

In the lowest level of the center pillar laid a massive room of ceremony. Carpets of lavender and crimson bathed the floor, almost fighting against the blue hues that washed in from the surrounding lake. The grand room was the only level of the center pillar and skyscraper that was submerged underwater and had a ceiling of at least 30 meters in height.

Strong and sturdy silver pillars carved with intricate patterns followed the room's circular shape. Pillar after pillar gave the room a dominating feel that was only interrupted by the gaps allowed for the 6 entrances that connected the outer pillars.

The designs of the silver pillars seemed to hold up the ceiling, merging with it, continuing the captivating carvings to lead to a massive chandelier.

Many circular tables filled the grand room, bathed in cloths that matched the carpet's blood red design. Elaborate floral decorations and candles graced the centers of these tables, displaying never-ending wealth.

At the end of this room laid a wide set of stairs that led to 6 thrones. Familiar faces that had graced the silver yacht sat there, once again feigning politeness.

The beautiful dark-skinned Duco spoke. "Patia-Neva, your daughter has grown to be quite beautiful."

A strong and stoic man sat on one of the two center thrones. His skin had a deep olive color that seemed to complement Delia's. His eyes glowed a murky brown that was worn with age. His beard was marvelous, flowing a deep brown that was accented with whites. His hair was of medium length – combed over and well kept.

Just like the other family head, he wore robes fitting of their stature. A flowing red robe with a chain of gold that held the symbol of focus (F) at its middle.

He smiled. "Indeed she has. I hear Fero has grown to be quite dependable. The Duco family will have good times ahead."

Duco smiled, appreciating the compliment but being inwardly surprised. She had gone through quite a few measures to keep Fero's potential hidden, but it seemed that the head of the Patia-Neva family had seen through her.

A tall and sharp Asian man, whose face still contained his youthful vigor, walked up to the nobles before placing himself on the last throne beside Patia-Neva. He nodded in greeting before closing his eyes and preparing for the ceremony to begin.

The shorter Asian man glanced at him before turning away. "it seems the Kami family head has come. Now that we're all here, we can begin. Correct, Headmaster?"

Delia's father nodded in agreement. His eyes scanned the room as if looking for something before landing on his daughter who sat at a table with the other chosen of the pillar families. Delia gave him a pointed look that conveyed her message.

Delia's father understood. "I guess he's not coming," He said in a soft voice. "No matter".

He stood and the pressure in the room seemed to increase immensely.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and silence reigned. The soft swaying of the ceiling's chandelier made the rooms only sound, filling the room with a faint twinkling sound. Despite being the best teachers Focus Academy had to offer, they didn't dare breath a word when the Headmaster spoke.

“Today, we’ve gathered in honor of the opening of a new year at our Focus Academy. As is customary, the chosen of our families will display their talents for us today to showcase their level of understanding of martial theory.”

He turned to look at the table of youths, sparing a quick glance at the empty seat.

“I’m sure you all understand the importance of this event. You only get 1 chance, and in many ways, it will decide your path for at least the next 10 years. Stay resolute. Be confident. Display your focus. We will all bear witness to the level of will you can display.”

A towering teen who was almost an exact replica of the towering man from the yacht stood, his blue eyes flashing with a competitive light. “It would be an honor if you would allow me to go first, Headmaster.” The teen clasped his hands and bowed.

Patia-Neva nodded before returning to his throne. The tables, chairs and people were picked up by some unknown force and guided to the edges of the room. You would be hard-pressed to tell what was happening if you had your eyes closed. However, those well-trained eyes could tell that this was related to a formation created by someone skilled in the soul path.

A platform raised itself about 3 feet in the center of the now opened space, allowing the tall boy to stride forward with confidence, and hop onto it.

“SPEAR!” The boy shouted in a voice much deeper than what it should have been for his age.

A black carbon spear began to materialize, its tip shining with a silver sharpness as lightning crackled along its handle.

The nobles nodded in appreciation.

“He’s able to call upon the elements. Although faint, this is proof of at least a basic understanding of the will of lightning, at least the first of the nine levels. Something that was commendable for such a youth.” A mentor of Focus Academy chortled, stroking his beard.

This would have been impressive enough to gain quite a few sponsors, but Family Head Storm’s smile only grew larger.

Clouds began to materialize as the youth spun his spear. He moved swiftly, with an agility that shouldn’t be possible with his size. The crackles of lightning within the dark clouds grew more and more pronounced until the youth reached the apex of his movements.

“Ha!” The boy roared. A thick bolt of lightning descended onto the platform falling directly onto the tip of the sword as the youth swept his spear for the final time.

Headmaster Patia-Neva quickly waved his hand, forming a barrier around the platform.

The barrier rippled and distorted as the youth stabbed forward, but remained firm in the end.

Sweat rolled down the youth’s brow, but a proud smile bloomed on his immature features. “I am Hauk Storm. Remember my name.”

The barrier dematerialized as Hauk stepped off the platform.

A booming laughter filled the room. “Haha! Well done, son.”