

## Martial Unity 1341

### Chapter 1341: Inadequate

She considered his words for a moment, understanding what he meant.

"We do possess access to techniques in the fields of mind and assassination, however, those techniques require training and growth resources that we do not have access to," She explained. "As for primordial seed, I do not recognize the name, however, I have already transmitted a message to gather all the information we have on it."

Rui considered her earlier words. "So you're saying the techniques you have are not of much use by themselves?"

She nodded. "We can still provide you with them if you want, however, it would be a challenge to make use of them."

"Then... can I also purchase information on places across the continent for Senior-level growth and training resources?" Rui asked. "I intend to train and develop my Martial Art alongside the operations and missions I complete for the Beggar's Sect."

Ideally, he hoped to travel around to different places where he had the opportunity to grow stronger, similar to what he had done as a Martial Squire after leaving the Shionel Confederation while also completing missions in these various regions. That would be the best approach in his opinion.

It was definitely far better than sitting in one place and completing the same kinds of missions over and over again while trying to squeeze his creativity to pump out good techniques over and over without giving it any inspiration of any kind.

A wealth of experiences was the foundation for good imagination and creativity, it served as ammunition for good ideas. On top of that, he wanted to expose himself to what it was actually like to be a Martial Senior in this world, something he had yet to truly do.

"You have the freedom to go about how you intend to complete your commission payment however you want," She noted. "But the intelligence that you requested will only be delivered after you complete

your commission payment in its entirety. We do not mind supplying the other pieces of information you have requested pre-payment, but that does not apply to the intelligence surrounding Chairman Deacon."

Rui nodded. "That's reasonable."

It was essentially to make sure that Rui didn't just renege on their deal if he got the intelligence he wanted, while the other pieces of information were less important and valuable in comparison, thus there was no harm in supplying them to him before he made the payment for them.

It wasn't long before the door opened another person stepped in with documents, handing them over to Sian before leaving.

"These documents contain the information you were seeking." She remarked, handing them over to Rui. "But you'll have to sign another contract before we can hand them over to you."

Thankfully, many of the terms and conditions could be carried over from the previous one, which allowed both sides to get done with their business.

"It was a pleasure doing business with you," Sian shook his hand as they got up. "Please prepare a list of your general competencies and areas of expertise so that we can tailor and recommend operations and missions to suit your strengths and capabilities. Of course, you're free to reject them and pursue other operations and missions as long as you are competent enough in the necessary and relevant fields, but you will be able to complete missions fastest if you abide by our recommendations."

Rui considered that, shrugging. "I am not averse to that, but I do intend on expanding my skillset during my travels, so I may choose to go against your recommendations."

"That is your prerogative." She remarked lightly. "Now then, if you do not have any further business, our meeting here has concluded. Once again, it was a pleasure doing business with you."

Rui nodded. "I have one last question."

Sian simply stared at him, waiting.

"When you said you were tasked with evaluating my power and my character, would your judgment of the latter have impacted the willingness of the Beggar's Sect to complete transactions with me?" Rui wondered with curiosity.

"Of course," She replied. "We do not engage in business with individuals who cannot be trusted as well as unstable elements, or parties that we are in a hostile relationship with. On the other hand, we welcome independent Martial Artists who are willing to provide services that we need in exchange for information and intelligence that only we can provide. We judged you to be of the latter sort, hence the smooth transaction."

Rui figured there was more to it. It was probably the fact that he displayed a calm and composed temperament despite having much to be frustrated by while he was guided by her.

Too many Martial Artists were unstable and thus untrustworthy, people like him were probably breaths of fresh air to organizations like the Beggar's Sect.

Rui bid her goodbye, carrying the documents with him as he left the book market. and the Derimont Bazaar at large without anybody displaying even a hint of suspicion towards him. The book market was as ignored as always, and the foreign affairs department of the Saiful branch of the Beggar's Sect continued to operate in broad daylight without anybody ever realizing their presence.

It was actually incredibly impressive.

'Just how many people enter the Derimont Bazaar with the same interest in the Beggar's Sect as me only to completely walk past it and ignore it when they first reach the Derimont Bazaar, thinking that the Beggar's Sect would be buried deep within the Derimont Bazaar?'

Probably all of them, seeing as how the book market had probably yet to be exposed as a base for the sect.

Based on the competencies that they had displayed, he now understood how the sect managed to foil a Kandrian princess of all people in a nation that held intelligence gathering safeguarding to extremely

high standards even across the nation. He was also certain that they would succeed in bringing him the information he sought so that he could kill his greatest enemy.

#### Chapter 1342: Guidance

He retreated to a simple inn in one of the more palatable nations in the Saiful Region. He didn't want to spend any extra time in the Derimont Bazaar that he didn't need to, after all.

He also had some reading to do, with him were documents that he needed to read fully, they featured a lot of places where he, as a Senior could grow stronger.

He had specifically asked Guildmaster Bradt for places that could help Martial Squires go, most of those places were now irrelevant to him since he was a Martial Senior.

Furthermore, unlike before, he didn't just want to head to random places and improve random parameters, he had specific goals in mind. Mental techniques, assassination techniques, and techniques based on primordial seed. These were his goals.

The issue was that there weren't too many avenues to train those the same way there were for more foundational fields like offense, defense, and maneuvering.

There were absolutely no places to train primordial seed techniques since such techniques did not even exist. He needed to familiarize himself with primordial seed, and then develop a framework around it. This was why he first needed information on it, and then samples of the substance just to begin the process of experimentation.

Mental techniques and assassination techniques on the other hand were a lot more prevalent, but still much less so than the primary fields of combat. There were almost no equivalents to Thundering Valley or the Umiana Trench for mental and assassination techniques.

What there were, however, were powerful Martial Artists who were known for accepting Martial Artists of the Lower Realms as disciples. Whether out of generosity or out of principle, they aided and guided Martial Artists of the lower Realms in fields that they had mastered.

Rui was not strictly averse to seeking their help. He disdained relying on others when it came to the core of his Martial Art, but he didn't hold such strict principles when it came to aspects of his Martial Art that were not a part of the core of his Martial Art.

