

## Martial Unity 971

### Chapter 971: Arrival

Rui and Kane grew increasingly closer to the Uminana Trench they were able to sense it better, it wasn't too long before they actually drew close enough to perceive the entirety of the diameter of the Uminana Trench.

"What the hell..." Kane murmured as his jaw dropped at the staggering diameter of the Uminana Trench. "There is no way one Martial Artist did this by herself. No shot."

"It's even wider than the Shionel Dungeon!" Rui exclaimed as he grinned, awed at the size of the trench.

They were still a good distance away, and even with their evolved vision, it was difficult to make out any individual Martial Artists. At the distance they were, the Uminana Trench looked quite bizarre to the eye. It was as if the ocean itself was hesitant to move in and occupy an empty hole. It took a few steps forward in some regions but immediately walked away like it was scared. The waves seemingly danced back and forth onto the land and away, as though the trench and ocean were salsa dancing.

It was a truly bewildering sight to Rui, reinforcing how bizarre and exotic this world was compared to Earth.

"Woah... You can see the Martial Artists at the edge of the trench if you look hard enough now," Kane peered.

"Indeed," Rui nodded, he glanced around at the ocean that they were sky-walking across at high speeds. "All the ships veer off a good distance away from the trench."

He figured that ships in this ocean were equipped with the means to sense and locate the trench and be able to navigate around it. It was probably common practice and protocol for the coastal nations in and around the ocean.

As Rui and Kane got closer to the trench, they realized that they had underestimated how much infrastructure had been developed in the patch of land of the Uminana Trench. It seemed that they were truly confident in their ability to intent to keep the Uminana Trench. If the ocean ever overwhelmed the

Martial Artists keeping it at bay, then all of the infrastructure would certainly be flattened by the incoming tsunami.

Rui paid attention to the Martial Artists who were using their Martial Art techniques to keep the ocean at bay. He realized that he had underestimated how many Martial Artists partook in the resistance against the ocean.

Tens of thousands of Martial Artists of different Realms all came together in one place and use their Martial Art to keep the wave at bay in shifts.

The Martial Artists seemed to be segregated by Realm, grouping Martial Apprentices together, while Martial Squires and Seniors were also grouped together away from each other. What surprised him was that there also seemed to be a group of Martial Masters as well.

Despite being exponentially fewer than the Martial Artists of the other Realms in number, their contributions were even greater as a group compared to any other group, given that they covered more area than any other group.

The distance between them and the trench had reduced to the point that Rui could see the many Martial Artists constantly entering and leaving. The flux was immense and immensely chaotic.

"So what do we do from here?" Kane asked. "I'm guessing we gotta go visit the Trench Surveillance Force or whatever that guy told us about?"

"Yeah," Rui nodded. "We need to purchase training slots."

"You know..." Kane scratched his head. "I think I'll sit this one out."

Rui raised an eyebrow. "You're not gonna be participating in the training?"

"What can I say?" Kane shrugged. "Offense-oriented techniques have never been my strong suit and I'm not interested in subjecting myself to the rigors of trying to push back this wave."

"You'll never be able to grow stronger if you don't push yourself, Kane," Rui reminded him.

"I'm an evasive maneuverer," Kane complained. "I'll take on training that is to my field of expertise. Right now, my power is at the bottom of the Squire Realm, I'm just not suited."

"You could take on multiple Apprentice-level slots if you're not confident to handle Squire-level spaces," Rui smirked with a teasing tone.

"That's too embarrassing!"

The two of them crossed the boundary between ocean and trench as they swiftly headed to the large town at the center of the trench, carefully avoiding the many Martial Artists sky-walking to and from it.

"The town is so much smaller than the trench," Kane remarked.

"It's by design," Rui replied. "It's not worth making it any larger."

After all, they were currently situated far from a safe space where there were no threats. A town was the limit of what they could invest into the trench, and only because it was necessary to handle the training industry that had formed centering the Umiana Trench.

On top of that, Rui knew that Martial Artists like himself were best given the space they needed. It was unwise to keep any infrastructure around training Martial Artists.

STEP

"Hm," Rui grew interested in the bedrock of the Umiana Trench. "This is artificial."

He examined the ground.

"What makes you say that?" Kane raised an eyebrow as he landed beside him.

"The bedrock is far too porous," Rui replied. "It's not something that would you see at the bottom of the ocean."

Kane frowned. "But why would they do that?"

"Probably to reduce the impact of the return of the ocean if it ever does reclaim the Umiana Trench, I'd imagine," Rui shrugged.

"That makes sense," Kane nodded.

The two of them turned back to look at the wall of the ocean being kept at bay.

"It's a lot less magical when you see what's happening up close," Kane remarked, shrugging.

It was nothing more than tons of Martial Artists hitting the water with their best techniques.

"Come on," Rui headed towards the Umiana Town. "I want to see what the registration is like. I'm curious as to how they go about giving away slots."

## Chapter 972: Measure

The two of them quickly reached Umiana Town, and neither of them was surprised at how busy the town was. After all, as large as the town was, they needed to be able to accommodate many Martial Artists.

Both Rui and Kane felt a lot more stiff and on guard naturally. They were surrounded by Martial Artists in all directions, they felt a lot less safe and secure than they normally did as Martial Squires.

The sense of security that came with being Martial Squires was comfortable and was something that they had grown quite comfortable with for quite some time. Now, suddenly, they were essentially reduced to normal humans walking in a normally populated area.

Still, it wasn't as though either of them were particularly worried about anything. The town signs constantly prohibited violence, which was stated to be punishable by death.

No Martial Artist was interested in testing the resolve of the Trench Surveillance Force to uplift the law. Thus, the Martial Artists made sure to keep some distance from each other, unwilling to get into any sort of conflict that could set the Trench Surveillance Force on them.

