

Martial Unity 1491

Chapter 1491: Rising Friction

"You're telling me five Martial Seniors have died just like that?"

"Yes...Master Haishi," Senior Zenshin bowed deeply.

"This is despite being provided with the necessary resources to maintain the Martial Heart continuously at all times within the forest?" She asked.

"...Yes," Senior Zenshin gritted his teeth.

Her mouth curled with contempt.

She wasn't even in the room physically, yet her merely projected image seemed to generate an avalanche of weight that wrung the very air he breathed.

"The height of incompetence," She declared. "The Carnil Mafia has no use for Martial Artists who are too weak to even survive."

Senior Zenshin was not pleased. As someone who was entrusted with the security of the Gereign base of the Carnil Mafia, these failures fell on his shoulders.

"Continue the operations," She ordered. "That goes for yourself. Obtain the Ecstasy Plum Fruits, or die trying. I can assure you that the importance of the narcotics supply far exceeds that of your lives."

"Yes, Master," Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes. "When will the reinforcements be arriving?"

"I alone will be arriving under the guise of a Martial Senior, initially." She announced. "I will oversee the Gereign Base when I arrive. It is far too important to be left in the hands of Martial Seniors, as I had expected. Once I arrive, we will be able to expand our operations tenfold. No number of Martial Seniors can overrun us with my presence."

"Yes, Master,"

"How are the Ecstasy Plum Fruit yields going?" Master Haishi asked.

"We've procured eight of them," Senior Zenshin replied. "However, the estimated yield was apparently one-fifth of the yield of our usual large-scale operations that we've halted."

"Eight is highly insufficient for Lord Carnil's machinations," Master Haishi's eyebrows curled as she glared at Senior Zenshin. "Increase your yield. Work harder. The Carnil Mafia has invested much in you over the past three centuries. If there ever was a time to prove you are worth it, it is now, during the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that the Underworld has, to ascend to greater heights."

The call was cut, leaving him to heave a deep sigh as a surge of rage welled up within him. He didn't even know what his assailant looked like, yet he pictured how wonderful it would be to watch the light of the man's eyes when he finally got his hands on him.

"I almost hope he reaches me," The man gritted his teeth.

It didn't take a genius to figure out that the assailant, whoever he was, was targeting the weaker Martial Seniors first and then moving on to the stronger ones. After all, the sole three high-grade Martial Seniors of the Carnil Mafia had yet to be untouched in their exploration operations for the Ecstasy Plum Fruit.

The fourth Martial Senior yet to be ambushed was a grade-twelve Martial Senior who was on the cusp of being a high-grade Martial Senior.

Senior Zenshin was the strongest of them all, thus following this pattern, he would be the last to be attacked.

Perhaps for the first time in his life, he regretted being the strongest. Had he been weaker, he would have had the opportunity to run into the hated assailant before anybody else.

There wasn't the slightest shred of doubt in his mind that he would rip the sinner alive. While he displayed a docile demeanor before Master Haishi, that was because he had boundless gratitude for the Martial Master who had taken him under her wing and trained him.

His true nature was the polar opposite.

He gritted his teeth as his fists clenched, his mouth curled with hatred.

"I'm going to find and tear you apart with my own two hands." Rage overflowed onto his face.

BEEP

He glanced at the communication amulet at his waist, reading the message he received.

"What?!" His eyes widened. "Senior Bernete is... dead?"

He gritted his teeth.

Only three Martial Seniors remained.

"DAMN IT ALL!" He bellowed, shaking the ground with sheer rage.

Martial Seniors were being picked off one by one with ease. Most organizations would be broken and in shambles with such a loss, but this was not the case for the Carnil Mafia, not only did this organization have the power to tap into the massive Martial Artist population of the Kandrian Empire, they even had the power to attract Martial Seniors from across the continent.

As the Underworld of a continental powerhouse, their power was proportionally high. They simply were not responding the way that Senior Zenshin had hoped. After all, once Master Haishi arrived, the operations would be able to expand massively under her protection.

Essentially, he would be deemed unnecessary and incompetent.

He clenched his fists. 'That cannot be allowed to happen.'

However, now there were only three high-grade Martial Seniors left. Although the assailant's stealth was absurd, and his power was certainly great, he didn't think that he would lose.

For now, he needed to investigate the death of Senior Bernete. It wouldn't be long before he would have to report to Master Haishi about this incident as well.

"What is the profile of the killing, same as the previous ones?" Senior Znehsin asked, growling at the scout when he met up with him.

"N-No, sir," The man gulped. "The corpse was arranged in a peculiar manner. With its arms and knees folded to resemble a chicken."

"What...?" Senior Zenshin's eyes narrowed. "Chicken...? If I'm not wrong, that is something that the Vale Syndicate does."

The Vale Syndicate was the leading Underworld organization of the Republic of Gorteau and was the Underworld force that harvested supplies of narcotics from the Gereign Region to sell in the Republic of Gorteau.

His teeth gritted. "Has it been those bastards from the very get-go?"

"We don't know yet, sir, but we have begun investigating," The man remarked.

"Find out everything there is to know! If the Vale Syndicate is involved then this may very well turn out to be a war," Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes.

Yet he couldn't hide a savage smile. A known organization with a known presence in the Gereign Region was better than dealing with some singular elite assassin with ungodly stealth.

Chapter 1492: Machinations

"Hm, I'm hoping this works out," Rui murmured as he read through the reports provided by the Beggar's Sect. "I may have overstepped a bit too much."

He had been the one to kill Senior Bernete, he had purposely arranged the body in a manner that resembled what the Vale Syndicate was known for doing to its enemies when it wanted to send out a message.

This was to spark friction between the two groups.

The more friction he could spark, the greater the reluctance that Carnil Mafia would have to return to the Gereign Region after Rui destroyed their base. While the Carnil Mafia was certainly weak in no way, they had more important priorities.

The Kandrian Throne War was their absolute priority at the moment, it was far more important than exacerbating a small conflict with the Vale Syndicate.

"However, I predict that that won't be the case," Rui murmured.

"Why not?" Ferm, the executive of the Beggar's Sect assigned to Rui, asked.

"Because of this man," Rui pointed at the profile of Senior Zenshin. "Based on the character profile that your sect has provided me, he will be driven to exacerbate the conflict."

Rui had thought long and hard about how he could manipulate the Vale Syndicate to provoke hostilities with the Carnil Mafia so that he could increase the cost of the drug operations of the Carnil Mafia by forcing them to resist the pressure of the syndicate.

