial Art. He would need to engage in deeper introspection before he could possibly even come close to making a decision.

"There are some more matters..." Headmaster Aronian said. "But one of them sticks out."

Rui raised an eyebrow. "What matter is that, Headmaster?"

"The Martial Union is not monolithic." The Headmaster seemingly randomly stated. "Like all human entities, it is subject to tribalism driven by differing mutual interests between different people within the upper echelons of the Martial Union. These different groups band together and work together and strive to fulfill the common interests they all hold."

Rui tilted his head, confused. Why did the Headmaster randomly delve into such a topic?

"Normally, it's not something I would have taken upon myself to inform you of... But now that you have taken the position of representative, I do believe this is the best course of action." He said, before taking a deep look into Rui."

"Tell me, what do you know of the Martial Sects?"

Chapter 235: Elaboration

"Martial Sects?" Rui tilted his head in confusion.

What were those? Certainly not something he was familiar with.

"Hmm." Headmaster Aronian nodded. "Well, take a seat. This might take a while to explain."

Rui sat down opposite to Headmaster Aronian, waiting for him to explain.

"The Martial Union is a commercial organization; this is one of its core functions." The headmaster revised. "There is an enormous market for Martial services from countless consumers and clientele willing to pay for hiring Martial Artists for various services. The Martial Union serves as liaison between these consumers and the Martial Artists themselves, allowing for an incredibly smooth and regulated exchange of commissions and Martial services between the two sides."

Rui nodded, being quite familiar with the way the Martial Union functioned.

"As you know the Martial Union takes a fifty-percent cut of Martial commissions." Headmaster Aronian. "The reason for it being entitled half of the commission is because the services it provides to Martial Artists and clientele and consumer is indispensable. Without the Martial Union, there would be no avenue for Martial Artists to easily be able to easily access countless commissions that the Martial Union receives, processes, stores and organizes in an extremely user-friendly manner. This would be utterly impossible without a highly bureaucratic organization handling the immense documentation processing as quickly and smoothly as the Martial Union does. Furthermore, the intelligence and difficulty grades that are also indispensable to Martial Artists all require immense amount of funding."

Rui nodded, agreeing. The Martial Union made life very convenient for Martial Artists. Without the Martial Union. Martial Apprentices would struggle to be able to access the commissions from clientele and consumers of Martial services, there would be no extensive way for either side to contact the other. Furthermore, although not perfect, the intelligence and difficulty grade evaluations of the Martial Union were extremely useful, it minimized risk and maximized efficiency. Rui did not think that the Martial Union taking a hefty cut was particularly unfair, the services it was offering in return were quite substantial.

"Naturally, acquiring such a hefty cut from all commissions inevitably means that the Martial Union accumulates an enormous sum of money every year." The Headmaster continued. "The question is... what do we do with all that money?"

Rui began understanding the direction this was going. "Paying the work and labour force of the Martial Union, the many staff members and the many other employees the Martial Union has hired. I imagine a sizable chunk of funds goes into the maintenance and repair of infrastructure too, stocking of supplies and other essential things that are needed to maintain the functioning of the Martial Union."

"Correct." The headmaster nodded. "Running the Martial Union is more fund-intensive than you can possibly imagine, no doubt more than half of all funds are expended into the necessities that you mentioned."

"The questions is..." He continued. "What do we do with the remaining funds?"

Rui could feel the attention he was paying him, evidently the old man was finally getting around to the point after rambling on like old men generally liked to.

Rui wasn't sure, there were a number of obvious answers, he just wasn't sure which one headmaster Aronian was looking for.

"Do we primarily store all those funds in a treasury?" Headmaster Aronian asked. "Do we primarily invest those funds in side businesses? or perhaps we primarily invest those funds in territorial expansion?" He paused, throwing Rui an inquisitive look. "Do Martial Artists care for such things? What do Martial Artists care about the most?"

Rui didn't need to even think about this answer. "Power."

