

Martial Unity 721

Chapter 721: Kraterocracies

In a sense, while she was dramatically opposed to the Merger Faction that Colonel Geringan was a part of, their end goals had some commonalities. The Merger Faction wanted to merge existing institutions of the government with that of the Martial Union to create a hybrid singular ruling structure with a division of power that placated all of its constituents so that the constraints and restraints on and from the government, and on and from the Martial Union would go away, strengthening the nation as it became more unified.

Martial commissioner Derun, on the other hand, also wished to retain the constraints that the two groups placed on each other, however, she believed that only one of the two groups possessed the ability to truly unify a country and draw out its full power. She even extended this philosophy to the entirety of human civilization.

"Your propositions make sense," Rui admitted. "When the biggest stakeholder interest group with unshakeable hold over military do not possess legislative power, then they do end up hampering those in seats of legislative power with conflicting interests. The most straightforward solution to prevent this conflict of interest is to place such said Martial Artist stakeholders in positions of power themselves."

She nodded. "But...?"

Rui smiled wryly. "While it is true that lack of political opposition from stakeholder interest groups leads to a less fragmented political power dynamic, that is not necessarily a good thing."

"Oh?" She raised an eyebrow at his words. "And why do you say that?"

"Such a power system lacks too many checks and balances. Conflict of interest groups may slow down a country, but it also prevents any one stakeholder from extreme exploitation of others. This is a bit of a guess since I've never studied political philosophy all that much, but the nations that are Martial Kraterocracies most likely also have greater occurrences of human rights violations and economic exploitation of the lowest classes of society, am I wrong?"

When legislators were constrained by conflicting interest groups with comparable influence and the ability to compete for political power, it became much harder for the former to exploit the citizens of the nation.

She simply stared at him for a bit, before finally replying. "Perhaps, but I do not believe that it is inevitable. And even if it were... I believe that the pay-off is worth the benefits."

Rui furrowed his eyebrow in confusion.

Why did he, a Martial Artist, seem to care more about the average person in a tyrannical system than her, a normal human being?

It was rather odd.

"I might have to disagree with you there, commissioner Derun," Rui shrugged. "I can't dismiss the costs so easily I am afraid."

"There's no need to be apologetic," She shook her head. "We are all entitled to our own opinions, after all."

Well, she was at least open-minded. She didn't try to spend too much time trying to persuade Rui. She accepted that he disagreed with her, and moved on.

For now, at least.

"I'm surprised that you are willing to be within a system run by people who would die from a single attack from you. Would it not feel better to be in a system where people at the top have the power to crush you effortlessly? Martial power proportional to their political power?" She seemed genuinely intrigued.

"I'm just worried that they'll screw things up if I'm being honest," Rui shook his head. "We Martial Artists are not entirely normal in the head. And that becomes increasingly true the higher we go up the Realms."

Martial Artists were driven to pursue power for whatever core reason it was that any Martial Artist pursued power. This meant that they would be willing to go to insane lengths to obtain what they wanted to obtain. Who knows if some Martial Sage would be willing to let a country go to ruin just to become stronger or something like that?

They could very well destroy a country without batting an eye. Furthermore, with how strong Martial Seniors were, it was not entirely inconceivable that Martial Sages may be able to destroy a country if they let loose and fought within the borders of the country.

They were two Realms of power above that of Martial Seniors, after all. Rui could not even possibly imagine that he did not have any clue as to what degree their power would exceed.

With these considerations in mind, how could he possibly feel comfortable letting these beings take rule over the country, he would be unable to sleep at night with just paranoia alone.

Of course, he was cognizant that this was paranoia, rather than a well-justified fear. There were countries ruled by Martial Artists, and they did not befall calamities and catastrophes caused by Martial Artists. Regardless, it just wasn't a good idea, and certainly one he wasn't willing to entertain at the moment

The conversation proceeded a bit more before it ended.

Rui sighed as he put his communication device away.

('The average person sure has a lot to fear with people of her mindset,') Rui couldn't help but sigh as he thought of the tumultuous world that his family back at the Quarrier Orphanage lived in.

Frankly, if not for them, he would not be too opposed to the Martial Union taking over the Kandrian Empire and establishing Martial law.

He was not a saint. He helped people immediately within his capacity to help, but he did not go out of his way.

He shook his head, he was never interested in political lobbying in the first place. Multiple Martial Sects and factions had already approached him, hoping for support for their cause or goal or whatever.

('Don't care,') Rui shrugged.

He immediately got back to work. Given that his training and teaching would both begin tomorrow, he had a lot to sort through. He needed to plan and flesh out Senior K'Mala's crash course to ensure that she had learned the necessary and relevant theory.

Chapter 722: Homework

He divided her crash courses into two simultaneous courses.

The first course would be to help her develop an accurate model of the atmosphere, air, wind, and sound. This included what they were, how they worked, what were the laws that governed their motion, and why these phenomena occurred.

It was important to develop a good foundation, even if not absolutely necessary. She would have no fathoming of what the ODA system was and, how and why it worked. She most likely would be able to use it well without a theoretical foundation for the technique.

The second course would be about the technicals. She would need to learn many mathematical concepts, as well as memorize the processing protocols of the ODA system. This would definitely be the harder of the two courses, and by a good degree as well.

What he needed to figure out was a way to get her to absorb the latter well enough. Unfortunately, there was little chance that she would be able to master the Mind Palace technique. He would need to grind it into her head by force.

He spent the entire day chalking up and fleshing out a course, before finally presenting it to Senior K'Mala the next day.

"What do you think?" He asked her with a perfectly normal expression, yet he was sweating inside.

Her eyes were wide open, yet not as wide as that of her open mouth. Her eyebrows were knitted and she stared at Rui with an incomprehensible expression.

"What is this?"

"Er... Well, like I said-!"