However, he soon came to realize that merely making them believe that the Carnil Mafia was responsible for sabotaging their operation was not enough.

He needed a much stronger provocation.

"Senior Zenshin is perfect for that role," Rui calmly analyzed. "He is hurt the most by my assassinations. He is surely looking for the culprit with everything he has. All I need to do is give him a viable culprit, and he will do the rest."

"Perhaps you're overestimating his proactiveness," Ferm suggested.

"Unless your information is inaccurate or incomplete, that is certainly not the case. His violent and aggressive temperament is perfect for this role. That is why I need to convince him that the syndicate is involved, he will divert his efforts in their direction."

"What if he is prudent enough to realize he's being manipulated?"

Rui smirked. "People will be more inclined to believe what they want to. Perhaps intelligent and objective leaders on either side would realize they're being played and avoid falling for it, but unfortunately, neither side is particularly intelligent and certainly not objective."

Rui glanced at a map laid out on a table before him. "Both sides would rather have a culprit in mind for their respective sabotages than not. Especially the Carnil Mafia side. Many of their Martial Seniors have fallen to an unknown assailant with incredible stealth. They would do anything to know the identity of the culprit. Once they do, they will be able to leverage their power to find and kill him far easier than they otherwise could."

Now, he just had to hope that this would devolve into a full-blown conflict.

"...But even if it doesn't, my plans will still be fine," Rui narrowed his eyes. "I will still kill the three remaining Martial Seniors in Gereign base of the mafia. And then I will destroy their precious base and foundation."

The Vale Syndicate was just icing on the cake. If hostilities broke out and the two sides started fighting, that would be good for Rui to curb the Carnil Mafia's ambitions in the Gereign Region.

However, even if they didn't do anything, the passive pressure that they would put on the Carnil Mafia alone was enough.

What would one do if one had a neighbor who wanted to kill them?

It was only reasonable to take precautions.

A tall fence, perhaps.

What if the neighbor was rich and powerful?

Perhaps one might be inclined to get a guard, a gun, and reinforce doors.

However, these measures cost money. Thus the mere presence of a hostile neighbor increased the cost of living safely. This was what Rui was banking on. He needed to not only pause their operations but completely halt it.

"Now for the hardest part," Rui narrowed his eyes.

Yet he couldn't even hide his excitement. He needed to fight and kill three high-grade Martial Seniors. He had taken low-grade Martial Seniors multiple times in his endeavors thus far, he had even killed multiple mid-grade Martial Seniors.

But finally, it was time to fight high-grade Martial Seniors.

This was what Rui had been waiting for. It had been exceedingly taxing his patience to hold back from fighting them.

Planning, strategizing, thinking, he certainly was far from a stranger from all of this, but he had been itching to test his newfound power and his developed Martial Art against Martial Seniors who had been around for centuries.

Just the very concept of Martial Seniors who had trained for centuries gave him a deep impression of their power.

For one, he knew he was leagues behind them in raw power. Ieyasu being six years older than Rui had a visibly stronger Martial Heart. How much stronger would a Martial Heart that had grown for centuries be?

Rui actually knew how strong.

His Martial Heart glowed, however, Senior Zenshin's Martial Heart seemed to shine. The sheer amount of power contained within his body was astronomical.

Furthermore, with centuries of dedication to his Martial Art, it had grown truly formidable in its ability to harness its raw power and make the most efficient and effective use of it. While Rui was leaps and bounds ahead of his peers when it came to the development of his Martial Art, Senior Zenshin had centuries on him.

He was at a disadvantage in every single conceivable way. In every parameter except for the quality of their Martial Art.

He had only met one person who had a Martial Art whose grade was in the same league of power, and while he was surprisingly close by, he was not a part of the Carnil Mafia.

It was time to test his limits once more.

Chapter 1493: Temper

Word spread through the Gereign Region.

"The Carnil Mafia and the Vale Syndicate have entered a cold war."

As of yet, hostilities had not been broken out. However, everyone even remotely informed could sense the friction.

Competition over resources, trade routes, and skirmishes. These things all pointed to a broader underlying tension.

Yet none of them knew that the origin of this tension was two red herrings created by a mastermind that had foreseen all of this.

Rui, on the other hand, did not care.

He had planted seeds of conflict because they had been worth the effort. If they panned out into a grand fire, that was great.

If they merely smoldered, that too was fine.

He was much more focused on something else.

The combat data of the three high-grade Martial Seniors in the Gereign base of the Carnil Mafia.

When he revised all the information that the Beggar's Sect had on them...

"They're goddamn monsters," Rui grinned.

Senior Zenshin, the Veritable Tiger.

His Martial Body had been geared towards absolute offense and power.

His claws had been honed and sharpened for three hundred years.

According to the Beggar's Sect, his claws were so sharp, that they would create sparks and crackles of lightning when he clawed through the air.

Rui's eyes widened. 'He can create plasma just by swiping his claws? Is he splitting molecules into atoms? Just how absurdly sharp are they?!'

Rui couldn't even imagine how sharp they were if they were progressively sharpening over the span of three hundred years. There were some things that could only be gained through dedicated perseverance for mind-bogglingly long periods.

The more Rui read about him, the more he became wary of the sheer peril that Senior Zenshin possessed.

His piercing attacks were decisively fatal. Rui suspected that the piercing attacks could probably hurt him even if Senior Zenshin didn't use his Martial Heart

With it? He could probably split Rui in half.

'And despite this, he is still only a grade-thirteen Martial Senior,' Rui laughed.

That meant that there were two grades of Martial Seniors who were above even Senior Zenshin.

There probably were a small group of elites who could crush even Senior Zenshin.

'The Senior Realm is definitely wider than the Squire Realm.' Rui clenched his fist, trying to suppress his excitement. 'I already knew this, but actually seeing the vastness of this Realm leaves one speechless.'

He had yet to be pushed to his absolute limits in a fight. Not even the mid-grade Martial Seniors who were on the upper end of the mid-grade had been able to push Rui to go all out. Currently, his Martial Art had three oases of power within it.

The Pattern Recognition System.

The Metabody System.

The Hypnomatrix.

Usually, he needed only one, or at most, two to beat the mid-grade Martial Seniors of the Carnil Mafia.

Never had he been forced to use all three against any Martial Senior.