They knew that they would probably not be able to get away given that the Trench Surveillance Force was comprised of the Martial Artists of all the coastal nations of the entire ocean. Rui highly doubted whether even Martial MAs would be able to get away with breaking the rules.

The town was quite large, and a whopping half of it was comprised of offices belonging to the Trench Surveillance Force. Each office accommodated and handled transactions with the Martial Artists' surrounding training with the ocean.

Each office had a line too, much to Rui's dismay.

The rest of the town served as housing accommodations and infrastructure for other basic necessities. They were essentially incentivizing Martial Artists to stick around rather than return back to whatever nation that they were currently residing in. It was a lot more convenient to be nearby their training locations.

However, the housing infrastructure was built with pure necessity and need in mind. It left much to be desired as far as luxury went. Furthermore, with the senses that Martial Artists possessed, privacy was simply not a thing.

"It's fine, we can make do," Rui shrugged as he entered one of the offices, immediately, he ran into a set of instructions written on a board on the wall behind the registration counter.

('You have to have your power evaluated before you purchase a slot, eh?') Rui's eyes lit up with interest.

It made sense. The size of the area of the ocean they were assigned to as a training area could not exceed the Martial Artist's capabilities, otherwise, the ocean would recede. Thus, it was prudent to

measure the capabilities of each individual Martial Artist and ensure that they didn't take on more than they could chew.

There was another thing of note as well.

"Ha, you need to purchase a training slot in order to get a room," Rui chuckled. "You're out of luck it seems."

"Aw man," Kane's shoulder drooped. "Alright alright, fine. I'll take part."

The two of them made their way over to the evaluation facilities, waiting for quite some time before they finally got their turn.

"Please take this numbered token," The employee offered them a badge each. "You can demonstrate any offensive technique of your choice against the target wall at any range. If you're unable to maintain a uniform output, then your attempt will be registered as invalid, and you'll have to go back to the line."

She gestured towards the other end of the evaluation facility.

Rui could immediately tell that the barrier on the other end was esoteric ore technology that was made out of some esoteric alloy that could probably withstand anything within the Squire Realm. It probably relied on the measuring of spring compression to gauge the force exerted.

"Please go ahead," The staff employee requested him.

Rui briefly considered what technique to use. Given that he needed to be able to maintain it, he definitely couldn't go for his most powerful attacks. None of them were attacks that he could continuously spam, let alone spam for longer periods of time.

He decided to stick with a more grounded and easier technique.

He took a stance, bracing himself as he inhaled deeply.

THWOOM!

BAM!!!

The Mighty Roar Flash Blast Technique slammed into the target barrier, forcing it back by about ten meters.

Immediately, a number of measuring the force units appeared on the terminal that the staff immediately fiddled and typed about.

Rui noted the resultant number, and thanks to his exposure to the foundations of a theoretical science of the Panama Continent, he recognized the units of force being used.

('About nine million tons of weight, give or take,') Rui instantly calculated exactly how impressive his attack was in units. ('Not bad,')

"Now, please demonstrate your ability to maintain uniformity," She requested him.

Rui inhaled once more, before firing off the Mighty Roar Flash Blast consecutively one after the other.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM...!

"Confirmed," She nodded. "You have been evaluated. You are now eligible to purchase a grade-six training slot."

Rui did not mind the grading too much, he knew that it was different from the grading technique that the Martial Union used for techniques, Martial Art, and techniques. It probably meant that his continuous uniform offensive power was in the middle. This wasn't bad given that he wasn't a specialist in that regard.

"Your turn," Rui gestured as Kane heaved a sullen sigh.

He didn't possess a single long-range technique, thus he needed to be near the barrier in order to try.

BAM BAM BAM!

He relied on a basic striking technique.

"Grade-one training slot," She confirmed Rui's suspicions.

"Damn," Kane murmured.

"It's fine," Rui reassured him. "Offensive power isn't your Martial Path, as you said. And this is an opportunity to grow stronger. It's not good to neglect one of the broadest and most fundamental fields of combat."

Chapter 973: Framework

Once the two of them had their evaluations done, Rui abstained from heading to purchase a training slot.

"You're not going to train?" Kane asked, frowning. "What was the whole point of getting that evaluation done?"

"I don't just want to jump into training for the sake of training," Rui told him. "I do intend to use this training opportunity to hone existing techniques, don't get me wrong. Sharpening the use of my existing tools is definitely important. There was an incredibly wise and awesome martial artist who once said 'I fear not the man who has practiced ten thousand kicks once, but the man who has practiced one kick ten thousand times.'"

"Ok..." Kane scratched his head. "So what's holding you back?"



"I would like to take this opportunity to accomplish more than just honing my existing techniques," Rui replied. "I would like to take this opportunity to learn something new."

Kane looked at him with raised eyebrows. "You intend to create a new technique? Here?"

"Sure," Rui nodded. "You shouldn't waste opportunities to explore your Martial Art."

"How are you even going to come up with techniques without training resources?"

"I've done it before," Rui shrugged.

"You took like half a year with training resources and my help for learning the Godspeed technique," Kane pointed out.

"True, but the Godspeed technique is grade-ten," Rui reminded him. "Not every technique needs to be grade ten."

"That is true," Kane admitted.

Rui had created multiple grade-ten techniques, and each of them was a hassle. They were huge projects of great difficulty and none of them were simple. Rui did not think that engaging in such a project was possible in these circumstances. Furthermore, he didn't want to get dragged up into a mindset where he thought that techniques other than grade-ten techniques were worthless.

This simply wasn't true. The grade-ten technique certainly granted the user prowess above the conventional limits of the Squire Realm in some way or the other, without a doubt. However, they usually came with drawbacks and requirements that other techniques did not have. They also had grade-ten difficulty in mastery and utility, which meant that they were taxing to use.