Her aura flared before flooding Rui with pressure that he struggled to bear. Thankfully, a friendly aura washed over him, shielding him from her.

"Watch it," Senior Ceeran grumbled mildly.

He was also invested in mastering the technique, thus when he learned that Rui was creating a program for her to master it, he decided to join in and learn from Rui himself.

Senior K'Mala warily glanced at him before subsiding her pressure, leaving Rui relieved.

His mind was strong, far stronger than an eighteen-year-old Martial Squire ought to be, but she was still an entire Realm and a half above him.

"What. Is. This." She demanded. "What is all of this? This isn't a technique!"

She was so overwhelmed that she defaulted to elementary confusion where she couldn't even ask pointed doubts.

('This is going to be rough,') Rui sighed.

"This is the knowledge that you need," Rui explained.

"Techniques don't need knowledge! Techniques only need movements!"

"Well, first time for everything. If you want to master this technique, you will have to follow this." Rui gave her a smug grin. "Didn't you say that you could handle whatever I threw at you?"

She stiffened as she recalled those words.

"Well well well... I wonder what the Martial Tribes on Vilun Island will think when I inform them that the mighty K'Mala got bested by a Squire's technique?"

She gritted her teeth. "Fine! I'll master it!"

"That's the spirit," Rui grinned, receiving a note of approval from Senior Ceeran. "Let us begin with the basics. What is air?"

"Air is to be breathed to survive," She replied.

"What is it made of?" Rui probed.

"Air is made up of something?" She frowned.

"...I see."

The challenge was looking even tougher as seconds passed.

The first session lasted only three hours. A laughably small amount compared to how long students would generally study.

Yet, she was exhausted by the end of it. She had spent the entire session as Rui began explaining the composition of the atmosphere and its traits and principles.

Rui wished he had recorded her reaction when he told her about molecules and atoms. It appeared that the Martial Tribes of Vilun Island still believed in the continuous model of matter that believed that matter was not made up of individual particles but was continuous and singular.

She gaped in wonder as he gave her a brief breakdown of how sound worked.

It was odd, that despite now knowing what it was or how it worked, they were still able to leverage sound in their Martial Art techniques that allowed them to use it in their favor. Rui suspected that it was a highly instinctual process that they were able to execute because of extreme familiarity with the phenomenon intuitively after immense hard work and subjection of themselves to it.

This was also how the Martial Union trained its Martial Artists, to a certain degree, although it was also true that they were more objective as far as the quality of training went.

Rui was probably the first Martial Artist to be able to substitute passive skills such as accuracy and aim with a conscious and thought-driven system that cleanly substituted for the intrinsic capabilities and parameters such as aim.

And if she mastered it, she would be the second.

By the time the first lecture was done. Senior Ceeran looked wound up, but Senior K'Mala looked like her soul had been sucked out.

"Oh come now," Rui tutted disapprovingly. "It wasn't that bad. I made it as fun as I possibly could. There was no way you did not enjoy that."

Both the Martial Seniors gave him a look of incredulity.

Rui felt offended, he had served as a teaching assistant at a university long ago, and he enjoyed organizing classes.

None of his students reacted this way to his teaching when they came to him for aid.

Then again, this was their first conventional class, so perhaps he ought to cut them some leeway.

He took two copies of certain pages before tossing them before them.

"What is this...?" Senior K'Mala had an ominous feeling.

"What is it?" Rui smiled. "It's called... homework."

They shouldn't have known what it meant. Yet it was as though they were subconsciously able to sense all of the hatred all students had for homework all the way from Earth. Senior K'Mala threw a resentful look at him before defiantly picking it up and leaving without bidding him goodbye.

"Oh dear..."

Chapter 723: Windfell

The second that his two students left with solemn expressions and demeanor, Rui immediately rushed off to the G'ak'arkan Tribe as early as he could. After all, during this time, he would also be serving as a student, not just a teacher.

He quickly finished the bit of paperwork he needed to do before immediately shooting off to the G'ak'arkan Village. This time, he wasn't accompanied by his assistants, so he could freely move at his top speed through the sky.

THUD

He landed with an impact some distance away from the G'ak'arkan village. He could see that people had begun gathering the second that he had arrived, looking at him with curiosity and awe, as well as skepticism and intrigue.

"What business do you have here, outsider?" A Martial Squire stepped forth.

"I have come to learn the technique, as agreed," He replied calmly.

Another Martial Squire stepped forward from the crowd behind, whispering something in the former's ear.

He then turned to Rui with a grudging expression. "Alright, we will guide you to Kt'obila."

The name was pronounced with a click, a sound that the Vilun dialect employed frequently, both in words as well as in names.

Soon enough, Rui was taken deeper into the village than he had ever been. The borders of the G'ak'arkan Village did not strictly encompass only the area that was inhabited by the tribes folk. It included several other areas and places that weren't frequently inhabited with housing but were still considered directly part of their village.

He was led into their mountain through an extensive cave network that led into a large internal cave that spanned a huge area. There were glowing crystals and other gems sticking out of the walls. Thin holes in the ceiling gave beams of light that caused them to sparkle.

Across the area, there were a large number of Martial Artists that were deeply absorbed in some training or the other.

('What a picturesque scene,') Rui couldn't help but sigh in appreciation. It reminded him of the trope of martial art masters training in the serenity of the mountains for extended periods of time.

While the Martial Union was obviously more sophisticated, efficient, and effective, there was a degree of profoundness in the way these Martial Artists trained to become stronger.

('In a way, these Martial Artists pursue individual capability to the absolute maximum,') Rui couldn't help but sigh. They relied on themselves and nature.

Nothing else.

"Kt'obila," One of them addressed a meditating man, who promptly opened his eyes when called out.

"You're here?" He asked, glancing at Rui, sizing him up from top to bottom.

"I am," Rui nodded. "I'm here to learn the Mighty Roar Flash Blast techniques. I look forward to your guidance."