He had refused Master Deivon's offer to help him with the Metabody System precisely for this reason, it was too important to the core of his Martial Art; the VOID algorithm and hence it was something that he had to handle by himself.

However, he looked forward to getting some guidance from powerful Martial Artists of the Upper Realms when it came to mental or assassination techniques. Naturally, he still intended to create his own techniques, but in order to create techniques he needed the appropriate building blocks.

That was where these mentors or guides could help him out, providing him a foundation to create a powerful mental technique with.

He glanced through the various reports and profiles that the Beggar's Sect had neatly organized for him.

[Master Zeamer Ger-Vil]

Rui's eyebrows rose as he came across an interesting profile. According to the available intelligence, Master Zeamer Ger-Vil was a renowned Master of mental techniques. He was known more commonly as the Hypnomaster, a master of hypnotic techniques of all sorts. Getting accepted as a disciple by him was a dream for many, yet it was also an unattainable dream since the man was said to be extremely picky with whom he accepted.

According to the information provided by the Beggar's Sect, he had no students under him at the moment, finding the entire crowd of applicants to be unworthy. The last student was said to be a Martial Squire and had left his tutelage six years ago.

Rui was quite intrigued by this. He had known another Master who was also a master of hypnotic techniques; Master Carian. His Heavenly Pathos technique had put Rui in an illusion that even he was unable to break out of easily. This was despite Rui's powerful mind and symbiote.

Rui had grown intrigued by the potential he had in this field.

He just knew that he was truly capable of wonders now that he had finally finished solidifying the foundations of his Martial Art and could dedicate more energy to esoteric fields.

[Master Reina Cara]

Known as the Silent Shadow, she was said to be one of the most notorious assassins in the Martial World, having been extremely active for almost two centuries before finally stepping away from the world.

However, even when she retired from the pinnacle of the assassination world, she still decided to pass on her skills and experience, having given rise to many feared killers in the world.

However, she had extremely high standards for whom she accepted as a disciple. It was said that only the most driven and talented Martial Artists were worthy of her consideration.

Rui was determined to learn as much from them as he could from them, the sheer wealth of experience and mastery of their respective fields they had were far better than anything he could possibly get from techniques he purchased from the Beggar's Sect.

As for the Primordial Seed, the Beggar's Sect supplied him with a decent amount of information to start with. He would gain access to more once he completed the initial commission payment for them.

He was fine with that arrangement. Ever since he learned that research into the substance required the aid of Martial Masters or even Martial Sages, he knew that getting his hands on it as a Martial Senior was not going to be easy at all.

Though he probably could have exchanged the favor he got as Virodha Champion for full access to the research, he didn't have the opportunity to do so for obvious reasons.

Regardless, the information provided by the Beggar's Sect gave him several directions to go in for the next phase of his voyage. He would explore these various options in time, growing stronger as he did while simultaneously fulfilling his commission payment to gain the information he needed.

Once he grew strong enough in his travels as a Martial Senior and completed his commission payment, it would finally be time to eliminate Chairman Deacon once and for all.

#### Chapter 1343: Coup

That wasn't the only information that Rui got from the Beggar's Sect. A separate document that he had received from Sian was related to the available missions in the Saiful Region to get him started.

Although the contract that he signed with the Beggar's Sect gave him remarkable latitude in regard to the schedule at which he wanted to fulfill his commission payment, he understood that it was best to reinforce their agreement by beginning immediately. It was a way of demonstrating that he was fully serious about their transaction and that they needed to get started on fulfilling their agreement of the deal.

Furthermore, he hadn't forgotten that the most important thing to him at the moment was gaining some experience as a Martial Senior. That priority trumped all others at the moment, thus fulfilling some missions was also in his general interests.

He opened the document only to find that the first page warned him that the document would incinerate itself the moment that he closed it.

'Strict.' Rui mused.

The Beggar's Sect needed to take such measures to ensure that its secrets never got leaked. Unlike the previous document which only contained the information that Rui purchased, this document contained sensitive information about the internal missions and operations that the Beggar's Sect needed to complete. They could not allow this information to spread.

Rui didn't mind the measure. Once he read it a single time, he would never need to read it ever again. Thus he quickly skimmed through it, before closing it.

FSSSHHH!

It instantly combusted into strangely transparent flames that didn't burn anything else, completely turning the entire document into trash.

Thorough, as expected of the Beggar's Sect.

'Now then.' Rui's eyes clouded in thought as he revisited all the data that he had just stored.

[Assault mission; Ferendul coup mission]

The title intrigued him, already revealing to him what the mission was going to be about. He recalled the Ferendul Republic, having visited it when he first entered the Saiful Region. A broken nation with impoverished and oppressed citizens who were ruled by a tyrannical military.

According to the intelligence provided by the Beggar's Sect, the Ferendul Republic apparently used to be a kingdom ruled by a Martial Senior queen. The queen had a son, the crown prince, who had gone on to become a Martial Artist as well. All was well until the queen announced her intentions to abolish the monarchy and instate a democracy in the Ferendul Kingdom at the end of her reign.

Her announcement had angered many in power.

According to various reports, the crown prince was also furious at this announcement, having grown to believe that he was destined to inherit the throne and rule Ferendul as the next Martial ruler.

He had refused to accept her decision, and instead, chose to usurp the throne from her hands.

There was only one issue; He was a Martial Squire, while his mother was a Martial Senior.

He was powerless before her, he would not be able to successfully defy her. That was why he had hatched a plan.

He waited for years patiently.

Waiting for the day that his mother grew pregnant once more so that he could attack her when she was vulnerable.

Ordinarily, even the burden of pregnancy was not enough to bridge the gap between the Squire and the Senior Realm.

Not even close.

However, in order to wield the full power of the Senior Realm, she would need to activate her Martial Heart.

In doing so, the Martial Heart would kill her unborn baby violently. Every Martial Senior possessed a body that was fundamentally and foundational able to withstand and wield the ferocious power of the Martial Heart.