"Correct." The headmaster nodded approvingly. "Martial Artists are generally not money mongers. We respect one thing between each other; power."

Power was the very foundation of a Martial Artist, without it they were no different from normal humans. No, without it they were even worse. A Martial Artist without power was incompetent fool unworthy of the title of Martial Artist.

"Power is what we seek." The headmaster continued. "Money cannot buy everything, but it can usually help with most things."

"So the Martial Union spends its remaining funds on acquiring more power?" Rui asked. This made sense. The Martial Union was fundamentally driven by Martial Artists, who were driven by power. Power was indeed one of the most important pillars and interests of the Martial Union.

"Indeed. And Martial power, specifically." He continued. "We invest a tremendous sum of funds every year into acquiring Martial power. In the form of research and development of Martial Art and combat."

Rui's eyes widened at those words. To think that his career in his previous life was in such high demand to the Martial Union.

"All those countless Apprentice-level techniques that exist in the Apprentice library of the Martial Academy today." He said. "Did you think they fell from the sky or grew on trees? No, each one of those technique and trainings have been rigorously researched and developed by the research and development department of the Martial Union after many, many years and funds. The Martial Union places a great amount of importance in this avenue. Only by investing a large amount of funds and research manpower into developing Martial power can the fundamental and foundational level of Martial Artists improve."

This made a lot of sense to Rui. If not for this initiative, Martial Art would not grow stronger as generations passed. It was extremely difficult for this to occur naturally, because unlike technology, development of Martial Art was purely individualistic. One could not gather a bunch of Martial Artists and have them all collectively focus on developing one Martial Art. No, each Martial Artist developed their own Martial Art. This meant the development of Martial Art in the hands of Martial Artists alone was quite slow.

"However, research and development is an extremely wide field in and of itself." Headmaster Aronian remarked. "There are many large avenues even within the field of Martial Art that can be researched. However, not everything can be researched, and some things are clearly more important. So how does the Martial Union conduct the decision-making process for the research and development fund allocation? How do we decide which avenue of research gets how much money?" The headmaster paused, before continuing. "This is where the Martial Sects come in..."

Rui's eyes narrowed. The old man had finally gotten to the point!

Chapter 236: Lot to Think About.

"Not everyone agrees on how to allocate the budget for research and development." Headmaster Aronian continued. "Different Martial Artists in the Martial Union have different ideas on how these valuable funds ought to be allocated. Whether it be based on what they believe is best for Martial Art as a whole, or whether they desire a specific allocation because it benefits their Martial Art the most in the long run. Regardless of their intentions, not everyone agrees."

Rui nodded, understanding. An offense-oriented Martial Artist would want a disproportionate amount of research funding to be allocated to the research and development of offense-oriented techniques. A defensive Martial Artist would want the same for defense-oriented techniques and so on and so forth. This was quite a natural outcome. Human beings were naturally self-centered.

"The fund allocation is decided after immense deliberations and a voting session on the matter by the highest echelons of the Martial Union. Now, if you were one of them and you wanted to push for a specific allocation in these meetings, what would you do?" The headmaster asked.

This reminded Rui an awful lot of political discourse and engagement that occurred in governmental structures. Politicians often engaged in a lot of measures to try and push for certain direction policy making.

Following that route of analogy...

"I would find like-minded others who agree with me and band together to fulfill our mutual interests in regards to the allocation of funds." Rui answered.

"Exactly." The headmaster nodded approvingly. "That is what has already long happened. Those groups have already been formed long ago, and continue to exist to further their own mutual interests in regards to the allocation of budgets. These groups are known as the Martial Sects."

Finally, Rui understood. Martial Sects were no more than lobbying groups banded together to cooperate to ensure the fulfillment of their mutual interests in regards to the allocation of research funds.

Rui grumbled inwardly, although he appreciated the contextual breakdown, couldn't the old man have plainly said that?