Furthermore, most of his combat prowess came from more normal, albeit still high-grade Squire-level techniques that he had learned over time. If he had to choose between his more ordinary techniques and grade-ten techniques, he would choose the former. They were the ones that he used the most and the ones that constituted his normal fighting style.

"You go on ahead," Rui told Kane. "I have some things to figure out."

Kane nodded. "See you,"

Once Kane left, Rui introspected. What kind of technique could he look into creating today?

('Obviously, it has to be an offensive technique,') Rui mused.

The next thing he had to figure out was whether he ought to create a long-range technique or a close-range technique.

('I have enough long-range technique unless I'm working on a brand-new concept that will give me an edge that my other techniques cannot, it's just not worth pursuing at the moment,') He shook his head inwardly.

It had been a while since he developed a short-range technique. The Forestep technique ended up being a supplementary technique that was applicable to techniques of all ranges. Thankfully, he had already gotten a concept in mind from his time in the Shionel Dungeon. He had gotten inspiration for many techniques in the Shionel Dungeon. He hadn't had time to realize them in his previous training arc, after all, he was focused on creating the Forestep technique that allowed him to deal with the Root, but even that battle had given him inspiration for new techniques.

It was just that he didn't have any time to consider the potential techniques that he had come up with ideas for. Immediately after the fight ended, he had been focused on not dying, and once he finally healed, he noticed the escape of one of the Martial Squires. Only now, several days later, had he had the chance to think about new techniques.

He recalled the time in his fight against the Root when he used the Flux Earther technique partially to aid his evasion of the Root. By converting the kinetic energy of the Root's attacks into the kinetic energy of his own body in an elastic collision, he could use the Root's kinetic energy to propel him forward.

That had him wondering about something.

('Can I use my attacks to propel my opponents away instead of hurting them using the same mechanics?') Rui wondered.

In his mind, he imagine launching a powerful attack at his opponent, but instead of hurting them, he instantly sent them dashing away at extremely high speeds like a rocket. Normally, he would be inclined to just hurt them with his attack rather than launch them away, but there were circumstances where he couldn't afford to waste time dealing with them, it was convenient to be able to simply get rid of them, giving him a chance to disengage and get away from them.

('It would also be useful in this situation,') Rui glanced toward the ocean that the Martial Artists were keeping at bay. It would be perfect if he could create a technique that used his power and efficiently converted it into kinetic energy for the water of the waves, exclusively propelling them backward.

In fact, if successful, he suspected that he would be extremely effective at dispelling the water of the incoming ocean. After all, he would be efficiently converting all his power into momentum for the ocean water in the opposite direction. While other techniques would have to rely on inelastic collisions with water where the transfer of power was inefficient and ineffective.

Rui grew excited at the prospect of it, now all he needed to do was come up with the mechanics of the technique and iron out the theoretical framework of the technique until it was ready to be applied in practice for the ocean.

#### Chapter 974: Disperse

He quickly began formulating the framework of the technique. Thankfully, he was already equipped with everything he needed to know for the technique. If it was just an inverse of the partial Flux Earther technique, then he probably didn't need to learn any new techniques or principles, he just needed to apply what he could already do and do it well.

('I use my intercept attacks elastically in the Flux Earther technique,') Rui noted. ('I transfer power across all my body in the manner that I distribute it across my body by applying a principle from the Inner Divergence technique.')

The Inner Divergence technique was a defensive technique that he used to use before he created the Flux Earther technique. It was weaker, but it was also a little easier to use and apply.

('The question is how I uniformly distribute the kinetic energy transferred from an elastic collision across the entire body,') Rui wondered as he considered a number of potential solutions.

The issue he was currently faced with was the fact that even if he used his arm to try and slowly pass the energy throughout the entire body of his opponent to universally accelerate every inch of it, the fact of the matter was that his palm was going to be applying force to the outer flesh of the body first, this would cause damage before it would accelerate the entire body. He simply could not accelerate the entirety of the body simultaneously.

('...Unless I have a way to permeate the impact past the exterior layer,') Rui's eyes widened as a simple idea passed through his head. ('I can simply use the Reverberating Lance to pass the impact throughout the entire body as opposed to permeating it in one direction to do damage on my opponent or target.')

That meant that he needed to avoid hurting them in order to get this technique to work. Reverberating Lance worked by permeating a greater proportion, than normal, of an impact through the tough flesh, muscles, and bones into the more vulnerable internal organ systems of the body to cause more damage.

However, this technique usually had one target as far as the permeation went. The internal organ systems of the body were the target of the body. If he instead increased the scope of the technique to include the entirety of the body, then he would be able to permeate the force of the technique across the entirety of the body, and thus accelerate all of it seamlessly without actually hurting the target.

It may seem a bit silly to actively ensure that you don't hurt the target, but if he did try to hurt the target, it would reduce the acceleration. He had a limited amount of energy, and he couldn't do one to its very best if he also tried doing the other. He already had a technique for hurting people using vibrations, thus this technique was something he decided would be solely focused on the displacement of the target instead of harm.

He was already convinced that the technique was extremely viable, there was no question about that. What he was not entirely sure was about how effective it would be against the ocean. He narrowed his eyes as recalled the fluid dynamics and waves that he studied in his younger days back on Earth in college. The speed of transmission of vibrations through a particular medium depended on the elasticity of the medium, which water certainly wasn't lacking. The issue was that ocean water was not

molecularly bound as a whole in the way that a Martial Artist's body was. That meant that there was no way to know whether his ability would work the way he intended to.

For one, it would be difficult to make water disperse in the same direction since it wasn't bound together like an object.

('Then again, that doesn't matter in this case, I suppose,') Rui shrugged.

In this case, as long as the water didn't cross a certain boundary, it didn't matter, Rui supposed. They didn't care about anything else.

He closed his eyes as he pictured the implementation of the Reverberating Lance technique to disperse the impact across the entire body of the target. He needed to make sure to understand what that felt like.