The same, however, could not be said for a fetus who depended on the sustenance from the mother's blood. Instantaneous death was inevitable.

Ordinarily, not even this heavy restriction was enough to bridge the gap between the Squire and the Senior Realm, which is why the queen had never activated her Martial Heart.

Yet, her son did. Defying the odds, the crown prince managed to break through to the Senior Realm just moments before his mother defeated him, catching her off-guard.

The surprise breakthrough, as well as the extreme reluctance to harm her own unborn child, ensured that her Martial Heart had never activated that battle. She died on the spot, along with her unborn child.

The Ferendul Kingdom had gained a new ruler that day.

Yet the new king did not intend to follow through with his mother's promise. Instead, he chose to go in an even more authoritarian direction, imposing martial law, and ruling the country with the military.

Many of the queen's loyalists had fled the nation, taking refuge deep within the Derimont Bazaar that no nation dared to antagonize. With the help of the Beggar's Sect, they accrued power for several years and were now only one step away from returning to the Ferendul Kingdom to launch a civil war against the current establishment.

There was only one thing that was necessary; a Martial Senior.

They needed a Martial Senior to take on King Albus and defeat him.

That was where Rui would come in if he did decide to accept the mission.

"Sure, why not?" Rui mused.

He had no compunctions against killing the king. A son who would dare to kill his own pregnant mother was someone who he could kill without feeling even the slightest shred of guilt or remorse. He would even feel vindictive in the process.

Furthermore, the king was not too experienced as a Martial Senior either, having been in the Senior Realm for only several years for the most part, and being consumed with his position as king. He was the perfect opponent to baptize Rui as a Martial Senior.

He immediately accepted the mission, it was convenient and allowed him to fight a death battle with a Martial Senior with relative ease, and would allow him to repay the Beggar's Sect, for whom the Ferendul Republic was a strategically important intelligence gathering base as it served as a bridge for all those who wanted to enter the Saiful Region looking for the Beggar's Sect.

They had gained information on Rui in the same way as well, after all.

Chapter 1344: Meet

The decision-making process this time was remarkably quick. He accepted the first mission that he came across pretty much unhesitatingly, and quickly headed over to the Derimont Bazaar to not only register with the operation but also to meet up with the coup force that sought to dethrone King Albus.

It wasn't too long before he arrived back at the inconspicuously conspicuous book market, heading in where he received a private meeting with his point of contact with the Beggar's Sect and explained his choices.

Sian nodded. "We are glad to see that you have commenced your commission payment immediately. The Ferendul Coup mission is certainly a good place to start. We shall connect you with the coup force that resides in the Beggar's Sect."

He was given a small map that marked a spot in the Martial Art section of the Derimont.

Apparently, the Ferendul coup force had been recuperating in the Derimont Bazaar while completing Martial Art missions for various clientele to gather capital to build up their forces.

It was said that they essentially had everything they needed except a Martial Senior, which meant they most likely had built up a number of Martial Apprentice and Martial Squire forces that could earn a lump sum of money.

"Anything I should know before I meet them?" Rui asked.

"Their biggest concern is whether you will be able to defeat King Albus." Sian pointed out. "As long as you can convince them of that, you will be fine."

"I presume that the Beggar's Sect is going to help with that," Rui remarked. "You are aware that I am stronger than younger Martial Seniors. The power one possessed as a Martial Squire very directly carries over to the Senior Realm, and impacts your starting point in the Senior Realm. The fact that King Albus needed to break through to the Senior Realm to defeat a pregnant Martial Senior who could not activate the Martial Heart means that he is decisively weaker than me when it comes to his Martial Art."

Rui had defeated Martial Seniors without their Martial Hearts. A pregnant Martial Seniors was simply not an opponent that could take him on even as a Martial Squire. Unless the gap in their Martial Hearts

was so large that it could bridge the gap in them as Martial Artists, Rui was rather confident that he was up for the task.

"We are aware that you are abnormally stronger for your age and for someone with your youth in the Senior Realm," Sian remarked. "We have passed this information on to the Ferendul coup forces. However, it is quite likely that they will seek confirmation of this by themselves. This matter is far too important to them, after all."

Rui could definitely understand that. Their battle would decide the outcome of the entire civil war, even if the coup won the Squire, Apprentice, and human-level battles, it would all be for nothing if Rui lost the Senior-level battle.

It wasn't long before his brief meeting with Sian ended and he immediately headed to the Martial Art market of the Derimont Bazaar. It was most certainly one of the most populated markets in the Derimont Bazaar, naturally. Martial Art services were extremely popular in almost all places in the world, and the Derimont Bazaar served as a natural broker between consumers and the Martial Artist suppliers themselves.

He attracted a lot of attention as he walked through the market. The normal humans sensed that he was an incredibly powerful Martial Artist, while the Martial Apprentices and Martial Squires recognized that he was a Martial Senior.

They all steered clear out of his path. Not a single person wanted to mess with a Martial Senior, such was the deterrence that Martial Artists who were just one step away from the Upper Realm possessed.

KNOCK KNOCK

Rui knocked on a large warehouse. This was supposed to be the disguised hidden location of the Ferendul coup force in the Derimont Bazaar. A few seconds later, a man cracked open the door with a wary glance, flicking his head up a little in a gesture to question what Rui wanted.

Rui didn't even bother responding, he simply provided the man with an envelope that Sian had supplied him as a way to confirm his identity.

The door closed as the man accepted it, heading inside, only to return in a minute.

"We've been waiting for you." He remarked. "Come in."

Inside were innumerable Martial Artists, most of whom were in the Apprentice Realm. Yet he even saw a few dozen Martial Squires, most of whom were low-grade.

The man led him deep into the warehouse until he stumbled upon a small compartment with anti-sensory measures blockading it. Inside was a man he recognized from the information provided in the mission briefing.

The former king of the Ferendul Kingdom. A man who became the king having married the queen after she succeeded the throne. He had been the first to rally the Martial Artists that refused to accept King Albus' reign as legitimate.