"These Martial Sects are informal groups formed by Martial Artists with a similar mind and, usually, similar Martial Art, or atleast Martial Art of the same field." The headmaster continued, unaware of Rui's complaints. "The Fire Sect is the Martial Sect that advocates for offense-oriented Martial Art research, The Lightning Sect is the Martial Sect that advocates for speed and maneuvering-oriented Martial Art research, the Earth sect is the Martial Sect that advocates for defense-oriented Martial Art research. These three are the largest of Martial Sects for obvious reasons. They cover the most important broadest of aspects of Martial combat."

Rui grew engrossed into his explanations, the entire matter was extremely interesting and yet quite foreign to him. When he was a researcher, getting funds for combat research was quite difficult. But the combat researchers of this world were quite fortunate in comparison, the Martial Union dumped tons and tons of research funding onto them every year.

Rui felt a hint of envy. If he received such luxury in his previous life, he might have successfully perfected the VOID algorithm.

"There are other Martial Sects, of course. The Sun Sect is a Martial Sect centered around supplementary techniques. The Wind Sect specifically focuses on a smaller subset of maneuvering techniques centered around evasion. The Breathing Sect focuses on breathing-oriented techniques, the Poison Sect focuses on poison techniques and so and so forth." The headmaster explained. "These Martial Sects engage in various activities to fulfill their mutual interests."

He paused before throwing a pointed glance at Rui. "One of those activities is roping in unaffiliated Martial Artists, particularly the newer and younger Martial Artists."

He paused. "Particularly the talented and promising Martial Artists of the newer and younger generations."

Rui's eyes narrowed as he understood why headmaster Aronian had even brought this topic to him in the first place.

"The reason they do this is to increase the population of the Martial Artists of their Martial Sect. They offer Martial Art techniques of their Sect at discounted prices, attracting unaffiliated Martial Artists to informally join their sects and learn and use their techniques. The reason they do this is to increase the number of Martial Artists using the techniques of their Sect. By doing this, they can demonstrate a greater need for research and development of the techniques of their Sect. After all, would you rather research Martial Art techniques that only a hundred Martial Artists use, or Martial Art techniques that ten thousand Martial Artists use?" He asked rhetorically.

Rui nodded. This made sense. The greater the number of Martial Artists there using a certain type or field of techniques, then the greater the benefits of researching that particular type or field of techniques, since a greater number of Martial Artists would grow stronger by successful research and development, in turn increasing the strength of the average Martial Artist more.

"This is where you come in. Having more powerful Martial Artists would increase the political weight and capital of their respective Sects, and thus they sought out young talents like yourself, hoping to rope you in." The headmaster explained. "Especially now that you've been chosen as the representative of the Hajin branch, you have already entered the eyes of the Martial Sects."

"I see..."

Rui wasn't sure how he felt about that. On one hand he was flattered and interested, on the other hand he was wary as well.

"They will likely approach you, one way or another. And make rather tempting offers to you." The headmaster told him. "I would advise you to not offend them, but at the same time, be extremely careful with whatever decision you make. There is no need for haste or panic, the decision is important cannot be easily undone, therefore it must be made with immense scrutiny."

"I understand." Rui nodded. "Thank you for your advice, I won't be off-guard as much thanks to your warnings."

Headmaster Aronian nodded. "You have much to think about. I'd suggest you take some time to give all of what I've told you some thought. You may go." He told Rui.

Rui nodded, bowing deeply, before leaving.

He did indeed have a lot to think about.

Chapter 237: Something to Look Forward to

Rui headed back engrossed in thought. There was a lot consuming his focus and attention. There was a lot on his mind.

Naming his Martial Art?

What name ought he give it? Several generic names popped into his head but none of them really stood out to him. Headmaster Aronian had told him not to hastily pick one, and to only pick one that really satisfied him.

Rui shook his head. He wasn't feeling particularly inspired right now, so he put it off. He could spend more time on the matter later on.

Then there was the issue of the Martial Sects, this was quite the interesting issue. Frankly, Rui would not mind joining a powerful Sect as long as they gave him a good enough deal. Otherwise, he would rather steer clear of the issue. However, easier access to techniques of a particular Sect was quite attractive.