Kt'obila expressed respect for Rui, having got up and even shook hands with him out of respect.

('It seems Senior K'Mala hasn't spread the news of me not being grade ten to the Martial Squires,') Rui noted their respectful yet wary demeanor of him.

She definitely would have told the Martial Seniors of the tribe, but it seems as though she did not see any reason to inform every Martial Squire.

"Your training will begin today," Kt'obila remarked. "Today we will look at the way through which we train in order to facilitate our body in applying this technique."

"Follow me," He gestured to Rui, before heading deeper into the mountain.

It wasn't long before they arrived at an isolated part of the mountain, a small cave that was a dead-end.

Inside was just barely enough space for two people to sit. There was a tiny body of water just a meter wide, yet it extended incredibly deep according to his Seismic Mapping technique.

Furthermore, the walls were even prettier in this little cave dead-end. They were covered in all kinds of esoteric minerals and stones.

"This technique requires a powerful breath and a powerful voice," He explained as he tapped his diaphragm, and tapped his larynx. "Only when both of those are strengthened to the limit can you apply this technique to surpass the speed limit to sound blasts?"

"And how do we strengthen this?"

"By pushing them to their limits, of course," He smiled, gesturing to a small body of water in the small cave.

Rui glanced at the small hole filled with water inquisitively, it seemed that it clearly had something to do with his training.

"The best way to push one's self beyond one's limit is through the fear of death," He explained. "Only via the fear of death, can you truly push past your limits and obtain new power."

Rui didn't try arguing with him. Even if he disagreed, he was here to listen and learn whatever he could.

"Now then..." He plucked a rock tied to ethnic garb. "I was there to witness your technique, so around this much should be okay...?"

He broke the rock into two pieces, tying one back to his garb.

"What is this?" Rui frowned as he studied it.

It was a purple rock with a hard and rough texture.

"That there is what we call Windfell Stone," He explained. "It's special, when one puts it in water, the water immediately begins to absorb air, the only way to release air from the water is through sustained powerful sound. If you do not release enough air by producing enough sound underwater, you will suffocate to death."

He walked out of the cave before tossing the Windfell Stone into the water. The water immediately turned purple as a powerful wind current was generated.

Rui widened his eyes as he realized the powerful wind current was being caused by the sheer amount of the atmosphere the water that the windfall stone had dissolved in.

('This is ridiculous!') Rui frowned. ('What kind of solute causes a solution with water such that it causes a spontaneous exothermal reaction that somehow absorbs air?')

He was no specialized expert in inorganic chemistry, but he was absolutely certain that there was no substance equivalent to this on Earth!

Chapter 724: Pressure

Rui stood in place as an extremely powerful wind current pushed at him. An ordinary human would have long succumbed to the wind pressure.

Rui turned to clear his doubts, yet his eyes widened as he saw the man sealing the entrance to the cave with a gigantically long boulder that was sealing the entrance shit

"Don't bother trying to break your way out, this place is close to the center of the mountain that is reinforced for huge distances in all directions with many strong rocks that will be extremely difficult even for you to break out before suffocating to death! This will last for about three hours since this is your first time. Please don't die."

Rui didn't even have time to complain about the lacking explanations and elaborations on the technique. He was accustomed to knowing the entirety of his training regime involved before he began it. Yet it turned out that this was not how things necessarily operated in the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

And he had no choice but to acquiesce, he would not allow Senior K'Mala to dictate how he would teach her, thus he could not expect the G'ak'arkan Tribe to do that for him.

THUD!

Somehow, the rock covered all the edges to ensure that there wasn't even a single avenue for air.

In less than a second, all of the air in the cave had disappeared, absorbed into the water. There was no replenishing air from the outside since the entrance to the cave had been shut.

Suddenly, Rui could not breathe anymore.

('I need to release sound in the water!') He recalled what Kt'obila said before jumping into the narrow hole of purple water.

THWOOM!

He immediately released a Sonic Bullet downwards.

A tremendous gush of bubbles pushed him back to the surface, where he found fresh cool air hitting his skin.

He gasped for air, but he only had a split second before the water absorbed all of the released air back into it.

He went back down again, mustering the air he just barely managed to inhale before launching another Sonic Bullet.

THWOOM!

Once more a huge wave of bubbles of air pushed him back to the surface where he once again gasped for air, before diving back down again and launching a Sonic Bullet.

THWOOM!

He barely managed to supply himself with the oxygen he needed t each time as he released sound time and time again to get what he needed.

Rui was just barely cognizant enough to realize that there was nobody around this cave, through Seismic Mapping.

('Meaning if I fail, then I'll suffocate to death and actually die here!') The thought flashed through his head as he gasped for more air.

This meant that he could not afford to mess up, his very life was on the line.

This drove his mind and body to their limit as he began going all-out while ensuring that he didn't miss a beat.

Very soon, his entire body began aching. The medium that he was in was water, which made things a lot different. The pressure and drag to movements that water produced were exponentially greater than the drag and pressure produced by the atmosphere. This applied regardless of how powerful one was. He had to exert much more effort than he would if he was doing those movements in the air.

The struggle of breathing reminded him of his asthma back on Earth. It was labored, hampered, and tiring. Each breath felt like he had to pull a huge load of rock with his inhalation

Furthermore, he had to admit that the fear of death did indeed put pressure on him.

His nerves were tingling, even Primordial Instinct warned him of the danger of the situation he was in. His body temperature rose he began sweating a lot. His heart rate was permanently high too.

This continued for about three hours.

Until the water turned normal as the purple solute of the solution subsided and delved to the bottom.

Finally, he could breathe properly.

He could even hear Kt'obila moving the large amount of rock and debris that he had closed the entrance of the cave with.

"Huff... Huff..." he panted as he enjoyed the ability to breathe normally. If nothing, this training at least taught him to appreciate things that he was starting to take for granted. Breathing normally was a gift.