The original Reverberating Lance technique was not meant to be used to disperse an impact across the entirety of the body uniformly, diluting it in the process. It was meant to be focused permeation to ensure that the vibrations did more damage to the internal organs. He couldn't just use the same principle in this particular training session, otherwise, only a tiny portion of the water would be dispersed to an extreme degree while most of the water would make it past him.

Even in the Flux Earth technique, he didn't bother dispersing the kinetic energy that he had absorbed in width, but depth.

In this case, he needed to distribute the impact in all three dimensions.

As much as he wanted to use the ocean for testing, he knew that he ought not to. Testing usually involved failure, and failure was unacceptable in this particular case.

('I should make sure all the major problems are out of the way before I get to the training session... but unfortunately, I can't rent housing if I don't book a training slot,') Rui sighed. ('Guess I'll have to skip to the training, I hope I'm not wrong. It would be quite awkward if I failed to hold it back on my first try.')

He wasn't too concerned though. With Forestep, even if the technique failed he would be able to salvage it in time by using the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique. Given how fast it was, it should be able to fix his problems in time.

He immediately headed towards one of the offices to purchase a training slot. He was pleased to know that he didn't need to register his identity to the Trench Surveillance Force.

#### Chapter 975: Record

The number that he had been given in the evaluation facility corresponded with the force evaluation of his technique.

"You may purchase at most a grade-six Squire-level slot," The staff member informed him. "That corresponds to a section of the ocean roughly fifteen meters wide. Once you begin training you are responsible for ensuring the section of the ocean that you're tasked with keeping at bay does not cross a certain boundary, you will be held liable, and you will be required to pay a fee for every time this occurs. Please sign this statement if you agree to the terms and conditions."

Rui nodded as he quickly signed before receiving a token indicating the grade number.

"Head to the Squire-level section of the Trench," She instructed him. "The section manager and support staff will help you."

It wasn't long before he reached where he was supposed to be.

Great gusts of wind came his way, the roaring ocean atop that made for a jarringly chaotic environment. It was quite novel and exciting, but it was also strangely unnerving given that there were stakes at hand. The ocean levels receding would be quite disastrous for all coastal nations.

It wasn't long before he ran into crews of normal humans wearing full-body armour. Rui could immediately sense that the armor that they were wearing was comprised of Apprentice-level esoteric alloys. Given that they were normal humans, they were putting a lot of trust in the Martial Artists holding back the ocean. Rui knew that they probably had high salaries.

"Please come this way sir," One of the staff members guided him once he showed him his slot tokens.

He guided Rui until they were just a hundred meters away from a Martial Squire. "You're to replace him, sir!"

The man felt the need to shout due to how loud the waves were, but Rui could hear him just fine.

Rui looked around as he saw an endless line of Martial Squires farther beyond the eye could see, farther beyond even what his eye could see.

"Now!"

The Martial Squire that Rui was to replace moved back after striking a section of the wave, giving Rui enough time to dash in and take his place.

He used Gale Force Breathing and Outer Convergence together as he dashed forward leaving behind powerful sonic booms in his wake.

He gathered enough momentum with his dash as he readied his palm. Mentally, he had already prepared to execute the Forestep Technique with the Mighty Roar Flash Blast Technique.

However, he had a feeling he wouldn't fail.

STEP

He had reached.

RUMBLE!

The ocean wave was right before him. It had rushed forward with tremendous speed due to the sheer pressure the ocean was propelling the water forward.

Yet Rui drove his vibrating palm forward.

SPLASH!

He vibrated his palm the maximum as he gently pushed forward and upwards to target the upper segments of the wave, pushing harder and harder. Like a spring.

BOOM!

The impact permeated through the water as the wave blew back a dozen meters behind!

Rui's eyes lit up with ecstasy as he reveled in his success.

('That has to be record time for creating a new technique!')

It wasn't perfect however, he could feel that a decent chunk of his power was not being permeated correctly. All he knew was that he had plenty of room for improvement.

('I'll iron out all the chinks in my time here!') Rui grinned.

He initially planned on ironing out all his offensive techniques, but he ultimately decided not to. He had more to gain by using this opportunity to iron out the technique that he had the least amount of refining with.

The Martial Squires practicing their techniques on the waves were quite careful, they did not want to get in each other's way and get hurt, but at the same time, they couldn't be too distant from each other, otherwise, that would leave a gap between their technique causing water to rush through the gaps.

His technique grew more refined in real time as he figured out the way in which he ought to permeate the impact across the entirety of the segments of the wave that he was assigned to. It was quite difficult to make sure that caught every part of the segment, he let slip a few giant blobs of water, but



fortunately, that wasn't an issue at all, thus he never got reprimanded for it. He realized the merit of such a training method.

It was essentially a giant training facility that could even accommodate Martial Artists of higher Realms. Rui couldn't even imagine how much the whole thing would have cost, it could easily encompass the Martial Artists of multiple nations. He wasn't entirely sure if even the gigantic revenue he made from the Shionel Dungeon would be able to fund the creation of the training facility that this trench served as a whole.

It was true that Sage Sia had caused an untold amount of suffering when she created the Umiana Trench, but it was also true that countless Martial Artists had benefited from it to this very day.

BOOM!!

He drove back the ocean wave nearly thirty meters backward.

The feat was so impressive that the Martial Artists in the vicinity couldn't help but turn their heads in his direction.

The force that Rui had demonstrated had exceeded all of their techniques combined. He was accomplishing what only grade-nine or grade-ten Martial Squires did.

Rui knew, however, that it was a matter of efficiency, his technique allowed for a highly efficient transfer of power, allowing for extraordinary results with the same amount of power that many other Martial Artists were accomplishing.

He spend quite some time blasting away at the ocean until it was finally time for him to switch with the next Martial Squire.