However, he ran into a dilemma. He was an all-rounder; wouldn't that mean it wasn't particularly a good idea to practice the techniques of one particular Sect?

Perhaps he should have asked headmaster Aronian to refer him to an all-rounder Sect, though he highly doubted such a Sect existed.

Or whether it was even possible to join without a voluntary invitation from the Sect's end.

Ultimately, he lacked too much information. But that wasn't necessarily a problem. Headmaster Aronian was simply informing Rui to help him stay aware of the issue. So that he could be prepared mentally to some extent if he ever did run into one of the Martial Sects.

But besides from that, this wasn't an issue that required his attention any further. He would cross that bridge as and when it came.

More importantly, there was the issue of the Martial Contest. Rui needed to get his shit together for it, otherwise he would lose. He could not afford to be distracted.

Not that it was easy to get distracted.

He was going to fight the strongest fifteen Martial Artists of his generation!

How could his mind possibly wander to other things?

What could possibly drown out his enthusiastic excitement for the event?

However, even if he focused on it, there wasn't much he could do about it at this stage. The Martial Contest was in the middle of the Martial Festival, he had no time to improve by any meaningful measure at all. The stage for growth was over, now he could only make the best of whatever he had. His confidence wasn't as high as he would have liked it to be. The fact that there were four people in roughly the same tier of strength; Kane, Nel, Fae and Hever, was not particularly reassuring. It meant that his current strength level, while in the upper echelons of his generation was still some ways away from the peak.

The other representatives in the Martial Contest would no doubt at the very least of a similar level to himself, to potentially much stronger.

He would likely have as hard of a time against them as he did against the likes of his friends.

The question was, what could he do in the two weeks before the arrival of the Martial Contest?

There wasn't much point in training, but at the very least he could condition his mind to be at its absolute peak.

Over the next two weeks, the very least he could do is sharpen his focus and concentration to their absolute limits onto the Martial Contest.

Clear out all distractions.

Clear out everything else.

Focus only and only on bringing out his very best.

"Hey." Kane waved at him. "You're back, that was quicker than I expected."

He had been waiting for him.

"Yeah." Rui told him. "There wasn't much to it anyway."

Kane nodded, not asking the details.

"So." He continued. "What's the plan? You need a sparring partner?"

Rui wondered about that. "If I feel like it. I'll think about it. I'm definitely shutting myself out from all other activities. I want to immerse myself and bring myself to my peak before it's time for the Martial Contest."

Kane nodded. "Sure thing. I won't be taking any missions in that time. So, you can just call me for anything you need okay?"

Rui nodded. "Thanks."

"Don't worry about it." Kane waved his hand. He had been hating the arrival of the Martial Contest, but the moment Rui had been chosen as the representative of the Hajin branch, his attitude took a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. He knew Rui had been aiming for this from the very start and wanted to see his friend do well. He was excited to see Rui's performance.

"The others told me tell you the same thing too." Kane added, remembering. "You beat us, and are now going to represent us, none of us mind helping you going all the way and becoming the Martial Champion."

Rui smiled. He was blessed to have good friends.

"I'll give them my gratitude when I see them."

"So when do you plan to start your isolated training?"

"Now." Rui replied. He had nothing better to do. Nor anything more important to do.

"Are you planning on abusing potions again?" Kane sighed.

"I'll get a good night of sleep before the commencement of the Martial Union." Rui said.

"Gotcha." Kane replied. "Alright see ya. Let me know when you need anything."

"Sure."

* * * * *

"Young miss."

"Hm?" A short petit girl turned, facing her attendant. She had short brown hair and silver eyes that sparkled with vibrant curiosity.

"The results of the chosen representatives of the other Martial Academies were just sent by Master." The butler informed, holding a letter up.

"Oh, finally!" She said, delighted, reaching her hand out for the letter.