However, he knew that at the bare minimum, he would be forced to use all three against high-grade Martial Seniors.

'Huff... In truth, this isn't even the most optimal way to deal with them," Rui heaved a sigh. 'I could probably manipulate even more forces if I wanted to mount even more political pressure. Then I could just incentivize them to take attack and take over if the vulnerability of the current Gereign Base was revealed.'

However, he ultimately decided to not take out the high-grade Martial Seniors in this manner.

The reason was simple.

'I need to fight them.' A small grin cracked at the edge of his mouth. 'I want to fight them.'

That was the truth. He had grown a lot since his last fight to his limit. It had been more than four years since he fought the Martial Senior of the child trafficking ring in the Saiful Region. That was the last time a Martial Senior had pushed him to his limit when he was able to fight freely and all-out.

He needed to know his precise limit.

He also wanted to extensively break in his Martial Art with some experience. Experience was the foundation of growth. Anybody who didn't temper one's Martial Art with experience would cease to grow.

'It's like building a tower. The taller the tower, the stronger the foundations of the tower need to be at each level. Each floor needs to be strong enough to bear the weight of all the floors above it, otherwise, the tower will break.'

It was no different from how every development project, no matter if it was physical or software, needed to be tested rigorously countless times before it was deemed to be ready.

Physical structures needed to be pressure tested thoroughly at every stage before progressing to the next stage.

Programming projects needed to be run and debugged at every step.

What would happen if these processes were skipped?

The end result would be highly flawed, useless, and even harmful.

Rui had no intentions of skipping this process. He had made a lot of gains in the past years, and now it was time to temper them. Like a blacksmith beating the impurities out of a metal while increasing the tensile strength of a blade.

That was why he chose to go through with this.

Merely four hours later, Rui found himself standing before one of the three high-grade Martial Seniors of the Carnil Mafia deep in the Great Forest of Hypnonarak.

"I expected that this day would come," A woman remarked, staring at a masked Rui. "I am the youngest of the three elites at the Gereign Base. Still, the fact that you have evaluated me to be the weakest of my peers is displeasing."

Her eyes sharpened.

RUMBLE!

The very land shook as if responding to her rage.

Rui simply stared at her wordlessly, taking his stance.

"You will regret underestimating me," She declared as she clapped her hands.

'Dominion Art; World of Chaos.'

Rui's eyes widened as the ground below him sank and the forest around him erupted in a tsunami, looking to swallow him.

"Repent in hell," Her eyes flashed with bloodlust.

Chapter 1494: Tomb

Earthquakes were seismic radiation generated through the displacement of land. Shifts in tectonic plates relative to each other caused a huge release of energy that spread over great distances, causing quakes to spread across a great area.

However, there was a person who sought to harness this mechanism and use it as the source of their power.

Except in reverse.

Seismic radiation would diverge from the epicenter, which was generally located at the site of displacement. However, some discovered that if the diverging seismic radiation from the epicenter were to instead converge at the same epicenter, a reverse displacement would occur.

They were reversible phenomena.

This gave rise to the niche art of displacing land by generating converging seismic radiation with one's body.

Rui's eyes widened as the land beneath his feet sunk, and the surrounding bedrock rose, threatening to swallow him whole. His Seismic Mapping could sense a tremendous amount of seismic radiation being generated by both her feet.

'I see...' Rui realized as leaped, launching a Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique to blast himself an escape. 'She's using vibrations to generate seismic radiation and uses the principles of constructive resonance to cause radiation to converge and surge at any given point of her choice.'

BOOM!

Rui's eyes widened as several more surges of land struck him laterally, flinging him away. For a moment, he had been too immersed in his opponent's Martial Art.

She refused to give him even a moment of respite.

STEP STEP STEP!

She maneuvered towards him as she engaged in a deliberate form of footwork. Perhaps, others would be unable to understand their significance.

But not Rui.

His eyes narrowed as he leaped into the air.

WHOOSH!

The slightest moment later, a surge of spikes emerged at the spot where he was standing, narrowly missing him.

She inhaled deeply, activating a tremendously powerful breathing technique as her arms swayed in specific matter, causing alterations in the generated wind currents to manipulate as she pleased.

RUMBLE!

The very atmosphere shook as she generated a tremendous amount of power. Rui's eyes widened as he felt an incredible downward force that pushed him closer to the ground.

"Rgh!" His expression grew grave as her overwhelming power pulled him down.

She had generated a powerful downward wind current with the power of her Martial Heart. Although she wasn't as old as Senior Zenshin, her body had much more time to mature than Rui's. She was far above him in terms of raw power.

Rui felt footing him below disappear as she created vacuums that prevented him from trying to resist sky-walking.

As he plummeted, a hill emerged from the flat land, flying straight up at him tremendous velocity. His own descent in combination with the rapid rising of the topographical structure barely gave him any time to generate his own attack, he was hardly able to get out a Mighty Roar Flash Blast before it reached him.

BOOM!!!

The entire forest shook as a titanic explosion ensued, the attack successfully managed to destroy the incoming hill.

Yet she was far from done.

Her eyes intensified as she put more energy into her breathing technique, generating an even stronger force. She seemed to almost dance as she stepped around, engaging in her strange, yet enchanting mysterious footwork.

This time, spikes flew out from all directions. His eyes widened as an enormous number of land spikes converged into his position.

BOOM!!!

Senior Marna narrowed her eyes as several flesh wounds appeared on Rui's body. 'He's tougher than he looks...'

She clapped her hands. 'No matter, I'll just continue bombarding him.'

"Urgh..." Rui grimaced. 'I'd be dead if I didn't have Nemean Blossom.'

However, his problems were not gone. For one, she could still eliminate his ability to sky-walk. Even now, he was plummeting to the air as she generated yet another wave of spikes to strike at him.

BAM BAM BAM!

Rui gritted his teeth as the many waves of spikes bombarded him with attack after attack. He didn't possess any maneuvering techniques that could help him midair by compensating for or undoing the fact that she sealed his sky-walking with a vacuum beneath his feet and a huge amount of pressure in above him pushing him down.

BOOM!!!

SPLAT!

Rui's eyes widened as he coughed blood. A single spike had pierced through even his Nemean Blossom, impaling him.

Senior Carna's eyes intensified. 'Now!'

She crossed her arms as every step she took sent pulses of immensely powerful seismic radiation intermingling with each other.

Intermingling and growing stronger.

They converged into a single spot deep underground.

A single point.