"Huff..." He heaved a heavy sigh as he wiped some sweat off his forehead.

"Is that the new technique?" Kane asked, waiting for him. "Because I've never seen that.

Chapter 976: Extra

"It is," Rui nodded as he gazed at his palm. "I'm glad it turned out well."

"Wait," Kane brought his hands to the temples, confused. "You created a new technique in the time period between me leaving and you purchasing a training slot?"

"More or less," Rui nodded. "Well, creating a new technique is a tad bit overselling it considering I just put together elements from certain techniques to create a new one. It wasn't that hard, honestly."

Kane just stared at him with a shocked expression. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, but he had seen that strange new palming technique that Rui had used to dispel the water.

Rui had been so successful in dispelling the wave with his little palm technique that he had drawn the attention of many Martial Artists from him. They even started to look at him differently, considering him to be stronger than he was.

Funnily enough, this was something Rui was accustomed to. He had gone through this for quite some time.

Even on his mission to Vilun Island, he had been perceived as a grade-ten Martial Squire the entire time, back then he had merely been posturing with the Mind Mask, of course. In the Shionel Confederation, he hadn't actively tried to convince people that he was a grade-ten Martial Squire, in fact, he was just trying his best in the dungeon, and his preparations had allowed for him to exceed his normal level. The Shionel Confederation had naturally become convinced that he was a grade-ten Martial Squire at a bare minimum, given many of his feats.

It didn't feel out of place when people treated him to be stronger than he really was, which was quite strange when he looked at it.

"How did your training go?" Rui asked.

Kane's expression soured. "Let's just say it wasn't the most pleasant of experiences."

Rui smiled, amused. Kane was quite averse to power-oriented striking techniques, his style generally did not utilize them, and he much preferred more lethal attacks that didn't necessarily have more power but inflicted more damage.

Such techniques were usually much harder to land or had some other shortcomings that Kane could bypass with his maneuvering techniques and techniques like Void Step.

"Don't worry," Rui assured him. "It'll do you wonders in the long run. Unlike me, you have the advantage of knowing without any shadow of a doubt what is the most effective way to shore off your weaknesses."

"I imagine that's much harder for an all-rounder like you," Kane remarked. "Having to juggle and balance so many things. Specialists like myself have it easy."

"In some ways, true," Rui nodded.

He had to admit the sheer number of things that he had to keep in mind when considering the balance of his Martial Art was definitely a lot. At this point, he had mastered so many techniques of different kinds that it was not easy to create an accurate picture in his mind about the balance between techniques.

However, he was glad that he had come up with another close-range technique. He had been concerned that his long-range offensive power from the techniques that he had gained and created in Vilun Island.

The two of them headed toward the part of the town that was meant for housing Martial Artists. Neither of them was too eager to stay in a place devoid of privacy, but they had to make do with it. Most Martial Artists did not have the ability to feel what was going on over longer distances, thus Rui could at least take some comfort in knowing that he probably was not being watched nearly as much as being noticed. He hoped there was an unspoken agreement between the Martial Squires that they wouldn't peek at each other, though he knew that there was nothing guaranteeing that.

The housing section was divided between Martial Artists of different Realms. It appeared that Martial Apprentices got small rooms that only provided them with the bare basics of needs. Martial Squires

each received a less bare room that contained additional facilities, while only Martial Seniors and Martial Masters received what could be considered luxurious.

However, he highly doubted that any Martial Artist cared. No Martial Artist that came this far came for a sightseeing vacation, everyone here was serious about training, any Martial Artist that complained about the lack of hospitality would only be making a fool of themselves.

Rui considered his progress when he finally got a chance to rest for the first time since the training.

('It's good... but I still haven't forgotten that the things I need to do for training have increased ever since my previous training phase,') Rui sighed as he thought of the technique that he had created in the Shionel Confederation. The Forestep technique was powerful be it increased the difficulty of training all techniques from there on out. The reason for that was that he needed practice and to get used to applying the Forestep technique to supplement existing techniques. This meant that even after he mastered a technique, he still needed to train further to master it with the Forestep technique.

This significantly raised the difficulty and time period needed to master techniques. If he could master new techniques in a matter of months, then perhaps from this point in, mastering techniques would take no less than a year.

This meant that if he wanted to master ten new techniques, this endeavor might end up taking a decade to achieve.

He wondered if similar circumstances were among the reason that Martial Artists of higher Realms took longer to develop their Martial Art than Martial Apprentices and Martial Squires did. Sage Sia, the Martial Sage who created the Umiana Trench, spent two decades creating a technique. He knew that Senior Ceeran had spent quite a lot of time developing his Martial Art as well.

Perhaps the Squire Realm was the last Realm at which he could speedily develop a technique in a single day.

('I sure hope not...')

## Chapter 977: Warning

The next day, Rui and Kane got back to training early in the morning at full force after quickly freshening up. The two of them were exhausted enough to fall asleep despite the roaring ocean many kilometers away on account of their exhaustion.

Even for Martial Artists of the same Realm, the weaker ones were divided from the stronger ones. It was too risky to put grade-one Martial Squires near grade-ten Martial Squires, the probability of the latter affecting the former was too low. It could result in the former being hampered, causing the ocean to leak through.

That was why Rui and Kane were far from each other when they were training it was also why Rui was increasingly no longer fitting where he was supposed to fit.

He closed his eyes, before activating the Godspeed breathing technique.

**BOOM!**

The sheer amount of mass that he exhaled quickly dispersed into the atmosphere due to the pressure difference. He opened his eyes as he came face-to-face with an ocean wave. The speed of the ocean wave was not to be underestimated, any ordinary human would instantly be swept up before they could even react. High-grade Martial Apprentices could react to it as long as they were alert. However, it was still very slow in the eyes of Martial Artists like Rui who had reached a stage where they could think in a millisecond.