She immediately began pouring over the letter, mumbling as she read the letter. "Ohh.. Hm Hm. Ferlicia was chosen as the representative of the Ferlos branch eh? I get to see her after so long then~ Ah Ian was also chosen as a representative, tsk, expected but still annoying. Most of this is going as predicit- Hm?"

Her eyebrows knitted in surprise as she read the final name. "Wait, Kane isn't the representative of the Hajin branch? Who's this Rui Quarrier?"

"He's a young commoner Martial Apprentice who defeated young master Kane in the preliminary contest." The butler replied.

"Heh~ Kane lost to a commoner boy?" A mischievous smile lit up her face. "Hehe, more ammunition to tease him with. I wonder how strong this boy is though, to defeat Kane. In the Hajin branch, only Fae and Hever were at the level where they could have defeated him."

"His record is a perfect win streak, he is undefeated." The butler added.

"Something to look forward to then."

Chapter 238: True Festivity

The Kandrian Martial Festival had arrived!

The festive atmosphere in the entire nation had built-up for nearly a month prior until it erupted in full splendor. The streets were littered with decorations of various kinds as the emblem of the Martial Union; the face of Martial Art in the Kandrian Empire.

There a huge number of events being held in all major towns, and Hajin was certainly no exception. As a populated urban trade hub of a town, as well as home to one of then sixteen Martial Academies in the Kandrian Empire, an immense number of festive activities had commenced throughout the entire town.

The Martial Academies had all held demonstrations of Martial Art in public, demonstrations of feats that Martial Apprentices were capable of, flashy entertaining spars and other demonstrations that appealed to the average citizen.

The local businesses also took full advantage of the Festival, setting up large fairs with Martial Art festive ornaments and other domestic products of various kinds. These attracted an enormous number of people who attended them every day.

"Hiyaah!" Fae threw a palm attack at a boulder with an exaggerated yell.

CRACK CRACK CRACK

Several visible cracks spread across the entire boulder.

The crowd watching merrily erupted into cheers and applause. It wasn't everyday ordinary citizens got to witness what Martial Apprentices were actually capable of. The ordinary citizen rarely ran into Martial Apprentices on a day-to-day basis.

Asides from manual labour, Martial commissions were far too expensive for most of them! The only reason they could hire lower Realm Martial Artists for manual labour was because those commissions were rather cheap because most Martial Artists completed them rather quickly, and the value of labour was quite low to begin with.

Otherwise, it was a rare sight. Most citizens lacked a nuanced understanding of what Martial Artists were capable of, the Martial Festival would, of course, renew their memories, but because of its infrequency, the awareness of the matter never stuck.

"Wooooah!" A child in the crowd squealed in awe and amazement. "Martial Artists are awesome! Is big brother Rui also like that?"

"Indeed." Julian smiled. "Your big brother is also a strong Martial Artist."

He turned back to the demonstration with a wistful look. "It's a shame he isn't able to join us yet, however."

Rui had already long informed the orphanage of the fact that he was chosen as a representative of the Hajin branch of the Martial Academies. He had expressed his need to immerse himself in training and mental conditioning for the Martial Contest that would be held in Vargard, the capital town of the Kandrian Empire, in two weeks

The Orphanage was quite ecstatic. Julian even promised to bring as many as he could to the town of Vargard as possible, although it wouldn't be easy. However, none of them had wanted to miss this event.

Rui would be participating in a national level event!

Jus the very thought of it made all of them very excited.

Furthermore, they would be travelling outside of Hajin and the Mantian region for the very first time in their entire lives! Most of them were born in Hajin and had been taken in by Lashara at a very young age, settling just outside the town of Hajin in the Quarrier Orphanage. Visiting the very capital of the Kandrian Empire, the town that housed the Royal Kandrian Palace was something they would normally not even be able to dream of.

Julian had already begun making preparations for the lengthy four-day journey. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to bring as many people as he would have liked. The recent expansion of the Orphanage he himself had funded meant that the current functioning of the Orphanage was rather tight.