Suddenly, the boulder shifted as he found Kt'obila at the entrance, who inspected his condition, before scratching his head. "I would have expected you to feel better given how strong you seem to be."

Rui didn't even bother responding. Even if he wanted to correct his misunderstanding, he did not want to talk, it would interfere with breathing after all.

"This technique puts a lot of pressure on the breathing force and your voice," He explained. "This will help strengthen it to the level that is required."

The man continued going into deeper detail as he explained more than he did initially.

"Once you've achieved the strength of breathing force and voice, we will move to learn how to shape the sound with your mouth before releasing it. Once you have mastered that, your training here with the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique will be complete."

Rui nodded, wordlessly as he got on his feet. He was completely drenched, so he needed to squeeze the excess water out of his clothes before he could leave the place.

Rui was beginning to understand why the Martial Artists of Vilun Island were able to master techniques within reasonable periods of time despite severely lacking the technological training and growth resources of the Martial Union.

This has always been something he had pondered. How on Earth were the Martial Artists able to actually accomplish this? So far, there hadn't been any definitive answers even with the help of the intelligence team. The only thing that he had come to learn was the fact that their techniques were sacred and thus kept secret at all costs.

Yet, now he was starting to get an inkling of why they could master techniques at respectable paces despite not possessing the training resources of the Martial Union.

Chapter 725: Risks

The G'ak'arkan Tribe mastered sophisticated and powerful techniques in reasonable periods of time. Not only that, they also created a large number of unique Martial Art techniques at a remarkable pace and frequency.

They did all of this without the training and growth resources that the Martial Union had. That was extremely worthy of respect, Rui had to admit.

(They do this by placing a tremendous amount of mental pressure with the genuine possibility of death

Still, he highly doubted that this was all fun and games.

"How many Martial Artists have died in the training that I just underwent?" Rui asked with narrow eyes.

"About two or three in ten," He replied nonchalantly, without batting so much as an eye.

Rui on the other hand widened his eyes at that mortality rate.

It was no wonder. They were able to match the training speed of the Martial Union because they were willing to tolerate insane mortality rates to obtain that result.

The cost of the lives of twenty to thirty percent of Martial Artists of the Martial Union was something no one in the martial union would ever tolerate. Hell, Rui suspected just suggesting this to someone like Martial commissioner Derun would earn him strict reprimands.

Even if they wanted to have such training methodologies, no sane Martial Artist of lower Realms, like Martial Apprentices would voluntarily subject themselves to that. They would leave the Martial Union in droves.

It would instantly turn into a stream of migration of Martial Apprentices and even Martial Squires to the Royal Army and the Kandrian government, as well as to other nations.

Still... In the G'ak'arkan Tribe, it didn't even seem that out of place. The G'ak'arkan Tribe's culture was so extreme that it felt normal when he considered that this was their way of doing things.

Still, he had to admit that he had come to gain a certain degree of respect for the Martial Artists of the G'ak'arkan Tribe, they put their lives at risk to a much greater degree than the Martial Artists of the Martial Union. Even training was probably a significant threat to their life and bore a significant risk of death.

Of course, that did not necessarily mean that their way of doing things was better or superior. He just had to admit that people who successfully reached higher Realms of Martial Art in the G'ak'arkan Tribe had overcome obstacles and barriers that most Martial Artists in modern nations of the Panama Continent did not.

As far as net output went, the Martial Union would still take the win. Even ignoring the fact that the Martial Squires of the Martial Union had stronger Martial bodies, just the fact that the Martial Union had twenty to thirty percent more Martial Artists than any group of the same size that tried the same kind of risky training as the G'ak'arkan Tribe was enough.

A twenty to thirty percent advantage in quantity would be damning in an all-out war. Thus the Martial Union's means of training could be evaluated to be superior as far as the context of resulting net Martial war potential.

Still, he wondered if he, as an individual, ought to care about this parameter. After all, a net increment across large sample sizes did not necessarily mean that the Martial Union's way of doing things was better for him.

('Maybe I should consider borrowing from the G'ak'arkan Tribe's ways to a certain degree...') Rui's eyes narrowed.

His training speed had reduced, to a lesser degree as a Martial Squire, when he implanted the Mindmirror Symbiote.

('Maybe I could regain a part of that speed if I made my training life-threatening,') Rui's eyes lit up in cautious interest.

Of course, Rui was aware that was incredibly risky and substantially increased the probability of death across his lifetime.

('But... there are benefits, clearly,') Rui noted. ('These martial Artists surpass their technological limitations by putting their bodies in a state of fear of death. That cannot be ignored...') Rui's eyes lit up in even greater interest.

Of course, he wasn't some hot-headed fool who didn't care for his life. He absolutely cared for his life, and he definitely wanted to avoid death, even if he wasn't actively scared of it.

However...

('I can't say I care for my life more than my Martial Path, honestly,') Rui sighed. He would rather die than not have his Martial Path, Art, and the VOID algorithm, for example. Project Water had become a multi-incarnation project and had only grown dearer to him than it was back on Earth, and it only seemed to continue to do so as he grew stronger.

When he first joined the Martial Academy, he was not as driven as he was today, and when he was a Martial Apprentice, for the most part, he didn't even know if his dream was possible in any capacity for a long time!

Once he mastered the Mind Palace technique and used it to finally execute the VOID algorithm in its entirety from the start, he had to admit that he definitely had grown only more zealous and determined to fulfill Project Water, after having gotten the taste of success for the very first time in two lifetimes.

And now he had reached a level of commitment that he simply had not reached prior to at this point in time. He was not unwilling to risk his life to become stronger quicker and in the long term. He just needed to make sure that it was definitely worth it as far as the probability of the risky possibility unfolding.

He was willing to risk his life, as long as he gained something concrete that was worth it.

('This means that this training regime will be a good test for whether the benefits are worth undertaking the risks,') Rui concluded.