"Welcome to our humble abode, Senior John. I am Farun Ferendul" The man greeted Rui with grace. "It shames me that I am unable to arrange for greater hospitality for the Martial Senior that has chosen to aid us in our plight. I hope you found our commission payment satisfactory."

"I have a separate arrangement with the sect," Rui remarked. "But rest assured, I am satisfied with it. I have no compunctions about aiding you with your operation."

"I am glad to hear that." The man replied, nodding. "In that case, I hope you don't mind if we evaluate whether your prowess meets the satisfactory range, then. Although the sect has given us many reassurances, it behooves us to evaluate your nonetheless as a measure of caution."

"Do what you must." Rui simply said. "I don't have any compunctions with that, and am more than willing to cooperate."

"Good. Then I hope you don't mind demonstrating your skill against our Martial Squires, without the use of the power of the Senior Realm, that is."

## Chapter 1345: Demonstration

Rui smiled underneath his mask. "Of course."

A bunch of low-grade Martial Squires were so weak that they might as well have been Martial Apprentices to him, he probably wouldn't even notice the difference. Apparently, Farun didn't understand just how strong Rui was despite what the sect informed him. He would have picked a greater challenge if he did.

Nonetheless, Rui found himself facing all of the Martial Squires of the coup force in the Saiful Abyss which was far away from the direction that the Ferendul nation was.

They surrounded him, taking their stances. Rui simply stood in place, unable to feel even the slightest hint of pressure. He had reached a stage where he could simultaneously comfortably mop up multiple grade-ten Martial Squires with ease when he was a Martial Squire himself. High-grade Martial Squires were nothing short of weak, and he didn't even notice low-grade Martial Squires anymore.

"Any time." Rui remarked.

Those words commenced the spar as all the Martial Squires lashed out forward, yet they were so slow that Rui needed to actually wait for them to arrive. He didn't even bother wasting any time when they did.

POW POW POW POW POW.....!

One by one, all of them fell to swift and powerful blurs that knocked them out before they even realized what happened.

In less than a second, he had knocked all of them out.

Sometime later, he found himself before Farun once more, who looked at him with an impressed expression. "It appears that the sect was completely accurate in their evaluation of you, as always. You are more than qualified to fight Albus. My apologies for doubting you, however, I need to be skeptical of everything in order to ensure that nothing goes wrong."

"Don't worry about it." Rui casually replied. "When does the operation begin and how do you want me to coordinate with your forces."

"We will begin the operation in a week, which is the soonest now that we have confirmed a Senior-level combat force." The man replied. "Your role is simple. We will attack when Albus is away from the throne and far away from our conflicts on the other side of the Ferendul. All you need to do is be there at that time and place, and kill him when he tries to return to the throne in the wake of conflict."

Rui nodded, wordlessly.

It was a simple operation on his part, and Rui appreciated that. Although he was accustomed to coming up with complex and sophisticated plans that had the highest probability of succeeding, he did appreciate simplicity as well.

Especially when he wasn't the one coming up with all the plans.

"Albus spends the night of the full moon away from the throne on one of the countryside mansions," Farun explained. "All you need to do is assault him there, potentially ambush him, and take him down then and there."

He made sure to mark the point on the Ferendul maps of differing detail, honing in on the point, while also specifying the time and date. He even offered Rui a pocket watch that counted down to when Rui needed to be there.

It appeared that he didn't trust Martial Artists very much.

It wasn't long before Rui's business was concluded with the man, he simply took his leave returning to his inn. There wasn't much left for him to do. A week of time wasn't enough to guarantee that he could finish another mission before this one was due, so he avoided taking the risk.

He simply spent his days meditating as he brought himself to his peak mentally. Although he didn't think that such measures were necessary, he did them anyway.

It was his first fight in the Senior Realm. The information provided by the Beggar's Sect had extensively covered his Martial Art, yet Rui had decided to avoid looking into that information.

He didn't care if it lowered the probability of success, he wanted a genuine test of his ability as a Martial Senior. He was not interested in preparing for this battle since that would make him much stronger than he normally was in combat.

Furthermore, he looked forward to a genuine fight in the Senior Realm, not just spars or duels.

He had yet to gain a good understanding of how strong he was as a Martial Senior. He knew that he was definitely well above the average starting point for Martial Seniors, but he also knew that he was on the weaker end of Martial Seniors, as well. Meaning that across the wide scale of grades, he was most certainly on the lower sight.

He hoped that this upcoming fight would give him a better understanding of how own position.

After a week of excruciatingly long waiting, the day had finally arrived. Rui corresponded with Farun for a bit before it was time for him to depart for the Ferendul Republic. He could have simply activated his Martial Heart and rushed for the spot, but he recalled what Senior Sarak had told him quite well.

The Martial heart was too important and significant to be made use of in such a frivolous manner. It would also weaken him against King Albus, and while he wanted a fair fight, he did not want to sabotage his normal standard power.

Thus he did it the hard way, taking his time as he crossed multiple borders to reach the Ferendul Republic. Once he entered the nation, he needed to be even more discreet, making sure to avoid the military carriages that patrolled the streets for seemingly no reason.

He had arrived a little ahead of time, choosing to remain at some distance away from the mansion that Albus would allegedly visit when the night came. He kept the pocket watch he received at hand, watching it tick as time passed.

The night grew solemn and grave as the air grew heavy. It was as though the nation held its breath in trepidation of what was about to unfold.

#### Chapter 1346: Is That All

The nations in the Saiful region were aware of what was unfolding. Many of them possessed strong diplomatic ties to Farun Ferendul, the previous king, and did not like the militaristic regime that had been instated by the usurper.

It was in their interests to not only not convey the intelligence, but also hide it and prevent the current militaristic regime from learning of the impending coup. They even aided the coup force by supplying resources and funds, which Farun vowed to repay when he ascended the throne.

When the night came, many forces and nations watched with attention.

Rui, however, didn't know or care about the various developments that unfolded in the Saiful region. He didn't even care to ask about their plan to take over the Ferendul Kingdom, overcoming Albus' base of power.