Only he Farion and Myra among the adults could go, that also limited the number of children they could take, since there only so many children three adults could manage. They had decided to bring as many adolescents as they could.

Unfortunately, they couldn't bring the younger children, it would simply be too much. Furthermore, the journey would be too burdensome and difficult for the children.

Julian's only regret was that Rui wasn't able to join them today, but he understood how important this event was to Rui. Now there wasn't much that could be done about it either, Julian would have to settle with spending time with Rui in the latter half of the month.

There were numerous events going on, and Julian would have liked to visit them with Rui. Thankfully, it was likely this wish would still be fulfilled even in the latter half of the month. The Martial Families went all out with these kinds of events throughout the entire month. The demonstration they were watching was actually organized by the Dullahan Family, a prestigious and powerful Martial Family in the Mantian region of the Kandrian Empire.

Later today, an open Martial Apprentice tournament was being held by the Arrancar Family, another prestigious Martial Family that was actually based in their very own town of Hajin.

The entirety of the Martial Community as a whole had been very proactive about their presence in the Martial Community. As the biggest proportion of the Martial Artist population of the Kandrian Empire, this Festival was literally centered around them, how could they sit around quietly?

An immense amount proactive initiative was taken by these Martial Families to increase the favourability and impression of Martial Art to the population of the entire Kandrian Empire. In a way, the Kandrian Martial Festival was an avenue to advertise the power of Martial Art. Ultimately, Martial Artists were service providers, demonstrating the degree to which they were capable of providing the service. The influx of Martial Art commissions always increased substantially after every Martial Festival.

The Martial Festival was a complex web of emotions and interests that interconnected in deep manners. No one knew the depth of it in its entirety, that was the true festivity of it to many.

Chapter 239: Naming revelation

Rui breathed in and out deeply.

('Focus.') He told himself.

He had been meditating for the past hour, after having finished a long sparring session with Nel. He taken time to recenter himself rather than relax.

Inevitably his thoughts turned to his Martial Art and his Martial path.

Ever since Headmaster Aronian told him about the part about naming his Martial Art, he had inevitably thought about it more frequently.

He had never thought about it much since it wasn't really something he was accustomed to. On Earth, although everybody did fight differently and uniquely, the variation was never big enough to have a special name for each unique fighting style.

Yet this wasn't necessarily the case in Gaia.

The variance of Martial Art in this world was far greater than the variance of martial arts in his previous life, so the emergence of each unique and personal names for Martial Art was to be expected. But it never did click much for Rui.

And now he often found himself stuck in regards to what he ought to name his Martial Art. There were several names that sprouted to mind.

All-Devouring Water Style.

Art of Black Water Style.

Wet Void Style.

These weren't bad, except for the last one which even made him cringe. But none of them really struck him. They didn't resonate with him like they should have.

He even consulted his friends on the matter. He wanted to know how they had dealt with the naming of their Martial Art.

"Dunno yet." Kane had simply shrugged. He hadn't made much progress on that front and didn't seem particularly eager to or overly concerned either.

"I haven't decided the name of my Martial Art yet." Fae had told him. "I wish to choose something I'm truly satisfied with."

Surprisingly Hever and Nel had already chosen the names of their Martial Art. Hever wasn't as much of a surprise, but Nel had only been a Martial Artist for a little over two months.

However, one of the most insightful answers he received was when he consulted Headmaster Aronian more deeply on the matter.

"One of the reasons we aren't told to choose the name of our Martial Art earlier is because of its impact on ourselves, but also it becomes difficult to find the name of your Martial Art so long as your Martial Art lacks originality and uniqueness." Headmaster Aronian calmly explained.

"Originality?" Rui tilted his head.

"That's right." Headmaster Aronian nodded. "A Martial Art that is no more than techniques built by others, is such a Martial Art truly original and unique?"

Rui understood what he meant. So far, all the techniques of all the Martial Apprentice's Martial Art had come from the Martial Academy, there was very little room for originality and uniqueness.