Over the next few months, he would be testing whether the training regime was going to be worth it. It was possible that this training phase would determine how the rest of the training phases for the rest of his life go.

Chapter 726: Skip

Time quickly passed as Rui's life took on a bit of a routine. He would teach Senior K'Mala and Senior Ceeran about mathematical concepts, the theoretical framework of the atmosphere, and the classical wave theory. Senior Ceeran had already read up on the theoretical framework in the time after Rui had submitted the technique to the Martial Union. Thus, he was able to follow Rui's classes better than Senior K'Mala.

The latter found Rui's training vastly more difficult than she had ever imagined. She found that she had come across a problem that she couldn't just overcome with hard-headed perseverance. She needed to exercise her patience in trying to overcome difficulties with problems that she had never even fathomed before.

"You failed," Rui stated calmly as he scribbled crosses across a sheet.

Senior K'Mala's eyes narrowed at those words. "Tsk,"

"You just barely managed to pass, Senior Ceeran," Rui announced as he gave the man a smile.

Rui had been grilling them on their fundamentals very hard. He put an immense amount of pressure on them, and despite his instinctual fear towards both of them, he suppressed it and made sure to never let them off easy.

He couldn't give them an easy fun and joyful education when it came to what mattered, unfortunately. He had to impart an education intensity that matched high-intensity exam-prepping coaching classes.

What they were aiming to crack was much harder than any exam Rui planned to give.

Of course, when it came to the qualitative theoretical classes, he was a lot more patient, understanding needed to be nurtured, it could not be forced.

His own training was not easier than theirs.

The sustained underwater-sounding training drained his stamina at a rate that was scarcely believable. He was exhausted and his throat was sore to the point where he had trouble talking. If not for the healing and stamina potions he would have been extremely tired.

Yet as the weeks passed, he made improvements. He grew less tired from that particular exercise as he learned to execute it more efficiently and lower his heart rate and body temperature, among other things that allowed him to last much longer than his first time. He grew increasingly better and better as his diaphragm strengthened, and his larynx toughened.

Until finally, the day came when he could begin with the training of executing the technique.

"You have come far very fast," Kt'obila remarked with a surprised expression. "As expected of a Martial Artist as strong as yourself."

Rui smiled, without replying.

The truth was that he would have had to take at least twice as much time to master those techniques if he didn't have healing and rejuvenation potions. Thankfully, it helped to keep up his facade.

"Now that you have come this far, you simply need to take one more step," Kt'obila said as he got up, turning to face another direction.

He deeply inhaled, before opening his mouth ever so slightly.

THWOOM!

BANG!

The attack soared forward at a tremendous speed, far faster than his own Sonic Bullets did, before destroying a boulder the size of a building to smithereens in the distance.

"Wow..." Rui

"You need to leverage the strength that your breathing force and voice have gained," He explained. "Use all your power to force all that power into a small space in your mouth, and give it only the smallest opening to escape from your mouth while expelling it spontaneously and instantaneously."

"I see..."

Rui got up, inhaling deeply before attempting the technique with the instructions that Kt'obila had come up with. He pushed his diaphragm to the absolute limit, minutely opening his mouth before spitting out an extremely potent Sonic Bullet, that was much smaller and denser than any Sonic Bullet that he had ever released.

But...

('It hasn't surpassed the atmospheric pressure to the degree that is needed to surpass the speed of sound,') Rui sighed.

"It's not bad," Kt'obila nodded. "Rather it's surprising that you're this good already. I have no doubt that you will master it soon enough."

"Well, I'll have to keep training to get there," Rui sighed.

And he did.

Within three months after he originally began training, he had gotten hang of the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique. He simply needed to make small, but enough progress every week, and eventually, he reached the stage where he could launch supersonic sound projectiles with tremendous pressure and energy density.

However, to Rui, this was just the beginning. The first step in his mind.

This technique was not the end goal. It was simply one of the ingredients that was necessary for his goal. It was simply one of the building blocks for his new technique. The fact that it helped the existing ODA system was also just a bonus at best.

He wanted to create a power accumulative technique that allowed him to surpass his long-range power limits.

('Once I create this technique, my long-range formidability will likely reach on par with that of my close-range formidability.') Rui noted.

He was never under the illusion that the Pathfinder technique alone could make his long-range prowess on par with his close-quarters combat. Yes, the technique was evaluated to be grade ten, but that did not instantly mean that his long-range combat would be on par with his short-range combat.

Pathfinder was best for assassinations. It still worked well in head-on combat but to a lesser degree. Compared to short-range where he had numerous techniques that were largely short-range, he had to admit that there was no way that he would be able to overcome those advantages with Pathfinder alone.

('But with this new technique...') Rui's eyes narrowed. He would become a genuinely well-rounded Martial Artist as far as range went. He would be effective at short-range, mid-range, and long-range.

"Time to set out on a new training phase!" He grinned. Now that he was free from Kt'obila's training, he could dedicate all that time towards the development of his own technique.

In the past three months, all of the other contracts signed between the G'ak'arkan Tribe and the Martial Union had begun. The Longranger Martial Artists had begun training more than a dozen G'ak'arkan Martial Squires, helping them learn their techniques.

As expected, the language barrier slowed down both sides, however, considering both sides understood that they stood to benefit a lot as long as it worked out, they put their patience to the test as they worked through the slow communicative process of translations.

Things had settled down in the settlement of the Martial Union as its primary purpose had already been achieved, now it only needed to function and be protected until they got what they wanted and left the island.

Rui had more or less forgotten about his role as the manager and leader of the settlement. It no longer needed him, as the administrative work that needed to be completed was delegated to qualified personnel who were capable of handling the workload.

He secluded himself in one of the larger long-range open training facilities.

('Alright,') He thought to himself meditating. ('New project. Project goal? To create a technique that increases my long-range offensive power limit significantly via the help of constructive superposition through sonic projectiles of different speeds.')