For a brief moment, the titanic power of Senior Marna's Martial Body and Heart were compressed within a single point.

And there was only one direction it could all go.

Up.

BOOOM!!!

Countless spikes erupted from the ground converging on Rui!

He was entangled in a web of spikes even as he extricated himself from the one impaling him, furthermore, he had no leverage to maneuver due to the absence of air beneath his feet to serve as a footing.

Perhaps Kane would have been able to avoid those attacks.

But alas, Rui was not Kane.

SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT!

Countless spears impaled different parts of his body, making him bleed.

"Ack!" Rui spat blood as he grimaced.

She stepped about, dancing in an enchanting manner. The spikes that had tangled Rui about plummeted down, dragging him along as the downward pressure ensured he didn't escape.

Yet it was only after he reached the ground that the true attack had begun.

'Dominion Art: Tectonic Convergence,'

She clapped her hands. Generating tremendous amounts of power with a powerful breathing technique and her shining Martial Heart. All of that power was instantly turned into seismic radiation with her peculiar footwork and vibration.

It caused the land to shift.

WHOOSH!

The land around Rui that had entangled him in impaling spikes instantly shifted, it flew down hundreds of meters in a tunnel.

"This land is a tomb." She whispered to him with seismic radiation.

"Your tomb."

Her hands clapped once more.

The land converged, moving in closer. The tunnel shut down as the walls moved in closer, eventually closing in on Rui, crushing him.

The very world weighed down on his impaled body with the weight of a mountain.

Chapter 1495: Admiration

Impaled by spears.

Buried deep within the land.

A mountain crushing down on him.

Immersed in magma.

And yet, in that moment, a single emotion consumed Rui Quarrier.

Boundless admiration for his enemy.

At that moment, he could feel nothing else.

Nothing.

The pain of his injuries.

The despair and misery that came with the sanity of a normal being.

They did not exist. Not within Rui Quarrier.

His eyes opened.

Endless will surged from deep within them. The fight was far from over.

'It's just beginning.'

Rui reduced Nemean Blossom to fifty percent, before activating Weaving Blood. He closed his eyes, shifting his muscles to dislodge the spears impaling his body as Weaving Blood closed his wounds at a remarkable pace.

In just fifteen seconds, he was fully healed. He instantly deactivated Weaving Blood, activating Hypertrophic Surge in its place.

RUMBLE

Senior Marna froze, widening her eyes as she turned back to the battlefield where she had buried Rui. "Impossible."

Cracks emerged across the forest.

RUMBLE!

The land shook violently.

She gritted her teeth before activating her Dominion Art, trying to suppress him.

Yet, it was too late.

BOOM!!!

A titanic eruption emerged, reaching the skies as Rui broke through his prison with a tier six Transverse Resonance attack. An expression of pure relief emerged on his face as he breathed in fresh air.

"You..." Her eyes narrowed as she gritted her teeth. "I'll-"

She froze, widening her eyes. 'I can't breathe?'

Rui stared at her with calm eyes before lashing out at her at top speed, deactivating Hypertrophic Surge and activating his Neo Godspeed technique. Time slowed down to a crawl as he moved through a world that moved in slow motion. However, he knew that that alone wasn't enough to grant him the win.

She clapped her hands while leaping away from him at top speed. 'Dominion Art: Flowing Earthen Hymn Step.'

This was a technique that accelerated her maneuvering by having the land propel her away. With how superior her Martial Heart was, she was able to easily maintain the distance between them despite Rui's Metabody technique.

'I'm still struggling to breathe!' She gasped for breath.

Her power was significantly hampered as a result. Not only did she rely on it to generate half the power she relied on, she wasn't able to use the breathing techniques that she had created to suppress sky-walking.

Yet Rui never once took one step into the air.

No.

He chased after her on land.

A calm look of confidence flashed across his face.

'He could avoid my Martial Art by sky-walking but he doesn't...' Pure unbridled rage erupted from within her heart. 'How dare you underestimate me.'

She clapped her hands furiously.

The air boiled under the weight of her pressure.

Pure peril radiated from her.

She took two steps in rapid succession as she continued evading Rui, he narrowed his eyes as he felt the ground stirring.

Then four.

Then eight.

Then sixteen.

Then thirty-two.

Then sixty-four.

And then...

'Dominion Art: 108 Steps of Gaia.' An enormous erupt of soil swallowed Rui whole, killing him on the spot.

Or so it should have.

And yet, nothing happened.

Her eyes widened with surprise as the ground never surged up.

It never swallowed him.

And it certainly never killed him on the spot.

A single remark escaped Rui's mouth.

"I've already adapted to your Martial Art."

His tone was calm. His expression was composed. His words evoked a single emotion from deep within her.

Fear.

His eyes were silver, yet an unfathomable void emerged from deep within them. They seemed to consume everything they touched.

They pierced through her, making her feel transparent.

Naked.

Invisible.

'Damn it.' She clapped her hands as her Martial Heart strained, pushing itself to the limit. 'Damn it all!'

She activated more techniques, seeking to shift the earth to fight for her.

Yet it never did.

Nothing happened.

"BUT WHY?!" She bellowed with frustration as Rui chased after her at top speed. He didn't make any unusual movements, so why was he able to suppress her Martial Art?

The entirety of his focus was reaching her as he raced towards her, one step at a time.

'Wait...' Realization dawned on her. 'Step?'

Rui furiously blazed across the forest chasing after her.

Step by step.

STEP

VMMM!

STEP

VMMM!

STEP

VMMM!

Her eyes widened as she extended her senses underground. With every step he took, Rui applied Reverberating Lance to direct force underground using sympathetic resonance. Reverberating Lance was

a technique that used vibrations, throughout the fight, the moment Rui understood her Martial Art, he had fought passively.

He fought passively as he made the preparations needed to suppress her Martial Art. In order to suppress her Martial Art, he merely needed to sabotage the convergence of seismic radiation.

In order to do that, he needed to locate the point of convergence of seismic radiation. Unfortunately. He could not rely on Seismic Mapping. Just like with sound in the air, seismic radiation could be used to locate other things, but seismic radiation in and of itself could not be located.

Then the question was how was he supposed to know the location of the convergence of seismic radiation that gave rise to seismic displacement?

He had found the answer quickly. 'Unique convergences of seismic radiation give rise to unique seismic displacement attacks. I can estimate the location of the convergence by looking at the attacks.'