"If you are unable to come up with a name that truly satisfies you, then it is a sign that your Martial Art isn't uniquely personal, not enough, atleast. That is also the reason why I did not want to rush you, and

told you that you had the right to refuse. If you are not ready, then it is what it is." Headmaster Aronian explained, pausing before continuing further. "Although you discovered your Martial Path relatively recently, you've developed it an incredible pace so I suppose I can tell you more."

Rui listened attentively.

"Every Martial Path is unique. Unique in the sense that they have unique starting points. However, if one's Martial Art is not developed uniquely, then eventually your Martial Path will not long follow a unique trajectory. It will follow on paths that have been paved for you by others." He explained. "You will not grow stronger, and you will not be able to tread down your Martial Path any longer, for it will no longer be your own Path."

"What are the negative consequences of this, specifically?" Rui asked. Although headmaster Aronian sounded compelling, he was talking rather vaguely and flowerily.

"Hehe..." Headmaster Aronian chuckled. "Not an easy one to be convinced, are you?"

Rui didn't reply.

"I'm sure you're aware of the fact that the breakthrough to Martial Apprentice causes changes in the brain; permanent enhancements, correct?" Headmaster Aronian asked.

Rui nodded, recalling his conversation with Julian during his Winter holidays. Back then he had conjectured that the enhancements affected the Cerebellum, the occipital lobe and the parietal lobe.

"Do you think that this enhancement remains constant throughout the life of a Martial Apprentice? Or does it increase?" Headmaster Aronian.

"I would imagine it increases." Rui replied.

"It does, but not because of time spent, or the number of techniques explored." Headmaster Aronian explained. "Your brain becomes more and more enhanced the more uniquely original your Martial Art is."

The greater the personal and original development your Martial Art goes, the deeper down your Martial Path you tread, and the greater your brain is enhanced."

Rui's eyes flew wide open at this shocking revelation. In that case, developing your Martial Art with unique originality was much more beneficial than learning techniques from the Martial Academy!

"The benefits of greater cognitive boosts, of course, cannot be overstated." Headmaster Aronian continued. "Greater reaction speed, greater mental fortitude and resistance, greater reflexes and senses and so and so forth."

Rui wondered why the Squire instructors didn't tell the Martial Apprentices such an important detail. But given enough thought he could figure it out.

Most Martial Apprentices were too immature, inexperienced and incapable of developing their Martial Art uniquely the moment they discover their Martial Path.

How could a bunch of teenagers create something truly personally unique the moment they become Martial Artists?

It was impossible.

Informing these kids that they had to develop their Martial Art uniquely would likely yield negative results rather than positive. They would all be consumed with futilely trying to accomplish something they simply could not.

Rui suspected that the Martial Academy let them hit their limits, by then they will have likely gained the maturity and experience necessary to take their own steps forward.

Chapter 240: Squire Candidate

They were like newborn infants. They could not walk on their own the moment they were born, but many months later they would finally be ready.

Furthermore, there were more concrete reasons to be secretive about this fact.

If finding a true name for one's Martial Art was a measure of how uniquely original one's Martial Art was, which would in turn indicated how cognitively boosted your brain was, then the young brash fools would hastily name their Martial Art in the hopes that this was a sign they had made a lot of progress!

They would be putting the cart before the horse.

If naming one's Martial Art was a profound and important act, and it certainly was, then young hasty and greedy Martial Apprentices would certainly screw things up for themselves.

Rui's eyes widened as he recalled something Squire Dylan had told him. Squire Dylan had told him that they did not inform Martial Apprentices of the breakthrough process to Martial Squire because it ruined their development because they didn't handle the important information maturely.

That information Squire Dylan had inadvertently revealed back then was oddly similar to the revelation he had just had right now.

The similarities between the two strongly suggested that the breakthrough to Martial Squire was linked to the originality and uniqueness of one's Martial Art.

Rui felt he had reached something significant. He glanced up at headmaster Aronian, who had simply been watching him intrigued.