He didn't care all that much.

He was simply interested in fighting and killing Albus. He had a good impression of Farun, thus he did not think the man would fail if he decided it was time to commence the coup.

BZZZZT!

The pocket watch vibrated as Rui watched it.

It was time, he tossed it away as he lashed forward toward the mansion in the distance at top speed. He instantly alarmed the Martial Squire security detail that instantly took their positions, yet he abstained from killing them, at Farun's request.

These Martial Artists were merely doing their jobs.

Instead, he activated his Martial Heart while emitting a flash of bloodlust. Glowing red lines emerged from his heart, spreading across the entire time body.

THUD

The Martial Artists crumpled down to their knees with a shudder. The Martial Squires of this region were largely too weak to be able to maintain their wits in the face of Senior-level pressure.

Furthermore, it was a signal to the man in the mansion.

A challenge.

Rui waited for a moment on guard as nothing happened.

Yet the very next moment.

BOOM!

A powerful explosion shook the land around them as the wall of the mansion facing Rui exploded as a figure with a Senior-level aura lashed out toward him with remarkable speed.

BAM!

Their fists clashed, and an enormous explosion swallowed up a large patch of the forest.

"Hahaha!" Senior Albus laughed with a wide grin. "Looks like I've finally gotten my first assassination attempt!"

The man had donned a simple attire that bore the crest of the Ferendul Republic. His flowing brown hair swept with the wind as he lashed out.

"It will be your last," Rui remarked.

POW POW POW!

The two furiously exchanged fists, uncaring for their environment. Rui had already known that this place was devoid of any settlements, thus he had no compunctions about going all out with his Martial Heart.

RUMBLE!

The very land beneath them shivered.

The skies howled in pain.

Yet the two Martial Artists clashed, blazing with the power of the Martial Heart that coursed through their body, uncaring for the world around them.

WHOOSH!

Rui evaded a hook, throwing a flurry of body blows at his opponent.

POW POW POW!

His opponent blocked with a wild grin. "Not bad!"

His fists blurred into motion as he threw a seemingly endless flurry of jabs at Rui's body, making it incredibly difficult to dodge them.

POW POW POW!

Rui narrowed his eyes as he had already begun creating a predictive model of his opponent. The man was a striking-oriented Martial Artist with an emphasis on swift and short blows.

Nothing special, but nothing weak either. He didn't need powerful blows to knock Rui out.

A single well-timed blow to the jaw or head would do the trick.

Yet Rui had no intentions of allowing that to happen.

BAM!

Rui landed a powerful blow to the man's gut after avoiding a swift uppercut. The full weight of Reverberating Lance and Outer Convergence elevated to a higher Realm of power crashed into man's gut.

Yet before he could even gather himself, Rui's second strike had already begun flying at him. He swerved to the right, dodging it, and yet;

BAM!

It struck him nonetheless, adjusting course even he himself did.

Almost as if Rui knew where he was going to go.

POW POW POW!

A barrage of heavy blows crashed into him. Yet guard as he might, each blow cleanly navigated through the chinks of the man's defenses, and each blow cleanly struck him despite his dodges.

His offense began crumbling rather quickly, even as his defense may as well have not existed. Every strike he threw increasingly erred, either falling flat before Rui's defense or simply cleanly missing him from a mile away.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

It hadn't even been ten minutes, yet Albus was swiftly reduced to a punching bag as Rui hammered away at him with his most powerful blows and attacks.

BOOM!!

A powerful blow crashed into his gut, squeezing away his breath as he struggled to breathe.

BANG!

Rui launched him across a forest with a swift. The sheer speed at which he flew ignited the air as he flashed through it. Rui put out the flames with powerful Transverse Resonance attacks that flew towards Albus, burying him under barrages of attacks.

His body had already begun incurring some serious wounds, yet Rui wasn't done. Rui rushed forward at top speed even as he blasted him with sound.

BOOM!!

A powerful Flowing Canon crashed into the man's guts, stacked with Outer Convergence, Reverberating Lance, and Gale Force Breathing.

"Rgh!" The man spat some blood as he fell to his knees.

At that moment, Rui's mood fell.

He clenched his fist, gritting his teeth. "...Is that all?"

Albus looked up to him with an expression of fear. His two silver eyes seemed to hold endless voids that raged in hunger.

"Is that all?" Rui repeated himself. "All these years that you were a Martial Artists, and this is all that you've accomplished?"

Rui had hoped that the man would at least force him to use the Metabody System, but alas, that was not to be.

"Tsk. Worthless. To me and to this nation." Rui's eyes intensified as his attack surged forward.

BOOM!!!

Chapter 1347: Next

The battle between Rui and King Albus was the most important battle of all, everything hinged on it. Although the Ferendul coup forces led by the former king of Ferendul had gained a small measure of Rui's capabilities and had been impressed, it was not strictly enough to say that Rui would definitively win against King Albus.

When Farun heard that Rui had openly challenged his son, he couldn't help but grow immensely upset. He had hoped that Rui would exploit the element of surprise to the absolute maximum, gaining an advantage early on in the battle. Ideally, he hoped that Rui would kill Albus before the latter could tap into the power of the Senior Realm, but he knew that Martial Seniors could not be killed in such a manner.

The worst outcome, however, was completely surrendering his element of surprise and evening out the battle. Now the battle truly could go either way, becoming a variable that Farun could no longer control or predict.

He had been receiving updates from a Martial Squire who observed the battle from quite a distance to make sure that he avoided the sheer destruction that the two Martial Seniors left behind. While the coup was shaping up to be successful on his part due to his careful planning, he only felt increasingly nervous as the Senior-level battle proceeded.

"...Eh?"

"What is it?" Farun urged the man. "Did something happen to John?"

"It's the sinner, sir. He..."

"Speak dammit!" Farun cursed.

"He's dead."

Farun's eyes widened. "What?!"

"I'm moving in closer to get a better look sir, but there's no doubt about it. King Albus is dead!"

Farun simply stood there dumbstruck. To think that the most difficult part of his ambitions to launch a coup was handled so quickly.