He activated Forestep, executing pre-programmed movements with absolutely thoughtless reflexes back-to-back. The Forestep movements activated the Palming technique that he had come up with.

**BOOM!!!**

Blinding fast movements tore a twenty-meter wide corridor before him extending for quite some distance!

The vibrations conveyed the force generated by the sheer acceleration of the Forestep technique across the entirety of the incoming ocean, dispersing them backward with a remarkable impact.

The sheer ravine that Rui resultantly generated surpassed anything that any of the nearby Martial Artists generated.

The ocean instantly filled up the ravine from all directions as it rushed forward. Yet it was still quite slow in Rui's perception.

('Not bad...') Rui narrowed his eyes as he glanced at his palms. ('Can still get better though,')

The Forestep technique was not particularly time or energy-consuming in this particular regard since he didn't need to rely on the VOID algorithm this time.

He needed to normally use the VOID algorithm because predictions were necessary to be able to use the Forestep technique accurately in combat. However, he did not need the VOID algorithm to predict the ocean. Everybody knew how water moved. Just paying attention to the waves for a while would give one a good intuitive understanding of how the ocean moved in such circumstances.

That was why he could conserve mental energy much better in these circumstances than when he used the Forestep technique on the Root floor.

The surrounding Martial Squires grew remarkably surprised at why a grade-ten Martial Squire had randomly been placed among them. Rui's dispersion of the ocean was so overwhelming, that it also began affecting the sections of the waves assigned to other Martial Squires.

Because the ravine that he created filled up water from both sides to its right and left, it actually reduced the amount of water that the Martial Squires on his side had to deal with momentarily, making their jobs somewhat easier.

By the time he was done, he was even reprimanded by the Martial Senior overseeing his section.

"Underperforming during the evaluation test is frowned upon," The Martial Senior coldly informed him. "It can cause big problems and messes if you interfere with weaker Martial Artists due to stronger techniques. You will be let off the hook with a warning the first time, but the next time will result in being forbidden from training in the Umiana Trench, got it?"

"...Yes," Rui could only lower his head with a sigh.

How could he possibly know that he was going to get that much stronger? Sometimes even his incredible growth rate could be quite problematic. If such a thing happened again, he would be forbidden from returning to the Umiana Trench.

It wasn't long before he returned from the evaluation facility with a grade-ten evaluation. The combined efficiency of permeating an impact with vibrations and the Forestep technique together allowed for a remarkable exertion and application of power.

When Rui reached the grade-ten section after having purchased a grade-ten training slot, he had to say he was impressed.

Grade-ten Martial Squires were certainly worthy enough to be called the peak of the Squire Realm. Each Martial Squire in this section emanated a powerful unique aura. Each of them was allocated a big section of the ocean as a training section, far greater than any of the training sections he had seen prior for the Martial Squires he was surrounding.

Rui had made sure to opt for a much smaller timeframe since he did not have much stamina with Forestep as he did without it.

Soon enough, he stepped in, replacing a Martial Squire. He was faced with a wide area that he alone was supposed to defend.

He widened his hand as much as he could as he rushed forward using all the power he could muster with Forestep and Outer Convergence.

**BOOM**

The impact permeated so powerfully that Rui could literally see the wave travel through the water at remarkably high speeds.

He just barely managed to push back the ocean to the bare minimum necessary degree.

('Shit, at this rate, I might last less than I had expected,') Rui cursed as he activated Final Breathing to extend his stamina and endurance and last longer than he had expected.

Still, he felt quite euphoric at the idea that he was able to stand side-by-side among the most powerful Martial Squires of the Squire Realm and keep up with them without relying on the VOID algorithm, and only on his techniques.

That was quite refreshing since the VOID algorithm had always been his ticket to hurting people much stronger than him and performing feats that he could not otherwise.

Chapter 978: Next

A simple and safe routine had taken hold of their day-to-day life, something that was quite alien to the two of them had taken place. Rui had almost forgotten what it was like to not be in a place surrounded by people who would kill him in the first instance of knowing his true identity.

Although they still had to now hide their real identities with prepared aliases, the Trench Surveillance Force did not require Martial Artists to register with their identities, each Martial Artist was given a code, and their evaluations, training slots, and housing were all registered to the code.

It was a system that allowed for all Martial Squires to maintain anonymity, which was how most Martial Artists preferred it. He had kept his mask on most of the time, he had no intention of revealing his appearance so freely even if he had changed his hair and eyes to silver.

Had this been Earth, Chairman Deacon would have found him already. There were cameras everywhere and silver hair and eyes would not be enough to fool facial recognition software. Furthermore, the internet encompassed pretty much the entire planet thus the data could be transmitted quite far.

However, this was not the case here. Communication technology was highly nerfed in this world in so far as the bandwidth and the range, they were orders of magnitude weaker than that of Earth.



Furthermore, the only information about Rui that Chairman Deacon could ever obtain on Rui was a detailed description, and that would not be enough to be able to tie him to the Voider.

Rui had avoided using techniques that could easily be traced back to Rui Quarrier, thankfully, neither his new technique nor Forestep could be attributed to him due to how recent and unknown they were. There was absolutely nothing that tied him with Rui at the moment and he intended to keep it that way.

It was the reason that he had decided to avoid using his most well-known techniques. They were too close to the Shionel Dungeon, relatively speaking, for him to take such risks. What if he used Mighty Roar Flash Blast too many times and Chairman Deacon somehow hears the word of a Martial Artist with powerful mastery over sound, eh might choose to investigate.

Of course, once they were far away from the Shionel Confederation, Rui had absolutely no qualms about using more techniques, but at the moment they were simply too close to the Shionel Confederation.

Perhaps when they reached closer and closer to their destinations in the west, could he actually think about going all out without any concern.