"But why tell me this if you do not tell the others?" Rui frowned. "Aren't you afraid that I might simply not be ready."

"No." Headmaster Aronian simply answered.

"..."

"..."

"No?"

"No."

"Why not?" Rui asked.

Headmaster Aronian glanced at Rui with intrigued eyes. "You don't know?"

"I wouldn't be asking if I did." Rui sighed exasperatedly.

"Hoho, I see I see." Headmaster Aronian laughed. "It's rather odd you don't know. How could you possibly be unaware of this fact I wonder."

"What fact?"

"...The fact that your Martial Art is one of the most uniquely developed Martial Art I have ever seen in the hands of a Martial Apprentice." Headmaster Aronian grew a bit more serious. "It's truly a wonder. Your case is unheard of. How did you give your Martial Art such a high degree of personal uniqueness in the span of a year and a half?"

Rui tilted his head, incredibly confused. "I've only developed my Martial Art with the techniques of the Martial Academy. I don't know wha-!"

His eyes flew wide open as he understood.

The VOID algorithm!

The VOID algorithm was something he himself had created over the span of more than a decade!

He had brought it over to this world with himself in his mind and had made it the core of his Martial Art.

From the very start, his Martial Art was extremely uniquely personalized!

The VOID algorithm had been the solution to Project Water, his personal ambition. He had been by far the largest contributor to the project and had been the brains of the entire research project. His researcher colleagues were much younger and were mainly executive researchers, executing his directives on the matter, handling the documentation, data processing and documentation and the more technical aspects of the research project.

The VOID algorithm was truly a child of his own, that he molded into shape after years and years of dedication.

Never had he realized that this would be counted as unique development of Martial Art in his second life!

He simply hadn't realized it. He knew his mind was cognitively superior to everybody else's, however he had assumed that this was only because of the double-growth it had undergone, now he realized that there was another minor factor contributing to it!

"Ah, so you've realized it." The headmaster noted. "The fact that you realized it only now just makes you an even more bizarre case. Truly, I cannot even begin to imagine the ridiculous circumstances that led to this outcome, though I am curious."

Rui shook his head. He could not tell the headmaster about his past life.

More like, there wasn't any point. No one would believe such a nonsensical story. Hell, even Rui himself had wondered once or twice whether it was real.

"...No matter." The headmaster stated. "The Martial Union and Academy have a habit of respecting the right to personal privacy. However, it is a fact that your personal Martial Art has been immensely uniquely developed. That is why I brought the issue of naming your Martial Art in the first place and why I revealed all of this to you."

Rui pondered a bit. "Does the uniqueness of one's Martial Art have something to do with the breakthrough to Martial Squire?"

"..." Headmaster Aronian merely gazed at him. "Hmm. I suppose you're privy to this information at your current level. Yes, yes it does. Your Martial Art needs to be uniquely developed to a high enough degree for you to even be a candidate for Martial Squire. It is one of two pre-requisites needed to be a Martial Squire candidate."

"Candidate?" Rui asked in surprise. "All this and one more additional condition all to be merely a Martial Squire candidate?"

"Hohoho..." He chuckled. "The breakthrough to Martial Squire is not as simple as the breakthrough to Martial Apprentice is, young man. I cannot tell you the breakthrough process to Martial Squire just yet, but I can tell you the second condition needed to be fulfilled in order to become a Squire candidate, you are eligible to hear it."

"Please do." Rui requested.

"There are two things needed to become a Squire candidate; Uniqueness and Martial Maturity." Headmaster Aronian told him.

"Martial Maturity?" Rui tilted his head in confusion. "What's that?"

"Every Martial Art has a shape and a form. What it ends up looking like. Its parameters and attributes. Its strength and weaknesses. Its distribution of resources as far as techniques go." Headmaster Aronian. "A Martial Art is said to have reached Martial Maturity when the 'shape' of their Martial Art is no longer in flux and is no longer shaping. You can think of it as after the Martial Art has undergone puberty and becomes an adult."