It had barely been ten minutes since the battle had begun.

Now all he had to was succeed on his part, and they would have won.

"Bring his head over here as quickly as possible!" Farun grinned excitedly.

Unlike him, Rui was not having a good day.

He had hoped for a riveting battle, one that would challenge him deeply and help him grow stronger. But he had been incredibly disappointed in how shockingly weak his opponent was.

It wasn't even funny, the man was a lot weaker than Ieyasu despite being in the Senior Realm for much longer and being much older in general.

Rui wasn't entirely sure if it was a matter of his opponent being too weak or him being too strong. Part of the reason he had fought this battle was to gain a good gauge as to where he was in the Senior Realm compared to people who broke through not too long ago.

Yet the result left him a bit too confused.

It was at times like these that he missed the Martial Union. They graded him quite accurately, such that he never felt confused about where he was in the Apprentice or Squire Realms

Now, however, it appeared that it would take a while before he learned how strong he was, he would probably need to fight a lot more battles before he could develop an inkling of his power level relative to his peers.

"Tsk, what a pain." Rui simply tutted before leaving the area, heading towards the Derimont Bazaar.

If fighting several Senior-level battles was what it took to gain a better understanding of his own power standing, then that was exactly what he would do. Thankfully, he had plenty of ways to fight Martial Seniors, and the Beggar's Sect had plenty of operations for him to fulfill.

He intended to complete as many as he could to not only get a good gauge of how strong he was but also bolster his experience when it came to fighting Martial Seniors.

He didn't bother corresponding with Farun anymore, the man had a coup to win, and with Rui's victory, it was as good as guaranteed as long as he wasn't incompetent.

His mind returned to the various missions and operations that the Beggar's Sect had offered to him to complete.

One of them in particular, drew his interest.

[Assassination mission: Xavier Minneson]

The Beggar's Sect had commissioned him for a hit on a Martial Senior who was apparently the head of the biggest human trafficking ring in the Saiful Region. Senior Minneson had used his personal Martial power to set up an organization that systematically captured and kidnapped people for them to be sold in the Derimont Bazaar.

It was said that at least half of the supply of humans in the various markets, whether it be slaves, sex slaves, organ donors, or child slaves were all from the Minneson trafficking ring.

"These missions are quite convenient," Rui murmured. "They're so easy to choose."

Unlike when he was in the Kandrian Empire and often had trouble choosing a mission, these two missions had both been no-brainers.

His eyes narrowed when he recalled what he had seen in the Derimont Bazaar. "I told you I'd make you pay."

Since Senior Minnsen probably used his Martial power to hold his organization together, killing him would probably cause it to unravel on the spot, a highly desirable outcome as far as Rui was concerned.

"It's settled then, I'm going to do my good deed for the day."

Of course, he knew that his actions were not going to get rid of human trafficking in the Saiful region. He also knew that eventually another organization would probably pop up and pick up the slack that the Senior Minneson would leave behind if he died.

Such was human nature, if there was demand, then supply would always meet. Without fail. It was the strongest force, and it could not be stopped. Rui needed only to think back on the war on drugs, or the war on human trafficking back in his previous life to know that this was true.

The only way that he could do something about it was if he became strong enough to impact all of humanity. And as prodigious as Rui's growth rate was, it was most likely going to take a while to get to that power level.

Chapter 1348: Wider

"Your problem is actually not uncommon amongst newborn Martial Seniors," Sian remarked once Rui explained his predicament to his liaison in the Beggar's Sect. "Many Martial Seniors have no idea how strong they are until much later in their time in the Senior Realm."

"Well, given how the Beggar's Sect prides itself on information and data analysis, shouldn't you be able to give me an accurate overview of my power relative to my peers?" Rui asked with a resigned expression.

Sian immediately shook her head. "We are not a Martial organization like the Panamic Martial Federation or the Virodhabhasa Faith. While we do have some amount of internal Martial Artists, we rely on the power of the invisible common man, woman, and child. We do not possess the off-hand expertise to give you an accurate gauge of your Martial prowess. In the same way, we do not possess the off-hand expertise to evaluate any and all technological advancements or inventions properly. We largely outsource such matters to trusted allied partners who do possess the relevant expertise."

Rui sighed dejectedly. He had expected such an answer, of course. In the first place, only another Martial Artist or an extensive observation laboratory with relevant Martial scholars and scientists were qualified to evaluate him. The Beggar's Sect did not carry around such resources in the base of operations of their foreign affairs department.

Sian was most certainly not qualified to give him an accurate gauge of his power in the Senior Realm, either. It looked like he would have to figure it out the hard way after all.

"What I can tell you is that because the starting point of Martial Artists in the Senior Realm are completely different and because that consequently results in an extremely wide range of power levels within the Senior Realm, it is actually not easy for even Martial Art organizations to accurately evaluate the power level of an unknown Martial Senior." She replied. "They largely rely on the power that the Martial Senior possessed before breaking through to the Senior Realm to gauge how strong they would be as a Martial Senior. Thus even if you visited a Martial organization, they would find it much more

challenging to evaluate you if they do not have access to a thorough record of your history and background."

This was, of course, unacceptable to Rui. Still, he appreciated the free tidbits of information that Sian was giving to him.

"Because the Senior Realm is divided into fifteen grades in most Martial Artist evaluation and grading systems, such problems naturally arise." Sian casually revealed.

"What?" Rui blurted out in surprise. "Fifteen grades?"

Sian nodded. "I assumed you were aware of this."

He had not been. He had heard from multiple sources that the Senior Realm was even wider than the Squire Realm, but only now did he realize that they weren't exaggerating in the slightest. The fact that organizations felt to add an extra five grades to the Senior Realm evaluation system showed that the gulf was truly gigantic.

"Damn..." He couldn't help but subconsciously murmur.

No wonder only a fraction of Martial Seniors took several decades at the bare minimum to reach the Master Realm, the path forward was truly long and could easily take the average Martial Senior half a lifetime to cross.