The only issue was that the attacks came after the convergence, he needed to know ahead of time.

'Then, I just have to predict them,' He had realized early on in the fight. He needed to create a predictive model that predicted her attacks based on her preparatory movements, and then he could use that to find the convergence ahead of time.

He also needed to find the average resonance frequency of the land of the forest. This also required quite some time.

There was only question that had emerged in his mind when he began this process at the start of the fight.

'Can I make it in time?'

He hadn't known. The uncertainty of the outcome, the thrill of the fear of death, the ecstasy of unfolding his full power. These emotions reigned through Rui even as he had been buried deep in the crust of the land.

And even after he emerged from within.

Chapter 1496: The Void

"I almost died but... I made it in time."

His declaration rung in her ears.

STEP

STEP

STEP

With every step he took, he used Outer Convergence and Reverberating Lance to generate seismic pulses of the exact resonant frequency of the ground, permeating the seismic pulses relatively smoothly through the bedrock.

They traveled deep underground, interfering with the convergence and constructive resonance of the seismic radiation that caused the land to be displaced to attack Rui.

As a result, the land never surged to kill Rui.

RUMBLE

It shook violently. Yet not even a grain of sand rose to strike Rui.

"Dammit..." She gritted her teeth as her expression curled with frustration. "Huff..."

It was frustrating because she knew she was far more powerful when it came to raw power. Rui was indeed a man, but she had a far greater Martial Heart.

That was a gap that could not be bridged by the differences between the sexes, not even in the slightest.

Yet, he was able to sabotage her seismic convergence every single time. Although he used Outer Convergence and Reverberating Lance, they were only two techniques.

She, on the other hand, had six supplementary techniques that she had worked hard to develop over the span of a century. On top of that, unlike him, her Martial Body was designed for this.

Her Martial Body contained a much greater amount and proportion of quick-twitch muscle fibers than the regular Martial Body. This meant that she was far superior to Rui when it came to short high-power and high-speed movements, which were highly relevant to vibrations.

Yet despite all these advantages, Rui was able to overpower her seismic radiation convergence with his seismic pulses.

Why?

The answer was simple.

'I CAN'T BREATHE!' She gasped for air like she was having an asthmatic attack as she desperately tried to generate her normal power levels.

The Breathing Crucifix refused to let her generate even a fraction of her full raw power. With just a single grade-nine technique, Rui was able to close a huge raw gap between himself and her, allowing him to suppress her seismic activity.

This was the result of two years of training. No matter who his opponent was, they would have to face heavy sabotage if they wanted to face Rui. He had harnessed the power of his mind.

'Dammit...!' She gritted her teeth. 'Damn it all!'

She struggled with every ounce of power. Using every trick, every technique, everything that her Body, Heart, and Art had.

It was crushed.

No...

It was being consumed.

His eyes fixed on her. The endless void that she had beheld within them had surged forward, enveloping her. The gap between them closed as Rui gained on her as her hampered respiration caught up with her.

Every attack she made, he erased.

Every step she took, he outpaced.

Every step he took oppressed her.

She could not avoid him.

She could not attack him.

She could not even breathe.

As she gazed into her eyes, she found herself standing on a path. A path that extended beyond the eye. A path she had walked for a long time.

Yet the VOID didn't care.

It enveloped her path.

It enveloped greedily.

Hungrily.

And then it consumed.

CRACK!

Her body shook, trembling. Her eyes quivered with despair as she watched her Martial Art unravel. All the pride she had ever felt in developing such a unique and powerful Martial Art crumbled.

'Unique and powerful?' Her body went limp. 'What a joke.'

CRACK CRACK CRACK!

Boundless emptiness consumed her as the sounds of her Martial Path crumbling under the weight of the VOID overlapped with the physical sounds of her ribs cracking under the weight of Rui's Flowing Convergence.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

Rui's eyes narrowed as he bombarded her vitals with powerful blows. Her battered body grew worse with each blow as she began bleeding from multiple orifices. Her body grew limp as her eyes grew hollow.

CRACK!

A well-timed and well-placed kick to the skull did the trick. Her body fell to the ground as pool of blood began forming around her skull.

Rui heaved a deep sigh, narrowing his eyes gravely. He knew what had happened, but he didn't dare stop.

She had almost killed him once, if he stopped suppressing her mentally and physically, she could potentially use that absurd technique once more.

Besides, he intended to kill her regardless

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced as he coughed up several bouts of blood, deactivating his Martial Heart. "Damn..."

Abusing the Metabody System alongside his Martial Heart was very stressful to the body. The Martial Heart accelerated his aging while Weaving Blood sacrificed his constitution for healing. He could handle either one individually with no problem, but abusing both to the limit did his body no limits.

'I didn't have a choice.' Rui panted. 'If I didn't use Weaving Blood there I would have died on the spot.'

He had been forced to use Nemean Blossom to withstand the sheer pressure that her technique generated to converge on his body as well, further adding to the strain on his body.

His eyes narrowed gravely. 'If any of those spikes hit my head in the wrong way...'

He had done his best to guard his vitals, but he couldn't guard everything. And her offensive power had already been proven to handily overcome the Nemean Blossom.

'I could have died many times during the first half of the battle. In fact, if she hadn't gotten arrogant and done her best to make sure I was dead, I could have died then and there. At the very least, I would be much worse than I currently am.'

He shook his head. Reflecting was good, but he didn't want to get lost in too many what-ifs. The fact of the matter was that he won.

He won against a high-grade Martial Senior.

A deep wave of satisfaction overcame him as he got up. He quickly inhaled a potion, before steadily distancing himself from the battlefield as he headed towards the human domain.

Chapter 1497: Domain

Rui had much to think about the previous fight. It had been the first fight in quite a long time where he had been pushed to such a limit, and it helped him understand the current state of his power and progress.

Naturally, it also helped him realize his flaws and shortcomings.

'I need to be quicker with the Hypnomatrix,' Rui tutted. He had just gotten up after a good long sleep, refreshing himself a bit back at his personal quarters. 'Had I made my choice quicker, it wouldn't have gotten to this. This was despite having foreknowledge on her.'

Although the Beggar's Sect had offered him a good amount of knowledge into Senior Marna's abilities, it didn't offer insight into the nuances that he needed to figure out which Hypnomatrix technique to use.

By the time he figured it out, he was too busy trying not to die, being bombarded by the very land he stood on. Things would have been even worse had he not had any insight into her. He would have been completely blindsided by her niche abilities and there was a real possibility that he would have died.