This was easier said than done. The classical wave theory, while simpler than the quantum wave theory, was not a particularly easy thing to apply in combat.

('I don't think it will be more difficult than the ODA system,') Rui noted. ('But it certainly will require an immense amount of mastery. I first need to begin by establishing the conditions needed to ensure constructive resonance occurs between, say, two sonic projectiles of different speeds.')

The constructive resonance between two waves occurred when the crests and troughs of two waves occupying the same points in space at any given time, were overlapping. The two waves would merge and form into a single stronger wave with crests and troughs much greater than the two constituent waves.

('Essentially, I need to ensure that the two waves are always in phase.') Rui noted. ('They need to have the same frequency, and their initial angular phase difference must be a whole number factor of pi, also...')

Essentially, Rui was simply establishing the conditional equations that needed to be fulfilled for two waves of different speeds moving in the same direction to superimpose constructively.

Waves like sound waves were generally described by simple harmonic equations where the 'height' of crests and troughs were defined by sinusoidal functions. He needed to only equalize the simple harmonic wave equations of all the sound projectiles and he would gain the conditions that needed to be fulfilled for the two waves to be in phase.

If he could do that, that was most of the work.

He would gain the launch conditions for each of the sound projectiles and then he could simply use a standardized timing every time. Once he figured out how constructive superimpose a single time, he simply needed to memorize that particular timing and placement and it would work every time.

This was one of the convenient aspects of this hypothetical technique. Unlike the ODA system, this technique would be more static. With the ODA system, every Pathfinder shot was unique and needed the ODA system to be run every single time. With the technique of this project, he just needed to find the launch conditions for constructive superposition once, and he could simply memorize it and would never have to calculate it ever again.

('The mental burden is much less than the ODA system in that regard. Every time I use it would be the same as every other time, whereas no two ODA system outputs are the same. Every situation is unique, and it needs to be executed every single time I use the Pathfinder.')

This was good because he was seriously starting to reach his limits with mental processing systems, for now. He already needed to use the VOID algorithm and the ODA system. If he needed to use a third system every time he used this technique, his mind would explode with the sheer amount of calculations, Mind Palace or not.

('Find the launch conditions to create two sound projectiles in phase with each other, and then memorize those launch conditions and burn them into my blood, because I never have to use other launch conditions again') Rui nodded as he came up with the plan for the new project.

('What should this project be called...?') He wondered as he gave it a few seconds of thought. (Project Wavestack... Good enough.)

With that trivial issue out of the way, he began delving into it immediately.

The math was not difficult. Constructive superposition in simple harmonic waves was a topic that was taught in high school and college. The challenging part was fulfilling the conditions.

The frequency needed to be similar, ideally identical, otherwise the constructive resonance grew increasingly inefficient mechanically and would result in the loss of a lot of energy.

('Which means I need to be wary of the 'pitch' of my Mighty Roar Flash Blast projectiles and of my Sonic Bullet projectiles. I need to ensure the pitch of my voice is the same in both cases, I cannot have them be different.') Rui scratched his head.

He had never been a good singer, due to his asthma, but even taking that into account he was quite bad. He was nearly tone-deaf, thus learning to match the pitches of the techniques that were quite different and were executed differently was going to be very difficult.

Furthermore, the frequency of both those attacks was deep in the ultrasonic range due to the high energy density of the projectile, thus he couldn't even hear whether the frequencies were the same. His hearing range had improved far beyond that of a normal human when he obtained his Martial body, but still, it was not enough for such powerful techniques.

('This is going to be brutal.')

Chapter 728: Indicator

Unfortunately, due to his lack of ability to be able to objectively measure the frequency of the sound that he produced, he would need to rely on trial and error to a large degree. Furthermore, unlike when he was creating the Flux Earther technique, it would be much more difficult to observe the success or failure of his trial-and-error method.

Since the technique involved constructive superposition of two sound projectiles, he would necessarily need to release two sound projectiles of different speeds.

The first projectile would be the Sonic Bullet technique which moved at the speed of sound, and the second technique would be the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique, which moved faster than the speed of sound. He would need to use both those techniques and ensure that he timed and placed them and ensured that they were in phase with each other such that they would engage in constructive superposition.

The difficult part was ensuring they would be launched in phase with each other. Because he had no way to ensure that they would have the same frequency, he was at an impasse.

He glanced at the large target barrier more than five hundred meters away.

The barrier wall was made up of Apprentice-level materials, however, they had been extensively engineered with the right kind and mix of esoteric substances that they could withstand even the power of Martial Squires.

Rui had wondered why they couldn't apply such a methodology to weapons to create even stronger weapons that allowed them to be more ubiquitous but thinking about it, he could come up with a rather straightforward answer.

Weapons needed to be strong enough such that even if the power of the wielder was focused across a millimeter square of its surface area, it would not break. It needed to be so strong that every millimeter square of the weapon was individually capable of withstanding the full power of the wielder focused on it, without breaking.

When blades clashed with each other, only such a tiny amount of the blade ends up bearing the primary brunt of both the wielder and the opponent. If it every millimeter of a sword's tensile strength did not greatly exceed that of the user, it was an unfit weapon.

With human-level weapons, it was easy to ensure this was true. No ordinary human could ever break the edge of a sword made with steel alloys no matter how strong their muscles were. The difference between the tensile strength of steel and the muscular strength of swords was like that of the sky and land. It was a large gap. That was why humans could fight with full power without having to worry about breaking their weapons with their own power due to this big gap.

It became increasingly difficult to maintain this same gap for Martial Artists.

This same rationale did not apply to larger structures. With larger structures disproportionately greater than the human body in size, all forms of esoteric materialistic engineering of different esoteric resources could be employed to ensure that these structures could withstand punishment from powerful Martial Artists.

