

"Alright, let's begin." Farion said, glancing at Rui.

Rui nodded.

It had been seven years since Rui had been reborn in this world. Ever since he learnt about Martial Art and the Academy, he'd already begun preparing for them, doing everything he possible could. The minimum age necessary to enroll into the academy was thirteen; adolescence. As for his preparation, he had been unable to gather much specific information, The Martial Academies kept a bit of a tight lid on the nature of the entrance exam. However, there were simple deductions to be made based on the available information at hand.

For starters, the entrance exam being open to only ages between thirteen and eighteen implied that the Martial Art skill level requirements of the exam were not too onerous. Thirteen-eighteen was a very young age group, it was simply impossible for an overwhelming majority of adolescents of this age group to be proficient in Martial Art.magic

After all, hiring a long-term tutor from the Union was very expensive, something only the rich could afford, and even then, they would not be able to master any more than the foundations. However, considering the age limit being eighteen, it could be inferred that the exam would not be centered around martial proficiency.

That left only a few possibilities.

Thankfully, Rui was a former martial art and combat sport researcher, he was well aware of the predictors and determinant variables of a successful fighting career. It wasn't even that difficult to figure out really. The two biggest predictors of success were talent, and drive.

Talent in the context of Martial Art would mean the measure of innate, natural physical and performance attributes. This would include health, physical attributes like raw strength, speed, agility, reflexes, durability, flexibility and stamina, as well as performative capabilities like balance, analysis and judgement, body-eye coordination, alertness etc.

While these could most certainly be trained even within the window of thirteen and eighteen, he was certain the impact of training would not be to the degree that experienced Martial Art trainers of academy would be unable to evaluate raw talent. Rui was relatively certain he was not talented, unfortunately.

His health and physical attributes were just barely average, he wasn't gifted with a godly body with unparalleled physical prowess, but he wasn't crippled with a severe chronic disease either like in his last life, he was just average in terms of talent. The problem was his performative attributes, he was rather bad in this area. And there was mainly one reason for this.

For starters, there was the mismatch between his mind and body, his mind had grown extremely accustomed to his former body on Earth, he was lean, thin and quite tall with a weak physique. The physical attributes/mass distribution of his previous body were drastically different from that of his current body, his mind constantly treated his body like it was his old one and not his new one, this was because of muscle memory.

Furthermore, his mind was that of an adult and despite, the developing brain of his young body, it was extremely difficult to completely erase fifty-nine years of engrained muscle memory in order to make way for new muscle memory for his new body, certainly wouldn't happen any time soon.

That was why he had been training his performative attributes as much as possible so that they could from go bad to, at the very least, average, ideally as high as possible. He had begun training his balance and body-eye coordination, alertness as much as possible outside of basic physical training.

It was the middle of the winter, Rui had gathered Farion, Horatio and Mika; three adults to the frozen lake to help him with balance training. He was standing on the frozen river one meter away from the bank, the training was simple; playing catch. The three boys would stand on land and play catch with Rui. They would throw balls at him one at a time, Rui was to catch the ball perfectly on slippery ice and toss it back, all without slipping or falling.

There was almost no friction between his boot and the ice, meaning if his center of gravity was not directly under the support of his legs, he would slip and fall. Initially, Rui's sense of balance was so bad that he could barely stand in one place without falling, and most certainly couldn't think about moving around on the ice.

It was only after two years of training that his sense of balance improved enough that he could begin playing catch, which required far greater balance, since Rui would need to catch the ball and stop its momentum without ever losing balance, and throw it back without shifting his center of gravity.

"Yeah, I'm ready." Rui responded to Farion. Farion nodded before throwing a ball at him, before Rui got caught and returned it. Horatio and Mica followed one after the another, throwing balls at Rui from different directions. It was a whole one minute of rapid back-and-forths before Rui slipped and fell on his ass.

"That was your longest record so far." Mica noted.

Rui nodded. "Alright, let's continue."

Horatio sighed. "Are you sure this is worth all the effort? You're not cut out for Martial Art you know. It's especially a waste of your genius level intellect, you could become a scholar like Julian did you know?"

"I already told you, I'm not interested in becoming a scholar, I'll become a Martial Artist, or nothing at all."

"Yes yes." He sighed. Not everyone thought Rui's ambition was a good idea, of course. It was not easy to become a Martial Artist, although a great many people aspired to become one, ultimately a whopping ninety-nine percent of them fail to become Martial Squires. It was an extremely difficult ambition to fulfill.

Rui breathed deeply, readying himself. He couldn't do it in his previous life, but this time, this time for sure he would become a Martial Artist!

"Continue."