That was why despite winning, and despite the satisfaction that came with adaptively evolving to and overcoming someone of her caliber, he didn't let it get to his head. He was not so superior that he had earned the right to look down on her.

'Still, a domain Martial Art...'Rui grew curious about this field of Martial Art. "I guess even to this day, there are fields of Martial Art out there that I don't know about."

The world was wide and scarcely interconnected, there would always be places, people, Martial Art, and other phenomena that he would never be able to learn about unless he came across them himself. Not even the powerful Martial Union could every single and all niche and exotic techniques across the continent.

Only the Beggar's Sect could do something like that, but they were not a Martial organization.

However, despite being aware of this, he truly had been surprised when he learned about domain techniques. These techniques consisted of any and all principles that manipulated the environment in battle.

It was different from techniques that made use of air or sound since he produced the gust of wind or projectile of sound from within his body. In the case of domain techniques, the environment never directly interacted with the user. "Interesting..." Rui narrowed his eyes. He wondered if he had any aptitude for domain techniques. He probably did since, from what he could tell, domain techniques were hybrids of a variety of different principles that manipulated the environment. There was no reason he was particularly bad at it.

An exciting thought came to his mind as he wondered if he could potentially integrate an element of domain manipulation into his Martial Art. Perhaps he could manipulate his environment in a way that aided with adaptive evolution as a concept.

Perhaps he could have his environment to adapt to become antithetical to his opponent.

Or perhaps he could have his environment aid his physical and mental adaptive evolution.

Perhaps he could manipulate his environment to be unfavorable to everybody, but allow him to gain an advantage after adapting to it. There was much greater power to be gained if one was willing to risk one's self.

There were many potential ideas, however, there was no use speculating any further. He knew far too little about them. He didn't know what was possible and what wasn't.

"Hmmm..." Rui narrowed his eyes as he considered the matter. 'I'll put it on the list.'

He wasn't short of ideas or avenues worth pursuing, he even had a list of things he should consider doing or pursuing. However, domain techniques were not an immediate concern for him at the moment, it was something to consider after he had fulfilled his vendetta.

This was especially so since he was feeling the pressure on his decade-long time limit. It had been more than seven years since he left the Shionel Confederation, approaching eight years. He wanted to quickly get his hands on the information to form a foolproof way to get rid of Chairman Deacon. That was now his top priority. Everything came after that.

'Besides... I also have other avenues of pursuit that rank higher on the list such as Primordial Seed.' Rui sighed. Of course, integrating Primordial Seed into his Martial Art was much harder than mastering an existing field of Martial Art. BEEP

"Hm?" Rui raised an eyebrow, reaching for his communication device and reading the message that he had received. "Oh...? Interesting."

According to the Beggar's Sect, of the two remaining Martial Seniors, one of them had refused to take any assignment that required him to leave the safety of the highly fortified base HQ. Apparently, the Martial Senior had no intentions of subjecting himself to any danger, such as the assailant who had been scratching off the Martial Seniors of the Gereign Base. He did not want to risk his life.

"Hah..." Rui scoffed. "How sensible. This one isn't going to make it to the Master Realm and has no intentions of going there."

He didn't begrudge sensible caution to preserve one's life. Not everyone could risk their life for personal ambition, and not everyone needed to. It was OK to not want to die. However, an unwillingness to bear the risk of death for Martial Artists usually signified their limits.

He glanced at the name on an open file before him.

[Senior Francis]

The vice-leader of the security and exploration team under Senior Zenshin. Despite his unwillingness to face Rui, he was undoubtedly strong. Having been a Martial Senior for nearly a hundred and fifty years, he had managed to survive and overcome a lot of tribulations, even going as far as to awaken his Martial Heart in a desperate attempt to survive sixty years ago.

He was Rui's next target, and he refused to accept Rui's implicit challenge to face him in the forest, unlike Senior Marna. "Still, now that she's dead, I can finally execute that plan."

Chapter 1498: Didn't Survive

"You're going to hole yourself in the highest security arena of the Gereign Base?!" Senior Zenshin glared at a man seated in front of him.

A few days had passed since the death of Senior Marna, it had caused quite an uproar within the Gereign Base of the Carnil Mafia. "Of course," The man replied calmly, sipping some tea. "I do not wish to die or get hurt."

"You sorry excuse of a Martial Senior," Senior Zenshin curled his mouth with contempt. "You really are the most pathetic Martial Artist I have ever met. A Martial Senior cowering away like a little girl is something that should not exist!"

"The feeling is mutual," Senior Francis calmly replied. "If anything, it is the rest of you who are idiots. How many times did I tell you we should cease all activity until Master Haishi arrives? How many times did I warn the others to abstain from traveling across the Hypnonarak forest? No one listened, and all of them died. Hmph, serves them right."

"You bastard..." Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes. "You cowardly wimp. You haven't a single bone of pride or courage in you."

"If those bones didn't break so easily, the others who had them would still be alive," Senior Francis snorted. "Hmph, Martial Artists of the Underworld are too reckless, irrational, and volatile. That's why they have a higher casualty rate than those in the Royal Army."

"You aren't fit for the Carnil Mafia, that's one thing we agree on," Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes. "This ain't the Martial Union. This ain't the Royal Army. This is the Underworld. There is no royalty agreement. There is no hefty salary with government benefits. There is no safety blanket, guarantees, rights, or privileges. Only one thing matters in the Underworld."

"...Power," Senior Francis muttered. "That's right," Senior Zenshin's eyes narrowed. "The weak are exploited and killed, the strong exploit and kill. That is the only rule of the Underworld. You can't show weakness. You can't let others walk over you. You can't be willing to back down. You can't run away. If you do..."

His expression intensified. "You'll never stop running. You'll never stop backing down. You'll never not be weak. They won't let you. That's the reason the other Seniors of our team decided to go hunting for the Plum Ecstasy Fruits even though they knew they were going to be attacked...A pussy like you who is willing to let others walk over all over you by showing weakness would never understand."

Senior Francis snorted wordlessly. However, even he had to admit that there was merit to what Senior Zenshin was telling him. Backing down from a threat or a risk, that too an implicit one, was weakness. And weakness was consumed in the Kandrian Underworld. If word got out that the Martial Seniors that the Carnil Mafia at the Gereign Base were too scared to leave their base because they were afraid of being killed, it would destroy their reputations.