He found it to be an interesting albeit irrelevant detail.

('As long as it fulfills my needs, I am fine,') He mused.

He took his stance before opening his mouth.

THWOOM!

He closed his mouth after having shot a Sonic Bullet, preparing the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique rapidly after.

THWOOM!

The latter trailed three meters behind the former, rapidly catching up to it due to being faster than it.

Soon the two sound projectiles overlapped with each other.

BOOM!

A wind blast emerged from the union of the two projectiles, causing a huge gale.

('Hmph, they were completely out of phase, causing destructive superposition,') He sighed.

And the problem was, as predicted, different frequencies.

('This time, same pitch,')

THWOOM!

THWOOM!

BOOM!

A huge wind blast emerged once again.

The reason the explosion was violent was because the crests of the wave were meeting the troughs. The waves were oscillating in opposite directions when they touched, which basically meant that they were directly crashing into each other, and the molecules of the air were blown away.

That was what caused the violent dispersion of air.

('Wait, can't I judge the degree to which there exists a difference in frequency between the two projectiles based on how violent the superposition is?') Rui realized.

The more violent the blast, the more the waves were out of phase. The less violent it was, the more they were in phase. If they weren't violent and formed a single projectile, then that would be a sign of success; that they were in phase with each other.

He felt better. After all, he had come up with an objective way of measuring the degree to which the two waves were out of phase with each other.

Now he just needed to do it over and over until he learned via muscle memory how to get it right. It was sheer and raw experience needed to master the frequency equalization of the technique and nothing else.

Still, his job wouldn't be over once he mastered just constructive resonance between two sound projectiles. He wanted to learn how to accomplish it between three, and perhaps even four and five.

Of course, he highly doubted that the latter two would be viable in most combat. At most, if he ever happened to be put in a situation where he needs five times the singular offensive power of his strongest attack that he possesses at the moment, then he would be able to muster it up.

In the right circumstances, he could potentially end up outputting power that was on par with Martial Squires who were several grades above him.

('Now wouldn't that be one hell of a technique that the Martial Union would love to get their hands on?') Rui smirked with anticipation. He wondered what Senior Ceeran would think when he learned of this technique that Rui was working on, given his fascination for new techniques!

Chapter 729: Kane

Kane yawned as he reclined back in his housing quarters. It had been half a year since he had been deployed to the G'ak'arkan Tribe. He had been deployed on many espionage and infiltration missions on the G'ak'arkan Tribe and the K'ulnen Tribe.

Against the G'ak'arkan Tribe, he mostly had to gather as much information on their movements as much as possible.

Prior to the success of the mission, every ounce of information mattered when it came to adjusting and optimizing their approach and plans surrounding this mission. After that, he spent most of his time gathering information on the K'ulnen Tribe before and during the war with them.

However, that too ended.

Once the diplomatic mission with the G'ak'arkan Tribe succeeded, his job was more or less completed for the time being. Rui quickly ensured that the negotiations with the G'ak'arkan Tribe were successful as both sides managed to come to agreements and trades that were satisfactory and fair to both sides.

Now, he didn't really need to be there. In fact, most of the intelligence team, both agents and Martial Artists had immediately taken the opportunity to return back home once the bulk of their mission had been completed.

Not Kane, though.

Kane had adamantly chosen to remain on the island, he had no intention of going back home too early.

There were two reasons, firstly, he had reason to stay away from the Kandrian Empire. The further away from his family he was, the better it was for him. As Kane's Martial prowess grew, he only became more valuable to his family. Even if his Martial Path was different from that of many of the Martial Artists in his family, having him would increase the power of his family. The many more influential members of his family were not content letting him go.

One thing he found a little odd was the fact that his father never made an effort to bring him back directly.

It was strange.

The man was a Martial Sage, someone who had reached one of the highest Realms of the Martial Path. He had the power, both Martial and political, to drag Kane back without caring about the consequences. While the Wind and consequently the Lightning Sect were willing to protect him from the Fire Sect, it was a different matter if his father acted personally in the capacity of a father rather than as a Sect leader.

Kane knew that he was far from worth the political capital that would need to be spent to protect him from a Martial Sage that personally sought him out. Sage Viranaka, the leader of the Lightning Sect, would need to personally act for Kane to be protected.

And there was no way that was happening.

('Still, it's good to be far away from them.') Kane nodded to himself.

The second reason was that Rui was here. Although they didn't as much time hanging out together as they would have liked to. After all, Rui had become the manager of the settlement of the Martial Union and the highest in the chain of command. He had a lot of duties that had him busy.

Even when he wasn't working he was training. Once the deals succeeded, he shifted to full-time training. Spending his time isolated in one of the training facilities in the settlement.

('He's definitely found something new to pursue with his Martial Art,') Kane smiled.

He knew his friend well.

Suddenly, he got up from his bed and leaped to his feet. He wanted to visit him, perhaps it may not be the best time. But it was fine to try regardless.

"Have you seen Rui?" He asked one of Rui's assistants.

"Ah, he's in training facility fourteen sir," Stemple bowed with respect.

"Thanks,"

('Fourteen... That's that super long one for long-range techniques...') Kane noted.

Most of the training facilities in the settlement were centered around long-range techniques. After all, the settlement was loaded with long-range Martial Artists. They had to cater to the majority, and also they needed the training resources that were necessary for learning the Martial Union's techniques for training the G'ak'arkan Tribe in the promised techniques.

('He must be training some new long-range technique that he's cooked up,') Kane concluded.

He had no doubt that Rui was working on something significant. He recalled when he first saw Rui killing a Martial Squire with a single attack from a huge distance away. Martial Squires weren't supposed to be capable of such feats.

BOOM!!

He grew startled when he reached the entrance of the facility, a huge gust of wind washed over him following a loud explosion.

('What in the world?') He sky-walked to get a good look into the open facility.

BOOM!!