Regardless, Rui felt relaxed in the environment they were in given that everybody around him wouldn't him even if they knew his identity. It was rather funny because he felt more unsafe in the Shionel Confederation than he did in the Umiana Trench despite being surrounded by an ocean that threatened to swallow everything every second of the day. He felt more comfortable sleeping in these circumstances than he did in the Shionel Confederation.

That sensation was therapeutically relaxing as he honed his mindset in a daily strict routine of discipline.

And just like that, two months passed.

After three months of honing the new technique he had chosen to dub Reverberating Dispersion in addition to Forestep technique, he had grown increasingly proficient with both techniques. Both of the two techniques were not techniques he had had too much experience with it, and the two months of constant use had increased his comfort with them.

He also became able to maintain a grade-ten training section for much longer than he used to be able to do so before. However, it was still far less than the Martial Squires who were able to maintain their training sessions multiple times his maximum time.

The reason for that was that it was truly their normal power while it was his limit. He could not possibly hit harder and get a better result, but they easily could if they wanted.

It was a reminder that the gap between him and grade-ten Martial Squires under normal circumstances was not small. Although he had managed to perform feats that shocked even them, they were not weak by any means.

In the past three months, Kane had also grown stronger as well. He had struggled with even the weakest Squire-level training sections that he could get, but two months of practicing his striking had at least caused him to gain a stronger foundation. In the past three months, he had managed to upgrade to grade-two training sections. A feat that he was inordinately pleased with.

At the end of three months, Rui's itch for adventure and color had finally accumulated enough for him to agree to Kane's desire to leave. The Umiana Trench could grow tiresome as far as the atmospheric and environmental conditions went.

The constant roaring of the ocean in the distance, the high humidity, and the perennial scent of salt water could grow irritating if one wasn't accustomed to them.

"Finally!" Kane heaved a sigh as they packed up and sky-walked out of the Umiana Trench. "I was so done with that place!"

"It wasn't that bad," Rui shook his head disapprovingly. "For one, it got you to improve your offense, which is one of the few things holding you back from being a truly powerful Martial Squire, Kane."

"Yeah yeah, let's move on to more interesting places, the trench has been a novel place, but there's only so much you can get excited about it."

Even then, the two of them couldn't help but admire how exotic and fantastic the phenomenon looked when viewed from high above. They still weren't high enough to view the entirety of the trench as a whole, but even seeing a part of its curve as it disappeared over the horizon was an incredible sight.

"So, where do you want to go?" Rui turned to Kane.

"Some place where we aren't training power!"

### Chapter 979: North-West

The Umiana Trench had been quite fun and helpful to the development of his Martial Art, but ultimately it was not a place that held Rui's interest, and most certainly not a place that held Kane's interest. The two of them were more than willing to leave the Umiana Trench as they continued their little explorative voyage to the west.

Rui considered it a good sign that Chairman Deacon hadn't come looking for them yet. They hadn't met any Martial Squires that had come to the Umiana Trench looking for a black-haired or green-haired Martial Squire.

This was a good sign, it meant that the decoys that Rui had commissioned from Guildmaster Bradt were doing a good job keeping Chairman Deacon's sights fixed on the Kandrian Empire. The Martial Union was also aiding in order to make it look like it really was them.

However, Rui was not naive, he did not think that this would fool Chairman Deacon forever, that was impossible. Eventually, Chairman Deacon would figure out the truth, either before the protection ended, or after. Rui probably still had leeway as long as the protection of his family was kept around, however, he definitely could not take too long to become stronger.

Chairman Deacon was not kind enough to wait for him to grow strong enough, after all. Furthermore, there were going to be two more guildmaster elections in the Shionel Confederation in the next ten years. Although Rui truly did not expect Guildmaster Bradt to lose in the long run, especially after he had consolidated the wealth that he gained from Esosale Suppliers and the power that he gained from being the sole possessor of a map of the Shionel Dungeon, he did not want to imagine what might happen if Chairman Deacon became the guildmaster of the Shionel Confederation.

Rui shook his head, as he put these matters aside. He had already made his decisions in that regard, and there was already nothing more he could do in regard to these issues. All he could do was do everything in his power to grow stronger.

"A destination where they don't train power, you said?" Rui asked, turning to Kane. "We can do that. Where do you want to go?"

"You remember that place with the lightning?" Kane asked with an excited grin. "Let's go check that place out. I don't know if I believe that a single valley can have a billion lightning strikes every second. That's crazy!"

"I mean..." Rui glanced at the Umiana Trench. They were far away enough that they could no longer see individual Martial Artists even with their evolved sense of vision. Thus it looked like the ocean was magically staying away from the deep trench.

"Alright fine," Kane conceded. "It isn't too crazy by these standards, still, I want to see it in person."

"We can go to Thundering Valley," Rui nodded. "I too am interested in that place. It sounds like a good place to challenge myself."

His Forestep technique had been good enough to allow him to dodge nearly a thousand root attacks at one point in the Shionel Dungeon. However, was it fast enough to dodge lightning?

It wasn't for no reason that lightning was the prime hyperbole used when one wanted to convey that something was fast. Lightning was so absurdly fast that fast things were described as lightning-fast in order to exaggerate how fast they were. There was no other phenomenon in nature that received the same kind of treatment as lightning did. From primordial times, lightning was treated as one of the primary elemental forces of the gods.

And now? They sought to challenge that very force.

Both of them possessed strengths that allowed them to be more confident than other Martial Artists.

Kane, of course, was an evasive maneuverer, the Thundering Valley was a place where he could finally be challenged on his strengths, rather than being challenged on his weaknesses like he was in the Umiana Trench. He was quite curious as to whether he would be able to evade lightning, and if he wasn't, then he definitely intended to train in the Thundering Valley until he succeeded!

Rui wasn't entirely sure whether they could succeed. Lightning moved at speeds that they couldn't achieve at the moment. It traveled from the sky to the ground in just 0.00003 seconds!