It would do more than that, it would destroy the influence that they had cultivated for decades in the Kandrian Underworld. None of them were willing to do that. That was why none of them backed away from Rui even though they knew he was going to ambush them.

None of them except Senior Francis.

"I intend to leave the Kandrian Underworld, no, the Kandrian Empire once I'm done with this assignment," Senior Francis remarked. "I will have paid off my debt to the Carnil Mafia with this assignment, and then I'm free to leave."

"Hah..." Senior Zenshin snorted contemptuously. "You don't actually believe that you can leave, do you?"

"I have no intention of staying, I'll tell you that much."

"Just you try leaving..." Senior Zenshin narrowed his eyes. "Master Haishi may dispatch me to kill you, and I promise you that I will not hesitate."

"Hah..." Senior Francis felt his head aching. "Speaking of, when is she scheduled to arrive?"

"Today," Senior Zenshin grunted, his eyes narrowing.

"That's earlier than I expected," Senior Francis remarked with surprise. "She was furious when I informed her that Senior Marna died at the hands of the assailant," Senior Zenshin grunted. "She was personally ordered by Lord Carnil to stabilize the Gereign Base and restore the narcotics supply."

"Huff..." Senior Francis heaved a deep sigh. "I might just choose to run away before she arrives. I'm afraid she'll kill me."

"She definitely will if you try running away," Senior Zenshin snorted.

Senior Francis got up, walking towards the door. "I'm going to hole myself in the HQ command center, the most secure place in this facility. Mark my words, Zenshin, I'm not going to die, I'm going to survi-

Suddenly, his body went limp.

His eyes rolled to the back of his head.

THUD

Senior Zenshin simply watched, shocked, as his lifeless corpse fell to the ground. Senior Zenshin simply stared for the briefest moment before his instincts felt a single thing.

Danger.

"RARGH!" He activated his shining Martial Heart in just a microsecond, spinning as he swiped his claws omnidirectionally.

A titanic amount of power and force was generated.

...SPLAT!

A masked Martial Senior appeared out of thin air, leaping away from Senior Zenshin. His arms were bleeding, having blocked the prior attack. Senior Zenshin's eyes narrowed as he recognized the mask. This was the same bastard that started all of this by killing Senior Nereau. He gritted his teeth as his eyes widened with rage. "You..."

For a moment, the two Martial Seniors stared at each other. The very air seemed to quiver under the sheer force of mind that the two powerful Martial Seniors exerted. Senior Zenshin let his emotions boil. He let his rage soar through, taking over. He had pent up a lot of frustration over the past week or so, and he had no intentions of letting the chief party responsible for it go.

His eyes grew feral as he lashed out, abandoning his rationality.

Just as Rui had planned.

Chapter 1499: Power

1499 Power

Rui's plan came to fruition perfectly. The moment the number of Martial Seniors reduced to two, the Gereign Base became viable for targeting. Before, he had avoided assassinating any target there because the risks were too high with the number of Martial Seniors residing in it.

He couldn't maintain the Greater Phantomind Void, at least without any risks of seriously messing up, while also engaging in heavy combat that required his full attention.

Thus, if he got hit with a long-range wide-scale attack after assassinating one of them, he would be exposed to be attacked by multiple strong Martial Seniors.

Even for him, that was not something he could overcome at his current level of power.

That was why he waited for the right moment; when there were only two Martial Seniors left.

Then, it was possible for him to do his regular assassination modus operandi by preparing and finding the right resonance frequencies to assassinate him with a single strike.

Infiltrating had been difficult, but with the intelligence that the Beggar's Sect supplied, he had been able to do it with relative ease. The hard part was maintaining Greater Phantomind Void over longer periods of time. This tired him out a lot and he had needed plenty of mental rejuvenation potions to compensate.

He had also made sure to take both mental and physical rejuvenation potions before he committed the assassination so that he would be ready to fight without reserve if he needed to.

And as it turned out, he did indeed need to.

SPLATbender

His eyes had widened as four gashes had appeared across his arm after he headed toward Senior Zenshin, looking to attack him as well. Yet clearly the man's danger instincts were extraordinarily honed. Rui was impressed that he was able to sense his attack thanks to sheer instincts.

It was the first time that someone had managed to not be completely done in by the Greater Phantomind Void.

'I see, so his body isn't the only beastlike trait he has. His instincts have reached a level that makes even Primordial Instinct look trivial! Rui mused with interest.

"You..." Senior Zenshin muttered as his boiling emotions grew more intense by the second.

Rui's eyes narrowed as he felt horrifying peril from Senior Zenshin. The sheer pressure that he released far exceeded anything Rui had ever felt from any other Martial Senior.

At that moment, Rui knew that the man was the strongest Martial Senior he had ever met. The Martial Seniors of Vilun Island, the Floating Sect, the Derschek Region, and even the only high-grade Martial Senior he had fought.

The beast that stood before him was stronger than all of them. Not even Senior Ceeran had generated such abysmal peril.

The man's expression curled with inhuman bloodlust.

His claws grew longer.

His teeth evolved into fangs.

His eyes had turned red, bloodshot with mind-numbing rage.

"HRYARGH!" He snarled, swinging his claws towards Rui with a titanic amount of force!

BOOM!!!

Rui dodged the four gargantuan shockwaves that emerged from the man's claws. The shockwaves tore through the Gereign Base and beyond. Cleaving apart the bedrock and any structure that stood in its for nearly a kilometer away from its inception.

A huge number of people had died, and vast amounts of infrastructure had been torn apart.

RUMBLE!

The land beneath them quaked under the sheer raw power that spilled over. Rui's eyes widened at the sheer raw power that the man outputted with a single attack. It didn't take him even a moment to make a crucial choice.

Senior Zenshin didn't even waste a moment, quickly transitioning to the next attack.

"RARGH!" He snarled, launching yet another blast that Rui narrowly evaded.

Yet this time, the attack did only a fraction of the damage that the previous ones did. Rui rushed forward, racing towards the man as the man launched several more powerful shockwaves. Yet each of them was weaker than the previous ones.

BOOM!!

A powerful Flowing Canon crashed into the man's guard, pushing him away as he skidded back a meter.

'My strongest attack only did that much...? Oh boy...'

Yet he was unable to contain the crooked grin at the edge of his mouth. The only way he could beat Senior Zenshin was if he executed his adaptive evolution to the best of his abilities.