"It is not easy crossing the barrier between the Lower and the Upper Realms," She remarked. "I do not know the details as the few beings that do possess the information are extremely secretive about it, but it is said to be among the hardest of hurdles to overcome for Martial Artists.

The Martial Artists who ascended to the Upper Realms had already transcended mortality to a certain extent. It wasn't just that they were far stronger than Martial Seniors, which they also were. However, in addition to that, Rui also felt as though they had ascended to a higher state of life.

They were simply cut from a different cloth from ordinary mortals. Rui got the impression that their vision and understanding of reality were simply higher than his own. Their minds seemed to be able to see things that no Martial Artists of the lower Realms could.

Rui couldn't even imagine what it took to evolve to such a state of being.

"It can't be helped. I'll figure it out on my own." Rui shook his head. "I appreciate the information. Now then, coming back to business, I wanted to undertake the mission relating to Senior Minneson and the Minneson drug trafficking ring."

She considered his words for a moment, before nodding. "Given your crushing performance against Albus, it is safe to say that you are at least qualified to take on Senior Minneson. However, be warned that he is much stronger than Albus. It was said that when Albus tried to confront the Martial Senior to put an end to the man's trafficking operations in the Ferendul Republic, he was forced to retreat, having almost died against him."

Rui nodded. It appeared that at the very least, Senior Minneson wouldn't go down too easily. "That's just fine by me. I'm looking forward to a challenge. Can I gain access to all the intelligence related to the case?"

She nodded, fiddling with the beaded bracelet on her wrist. "I have already arranged for it to be delivered to you."

It wasn't long before Rui not only gained access to all the documents that detailed the reports and analyses on the man's movements and locations, but also memorized it, before leaving the book market empty-handed.

The gathered intelligence on Senior Minneson was vast. It appeared that despite his best efforts to limit data leaks, the Beggar's Sect was still easily able to gather immense strategic information on him. It once again solidified the Beggar's Sect's capabilities in his mind.

More importantly, however, Senior Minneson was a lot more formidable than Senior Albus from the available reports. He had once fought off two young Martial Seniors from a nation in the Saiful Region simultaneously and emerged victorious in the confrontation.

## Chapter 1349: Awaited

The Saiful Region underwent a significant shift in geo-political dynamics now that the militaristic regime of Senior Albus had been brought to an end.

The entire nation rejoiced when the shocking revelation of King Albus' death spread across the entire country. A wave of vindictive satisfaction rippled across the impoverished and oppressed people of Ferendul who had suffered under the tyrannical rule of King Albus.

Farun Ferendul quickly began reforming and reorganizing the government once the former king's supporters surrendered after his death was confirmed. He had already rescinded the exploitative system of taxes, fees, and tariffs that had been imposed by King Albus that drained the nation only to empower a bloated military. Furthermore, he issued subsidies and distributed accumulated resources reserved for the military to kickstart the recovery process of the economy and the nation.

The nation inhaled a breath of fresh air as the market began regaining a few signs of vitality. Of course, it would take some time before it made significant progress towards a full recovery.

Hardly anyone could believe that the notorious tyrant who had become nothing short of the greatest source of dread and horror in the hearts of the citizens had died a dog's death just ten minutes after the coup was launched.

It was jarring. It made them feel as though the anguish that they had been put through was trivial.

The Martial Senior who executed King Albus drew a lot of curiosity and attention from not just the citizens of the Ferendul Republic but the entirety of the Saiful Region.

In most places on the continent, Martial Seniors were absolute powerhouses that were game-changing strategic weapons. The Saiful Region was no exception, most of the nations of the Saiful region possessed one, or at most, a few Martial Seniors.

Thus, the presence of a new Martial Senior in the region could significantly impact the political balance of the region. Many wondered if the new Martial Senior had already joined the Ferendul Republic to become its new Martial Senior guardian.

Many nations sought to pull over the new powerful asset to their nation. The new Martial Senior had become the most highly desired target in the Saiful Region.

Yet Rui didn't care. He had simply focused his attention on the new mission that he had undertaken, going through the intelligence once more. Tracking the man that he was looking for was not as simple as it was when he fought Senior Albus.

Senior Minneson was a lot more careful and discreet. None of his subordinates were privy to his location most of the time, and because he even went as far as often using his Martial Heart while traveling to avoid being tracked by anybody, it was quite difficult to pinpoint where he was at any given location.

Rui knew that this measure was probably because he was afraid of the Beggar's Sect. The Beggar's Sect relied on the sheer quantity and variety of intelligence of ordinary people to gain a deeper understanding of the state of affairs. Senior Minneson was probably relying on his Martial Heart to avoid being completely transparent to the Beggar's Sect.

This was an expensive price to pay to throw the Beggar's Sect off his tracks. This was only partially effective, it appeared.

The Beggar's Sect was not able to pinpoint his exact location at any given moment, but it did possess a good grasp of his movements and all his bases of power, which was the next best thing.

Rui had decided it was best to go for a brute force method of tracking him. He simply decided to camp near one of his most important bases of power for the human trafficking ring.

Rather than waste time on more sophisticated methods to predict where he was, Rui estimated that simply using Riemannian Echo and waiting for signs of the man's arrival was at least twice as likely to be successful in locating him.

As soon as he found him Rui would immediately challenge him to a fight. He was most certainly aware that he could resort to more covert ways of gaining an advantage even before their fight started. But he wasn't interested in these ways as they impeded a pure fight that would allow Rui to test himself against other Martial Seniors

Although Rui's desire to cripple the human trafficking ring was definitely strong, his desire to test himself was even stronger. At the end of the day, he was not a saint, and his own personal interests outweighed that of his moral compass.

Still, he was confident that he would win.

The most important base of power of the Minneson human trafficking ring was actually in the Ferendul Republic. The man had shifted there once the previous queen fell due to how exploitable the oppressed population was. The law enforcement and military did not protect them, they merely exploited them. Thus they were left to fend off for themselves, which made them easy targets.

That was quite convenient for Rui.