His eyes widened as he saw Rui making strange fish-like mouth movements rapidly before a huge boom followed.

('Was his long-range offense that strong?') Kane frowned.

No, that couldn't be the case. He had seen Rui's attacks from range and while they were decent for his grade, this attack was much stronger. At least twice as strong as before!

('Is this the technique that he learned from the G'ak'arkan Tribe?') Kane considered it for a moment before shaking his head. ('He wouldn't use techniques created by others without adding his own individuality to it...')

But that made what he was seeing even more impressive. Rui had managed to rapidly create a powerful technique that allowed him to grow this much stronger already.

Kane landed at the edge of the range far behind Rui.

He watched as Rui launched more attacks one after the other, celebrating or cursing alternatively.

It was a while before Rui finally heaved a sigh before turning around to leave.

"Woah!" Rui's head jerked back when he spotted Kane. "Since when were you there?"

"For a while now," Kane yawned. "I'm surprised you didn't even notice me."

"Ah sorry," Rui laughed. "I lose track of my surroundings when I train, tend to get sucked into it, especially if I'm enjoying it,"

Chapter 730: Plans

Rui was pleasantly surprised to see Kane. He didn't have anybody else he could consider a friend in the settlement. Stemple and Zeyra were firmly assistants and no more, and Senior Ceeran was a friendly Senior benefactor with mutual interests.

He could not talk to anybody else too casually given his position in the settlement. Kane, on the other hand, had not changed his interactions with Rui even the tiniest bit. This was something that Rui appreciated.

"So, what was that technique you were using?" Kane asked with a curious expression.

Rui would have been more opaque and vague had anybody else asked, but he had no compunctions about being honest with Kane.

"It's a technique where I combine multiple attacks into a single much stronger one," Rui explained briefly, yet Kane's head cocked back a bit.

"I've never heard of a technique like that before," Kane frowned "Wouldn't that mean you can surpass your limits greatly to match much higher grade offense?"

"No, unfortunately," Rui grimaced briefly.

In the past few months, Rui had only come to master double superposition. It was an accomplishment he was very proud of, of course. Still, it wasn't the limit of what he wanted to accomplish. He wanted to be able to extend to a higher number of attacks stacking into a single attack.

He had been attempting a threefold superposition in his training, but it blasted violently more than half the time. He hadn't yet memorized the correct timing as he had with the two-fold superposition.

It took time, effort, and experience to slowly get better at nailing the timing. If not for the fact that he had been solving equations to help him achieve proper constructive superposition, he would have taken forever to reach where he had.

"It has many limitations," Rui sighed. "I won't be able to match high-grade Martial Squires just yet, at most I would struggle to keep up."

"Why's that?" Kane frowned. "That attack just now looked really strong."

"It's because I need to launch two attacks to form that one attack, while a high-grade long-range Martial Artist needs to launch only one attack to achieve that level of power. They can fire far more strikes of that level of power in a period of time than I can."

"Ah, that makes sense," Kane nodded. "You really have been into long-range stuff recently, haven't you?"

"I suppose I have." Rui shrugged.

It couldn't be helped, soon after creating the Pathfinder technique, he was thrown into a mission to which long-range Martial Art techniques were highly relevant.

"Hehe... Do you plan to become a long-range Martial Artist?" Kane teased him.

"Hah. No," Rui shook his head, snorting. "I will always strive to maintain my balance as an all-rounder. Once this mission is over, I will go for new projects that balance me out as a Martial Artist even more."

He had been becoming increasingly long-range in his Martial Art inclination. When he got back to the Kandrian Empire, he intended to fix that problem immediately. He even had some consideration for how to go about it.

The two conversed for some more time.

"Glad to hear that some of our Martial Squires have mastered the techniques of the G'ak'arkan Tribe," He said.

In the past six months since the deals had been signed, many of the Martial Squires had finally mastered the techniques that they were sent to obtain. Now they were simply in the process of 'giving' those techniques to the Martial Union by allowing the Martial Union to thoroughly test the techniques through and through, while also having them train the basics to several other Martial Squires.

Rui had to go through this for a brief period as well.

It was necessary to allow the Martial Union to get their hands on the technique while also having a few more Martial Squires learn the core of the training regimes so that the Martial Union could gain the full ability to spread the technique to other Martial Artists when needed.

That was how it ensured that a technique never died. By trying to ensure that they spread.

Of course, this wasn't always possible such as with grade-ten difficulty techniques that could be propagated. The Martial Union had no choice but to make do with what they had, at least, they had to strive to ensure that it wouldn't happen with other techniques.

"Which means that we'll be leaving soon..." Kane said with a mixed tone.

On one hand, he did appreciate being far from his family.

On the other hand, he also felt bored staying on the island.

"Don't look so sullen," Rui tutted. "I know you want to stay away from the Kandrian Empire, but there are other ways to do that you know, other missions. For example, I heard that a new dungeon had opened months ago. Maybe you could choose to head there."

Kane considered the suggestion. "That's not bad, though dungeons are not my specialty."

"This one is different from Apprentice-level dungeons that humans can enter and colonize like the Serevian Dungeon." Rui shook his head. "It poses too much mental pressure on ordinary humans due to its danger, thus it cannot be colonized by humans. The only ones who may enter it are... Martial Squires."

Kane's interest was piqued. If only Martial Squires could enter, then that served as a much greater degree of security than if all Realms of Martial Artists could enter.

It meant that his family was extremely restricted in what they could do if they randomly decided to use a forceful method with him.

"Also... The Martial Union won't be deploying external Martial Artists like us," Rui smirked. "You know what that means?"

"What?" Kane gave him a wary glance.

"It means that you and I would have greater freedom in how we choose to go about that mission," Rui grinned. "It's a rare chance. We don't have to follow the annoying protocols and other shit that we have to deal with missions. We can jump in, and retrieve treasure by ourselves!"