"You..." The man's ferocity only grew more feral. His breathing grew more strained as he choked out his words. "...What did you do to me?"

Rui narrowed his eyes as he leaped away, as formidable as the man's long-range prowess was, Rui knew that he could not afford to engage in close-range combat with those claws. He would literally be cleaved in half.

"GIVE ME BACK MY POWER!" He bellowed, jumping towards Rui at incredible speeds crossing the distance in an instant.

SPLAT!

"Rgh!" Rui grimaced as he blocked the man's claw swipes, pushing himself away as he opened the distance. He partially activated Weaving Blood, healing the deep gashes on his arms before swiftly launching a multitude of Mighty Roar Flash Blasts.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!!

Rui fired away at full power, unwilling to hold back. Senior Zenshin was so strong that he may very well have to go all out with the Hypnomatrix and the Metabody System even before the VOID algorithm was completed.

"RARGH!" The man snarled as he swung his claws against every incoming attack, tearing it apart before he could even strike his body.

Rui narrowed his eyes, gritting his teeth as he strained himself with sheer effort. It took him everything to he had just to keep Senior Zenshin at bay!

'And this is after I sealed away most of his raw power with Breathing Crucifix!' Rui's eyes widened with shock as he struggled to keep Senior Zenshin from closing the gap. 'I'd be dead if I fought him without the Hypnomatrix!'

Rui was glad that he decided to attack the Carnil Mafia after training under Master Zeamer. Had he chosen to do it before, he would undoubtedly be a dead man.

Chapter 1500: Onslaught

The first phase of the battle bloomed in completion as the two combatants exerted themselves to their absolute limit. Rui had begun the battle with Breathing Crucifix, immediately hampering Senior Zenshin's breathing greatly. He did not allow the man to exert his true full power by hampering breathing for the man had abysmally superior raw power than Rui.

Despite facing the impediment of Breathing Crucifix, he still possessed more raw power than Rui, something the latter found unbelievable.

Yet it was the truth.

"Rgh...!" Rui gritted his teeth as he strained himself to the absolute limit firing off many Mighty Roar Flash Blasts in rapid succession as he leaped away from Senior Zenshin trying to maintain as much distance between them. THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

The sheer energy ravaged the Gereign Base and more.

Senior Zenshin, on the other hand, was no slouch. Every attack that arrived was instantly decimated with a single claw swipe. His sharp claws pierced through every single sonic projectile without exception, effortlessly tearing them apart.

"RARGH!" He snarled as he began rushing forward at an even higher pace, swinging his claws with wildly as he tore down every single sonic projectile. His charge grew faster and faster as he got increasingly accustomed to blasting away all of Rui's Mighty Roar Flash Blast.

Not even Rui's maximum output was able to entirely keep him at bay despite his sealed power.

'Long-range attacks do tend to be weaker than close-range attacks due to the greater waste of energy in launching and transit, but how is he able to keep up with me so well despite falling victim to Breathing Crucifix?' Rui clenched his fists as he pushed himself to his physical limit.

He knew the answer, of course. The Martial Heart that shined across his body was that much superior to his own. "HYARH!" He tore past yet another barrage of Mighty Roar Flash Blasts, leaping towards Rui, his claws poised, ready to tear apart Rui at the first moment possible.

'No choice,' Rui exhaled deeply as he activated Hypertrophic Surge. BOOM!!!

Senior Zenshin's eyes widened as he was flung away by a tremendous surge in power. Rui's seemed to suddenly spike at the final moment, overcoming his own. Rui didn't necessarily have to resort to this option, he could have explored other possibilities, but he ultimately decided not to risk it.

Senior Zenshin's offense was far too lethal. A single mistake and Rui could easily lose an arm or be cleaved in half at close-quarters combat. It was best to maintain long-range combat for the time being, he didn't even want to risk it with close-range combat.

Although Senior Zenshin had remarkable long-range prowess, Rui knew that it was a learned skill that was not his primary and preferred range of combat. Close-range combatants faced certain universal problems. One of them was how they were going to close a distance against a long-range combatant who was not going to let them close the distance.

Some chose to maneuver.

Others chose superior raw power to push through with raw power.

Many chose to develop some elementary long-range prowess to combat long-range attacks. Senior Zenshin appeared to have chosen the latter two. He not only possessed long-range attacks, but he also preferred to close the gap by relying on his superior offense to tear everything his opponent threw to shreds.

It had been going well until Rui suddenly got a huge boost in power. His body grew in size and volume as he gained a muscular physique that matched that of Senior Zenshin's gargantuan body.

His offense grew proportionally.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!!!

A deeply powerful onslaught of attacks crashed into Senior Zenshin, flinging him an enormous distance away. By the time the man hit land, he found that Rui had flung him so far that they had ended up in the forest.

"Bastard..." Senior Zenshin gritted his teeth, baring his fangs fiercely. "You think you can take me down with such trivial attack power?"

Rui didn't deign to answer him. He was in a tight position himself. He needed to create a proper formidable predictive model on Senior Zenshin before his Metabody stamina ran out. If he ended up in a state where he couldn't use the Metabody System or the pattern recognition system, then he was screwed.

Senior Zenshin, on the other hand, simply stared at Rui with intense eyes fixed on the man. There was a brief stand-off as neither side moved an inch having relocated to the forest. That was fine as far as Rui was concerned. He needed a bit more time before the predictive model was complete. He was holding himself to high standards. The predictive model needed to be immaculate, otherwise the risks of dying or suffering a grave injury in close quarters were too high. However, his eyes widened when he gazed into Senior Zenshin's inhuman eyes. The man wasn't just staring at Rui like a predator.

'He's...thinking.'

Senior Zenshin had not sat still for the centuries that had passed by since he became a Martial Senior. He had diligently worked hard to create enough manners of thought to reach the standards of the Martial Mind.

He hadn't yet succeeded, but progress had been made.

At that very moment, he was employing it.

'This surge of power...is probably temporary,' He realized. 'That means that bastard will return to his original weak body after some time. That means that I just need to ensure that I don't go down in the time that he has access to such power. I also need to burn his stamina to hasten the process. Once he's lost that power, he won't be able to hold me back anymore. I should dedicate half of my stance and power to defense while the rest goes to offense. Yeah, let's go with that.'

This was the complete extent of Senior Zenshin's Martial Mind, and he was quite proud of it. Had Rui heard his internal monologue, he would have burst out laughing, lowering his guard, and would have died as a result.