"If you are able and willing, we would have bottomless appreciation for you if you successfully expel that scourge from our country." Prime Minister Farun bowed his head to Rui once he explained his intentions. "Unfortunately, we do not have a Martial Senior to combat the head of the trafficking ring. Please do not be concerned about the collateral damage to the region, it is largely devoid of population for the most part."

With the blessing of the new head of government of the Ferendul Republic, Rui set out to the southern region of the nation a largely abandoned region after the previous king had taken over.

It wasn't long before he perched himself in the center of the broken town, lying down on his back, facing the sky as he monitored the entire area with Riemmanian Echo.

A few days passed by. Rui simply sustained himself with dense nutrition pills that he got from the Beggar's Sect while taking simple daily measures and utilities to cleanse himself as the days passed. Long waiting periods were not uncommon, thus there were several utilities that made the wait more manageable.

At long last, Rui's senses picked up a an incredibly swift figure discreetly entering the region.

Chapter 1350: Commence

Rui didn't even bother hiding.

What need was there to?

WHOOSH!

He simply activated his Martial Heart as he rushed forward to the Senior-level figure that he sensed in the distance.

In just a moment, he had already arrived.

Yet it appeared that his opponent had sensed him as well. They took a moment to size each other up when Rui closed on him.

The man was gargantuan, he clearly possessed a body that was certainly attributed to offense or defense, or both.

BOOM!

Rui rushed in with a powerful Flowing Canon that crashed into his powerful guard. Instantly, an immensely powerful wave of destruction arose from their clash, erupting until it engulfed a massive amount of area.

Yet Rui could only widen his eyes when the man guarded the attack solidly. His guard held strong, hardly yielding any ground even under the weight of Rui's strongest close-range attack.

BAM!

Rui barely blocked an immensely swift haymaker swing, flinging him away a good distance.

"Which nation are you from, boy?" He gruffly inquired as he walked towards Rui. "You have the weakest Martial Heart that I have ever seen. Is it defective? Hahaha!"

He mocked Rui as he took his stance, a look of realization emerged on his face. "Ah now that I think about it, you must be the one that took down Albas, eh?"

Rui didn't respond, simply analyzing him to the best of his abilities.

"Not bad but...allow me to show you...allow me to show you just how much of a gap there can be between Martial Seniors!" He charged forward with an incredible velocity.

The very air around them burst into an inferno as the sheer friction this man generated with his charge was enough to trigger a conflagration. Rui's eyes widened as he blurred in his vision, crossing the distance between them in an instant.

BAM!

A powerful blazing-hot blow crashed into Rui, scorching his guard.

Yet the man wasn't done, his arms flashed into motion as they hailed down on Rui, barely missing him.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

Rui barely dodged the attacks with an incredulous expression, yet the persevering efforts of the giant eventually paid.

BAM!

Rui grimaced as the powerful blow launched him away, burning his flesh. His eyes narrowed as he took a greater measure of the man's capabilities. Despite being larger and heavier than Rui, he was actually much faster as well, it broke known paradigms that Rui had been accustomed to in the Squire Realm.

The reason for this was because the Martial Body used to be the most important variable when it came to the performance parameters of Martial Squire, in addition to their Martial Art. A heavier body had better offense or defense but was slower than a lighter Martial Body.

However, due to the introduction of the Martial Heart, this was no longer strictly true. A stronger Martial Heart could bridge the gap in speed just by supplying greater force and thus greater acceleration.

His Martial Heart blazed into action as it propelled a wave of burning blows forward at even greater speeds. "Eat my Burning Fist style! Hahaha!"

He laughed mirthfully, expecting to roast Rui slowly across their battle.

And yet, that did not happen.

WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH!

The man's eyes widened as Rui smoothly evaded his blows, surging through the chinks in the man's armor before-

BOOM!

Before launching a powerful blow to the man's solar plexus. The sheer weight of a Flowing Canon on a vital point caused the man to snarl in pain, before unleashing an even greater conflagration with his movements.

FWOOSH!

Rui's eyes widened as he leaped away at top speed, activating Gale Force Breathing and Outer Convergence as he leaped away at top speed.

Yet the flames were even faster!

They engulfed not just him, but everything within a hundred meters of the man. A giant fireball conflagration erupted as it engulfed a chunk of the abandoned town they were in.

Rui grimaced as many burns appeared on his skin. He didn't bother too much with the damage as his accelerated healing quickly took care of the burns. His mind was consumed with his opponent.

A Martial Artist that generated heat through friction. This was not something he hadn't run into before, but the level this mean wielded it at was vastly far above the paltry flames that the Martial Squire he fought generated.

The worst part was that Flux Earther was a technique that could disperse impacts, but could not disperse flames. That meant that the only defense that he had was Adamant Reforging.

'Insufficient.' Rui noted. 'Most optimal choice is to switch to a form of combat that evades the flames as opposed to withstanding.'

Given that the flames were too wide-range, an evasive fighting style was also not really feasible.

That left one option.

Rui leaped back, crossing many kilometers in a second as he inhaled deeply.

WHOOSH

The sheer force with which he inhaled caused a region of low pressure to develop across the entire region, accelerating the development of cumulonimbus clouds.

The skies darkened as thunder crackled.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

Rui fired dozens of hypersonic projectiles one after the other. The man sensed the activation of the technique even if the hypersonic projectiles themselves were hard to track.

"Hahaha!" He laughed. "How are you going to hit me from that far a-!"

**BOOM BOOM BOOM!**

His words were cut short as several powerful impacts struck his abdomen, catching him off-guard. The sheer potency of the impacts was so high that they launched him flying many kilometers away, destroying entire city blocks as he finally killed his momentum.

His eyes burned with fury as he began charging forward, this time guarding himself with his arms while also generating enough flames around him to mark the approach of the sound projectiles while weakening them before they struck him.

And yet;

**BOOM!!!**

His eyes widened as a mighty impact vastly stronger than before crashed into him, flinging him even further away than before. he flew across the region as he caught a glimpse of Rui in the great distance.

Yet he looked completely different!

An extremely buff and muscular figure had replaced the otherwise balanced stature that the young man had.