"It will be fun," Rui smiled at the thought of striving to overcome this challenge. Yet behind his nonchalant smile was a steely gaze, determined to grow stronger and obtain the power that he needed to protect his family from those that wished to harm them.

"Alright, let's get going," Kane nodded as he immediately began setting off away from the Umiana Trench, it wasn't even a second before he came back to Rui. "Er... Which direction is this so-called Thundering Valley again?"

Rui chuckled as he glanced at the sun before pointing North-west. "That way. It can be part of our journey to the West."

Rui had already plotted numerous courses that they could take in their journey to the west, away from the Shionel Dungeon. He had purposely picked locations that were to their west as opposed to any other cardinal direction so that they wouldn't have to suffer major detours and drastically delay their journey by quite some time.

Kane nodded. "Let's get started, we don't have time to waste. How long does it take to get there at a comfortable sky-walking speed?"

"It would take more than a month of near-continuous travel we sky-walked at a slow jogging pace the entire way," Rui replied. "It would take more than a week if we traveled on land."

Kane frowned turning towards Rui. "That's far! We need to set out immediately and maintain a brisk pace or it's going to take forever."

Rui chuckled at his enthusiasm, nodding. The two of them blurred out of vision as they made forth toward the direction that Rui had pointed in. It appeared that Kane had no intention of spending too much time traveling.

#### Chapter 980: Distance

Sky-walking was much slower than traveling on land for many reasons. The human body was anatomically evolved to travel on land, this fundamentally meant that they would travel through land faster than through any other means or medium.

This remained true even for Martial Squires even if their Martial bodies were evolved past humanity. Most Martial Squires retained the basic anatomy of human beings. The shape of the body, the number of limbs, bones, muscles, and the locations of these body parts maintained at least a resemblance with baseline human beings.

This meant that most Martial Squires also inherited humanity's inclination towards travel through land via their legs.

It couldn't be helped, every Martial Squire was once an ordinary human. Their entire Martial Art in the Apprentice Realm was centered around the human being that they were anatomically, then their Martial Body in the Squire Realm was optimized to cater to their Martial Art and their Martial Path.

This necessarily meant that the Martial Body could not be too diverged, evolutionarily speaking, from baseline humanity. Rui could not even imagine what kind of warped Martial Path would require such a thing to occur.

On top of that, based on the analytical and summary reports on the breakthrough to the Squire Realm gained from the research of the secret research facility in the Commonwealth Duchy of Vinfrana that Julian had prepared for him long when he was in the Apprentice Realm, Rui knew that it was impossible for the Martial Body to diverge too much from baseline humanity.

The breakthrough to the Squire Realm was an enhancement of the human body's specs the configuration of which was suited to the Martial Art of the Martial Apprentice in question.

Thus, an overwhelming majority of Martial Artists would always be more effective at traveling through land than through the air.

"Alright, we've finally reached land," Kane peered at the horizon, spotting land after nearly four hours of sky-walking. "Let's switch to land-walking when we get there."

Rui nodded.

He had no qualms about doing that. Sky-walking drew far too much attention in the first place, far more than he was comfortable given the sticky predicament that he was in.

"You're going to have to use Void Step to cover our approach," Rui told him. "I don't want people knowing that we even stepped foot into whatever that town is. That reduces the probability that we'll be tracked by anyone looking for us."

Kane nodded, putting his hand on Rui's shoulder.

The two of them disappeared into thin air as the technique took effect on all sentient and sapient beings in the vicinity.

Soon enough, they had reached their destination. A simple port town that went by the name of Garanga. Rui took note of the cooler temperature of the town that they had just arrived in. The town that they were in was much further north of the continent than the previous port town that they had presided in for the time being. The air was also a lot less humid, certainly a lot less humid than the air in the Umiana Trench.

The many people on the harbor wore denser and heavier clothes protecting their bodies as they went about their work.

The energy of the town was a lot more restricted than the dense and bustling town that they had previously stayed in, making it feel more bland and dull.

Not that it mattered to Rui and Kane, who had no intention of staying there.

It wasn't until they had entered a more remote place that they undid the technique when Rui made sure that there was no one tracking them.

A second later, they had already disappeared, leaving behind sonic booms in their wake as they traveled through land swiftly.

The following journey was one that was smooth, against all of Rui's expectations. They did take longer than a week to reach their location, but that was because of rest time, among other things. The two of them continuously traveled North-west as Rui soaked in the sights of the rest of the continent. This was the first time that he was so far from the Shionel Confederation that many of the locals in the villages and towns that they had periodically resided in had never even heard of the Kandrian Empire!

This was a shock to both Rui and Kane. The two of them were accustomed to everybody that they had ever interacted with knowing exactly what the Kandrian Empire was. It was one of the four powerhouse bigshot nations from the very far-east side of the Panama Continent.

The fact that almost none of them had even heard of what the Kandrian Empire was showed Rui how much lower the flow of information was in this world compared to Earth. Communication devices and remote communication were not entirely normal to him, however, he hadn't forgotten that prior to becoming a Martial Artist, he had never even seen such a communication device his entire life.

Only the upper echelons of society had access to more robust forms of communication and information transmission through esoteric technology, most of the human civilization couldn't use it, thus their awareness of nations far away from their homes was quite limited.

This was probably the first time that Rui and Kane had gotten so far away from the influence of the Kandrian Empire and the Martial Union. At such distances, it was not easy for the Martial Union to intervene as strongly as it could within the domain of its control. Most of the time, they had never gotten out of the domain of influence of the Martial Union. Even on missions, they had usually gone to nations that were firmly within the grasp of the Martial Union.

Even the Shionel Confederation, while still far enough to be out of the immediate domain of influence, was still subject to implicit constraints due to how powerful the Kandrian Empire.



Even that minor condition wasn't true here, although he still wasn't as far as he would have liked to have been, it was a good first step.