

## Martial Unity 1681

### Chapter 1681: Bold

It wasn't too long before the Masters were fully settled in. A non-Martial Artist entered the room, taking a stand on the podium, smiling at the various Martial Masters. "Distinguished Masters of the fiscal committee, I hereby commence the three hundred and fifty-fourth fiscal assembly of the Martial Union. In the interest of saving time, we shall get right down to the agendas of the day. Without further ado."

The speaker glanced down at a list. "The first agenda of the day is proposal AM362, a priority induction motion from Master Zentra."

Behind him, a screen came to life, displaying the details of the official motion.

"Motion to induct Senior Quarrier as a constituent of the fiscal committee."

Nothing had changed, but Rui felt a lot of weight on his shoulders, feeling the attention that the Masters were giving him. He wasn't the most fond of being the center of attention at such an important meeting.

"As per protocol, both the proposer of the motion and the constituent nominee are entitled to a speech," The speaker calmly declared. "After that, we shall commence the voting on the matter."

The speaker turned to Master Zentra.

"I decline."

"Very well, then, Senior Quarrier," The speaker turned towards Rui. "Would you like to exercise your right to address this committee?"

"Yes," Rui replied, standing up. "I most would."

"Very well then, I call upon Senior Quarrier to the stand," The speaker nodded. "You have precisely two minutes from the moment you start."

Rui heaved a deep breath, heading down to the speaker's stand as he beheld the Martial Masters of the Martial Union. It was almost surreal as they directed their undivided attention.

Yet his voice cut through the atmosphere, cleaving it in half.

"The power of thought is greater than you can imagine."

His words earned a mild reaction from the Martial Masters.

Not only did he not begin his speech with a respectful address to the gathered Martial Masters, but he had brazenly made a declaration that implied he understood thought better than the Masters of the Martial Union!

"To many of you, thought is merely a Realm of power, an element of your Martial Art," Rui calmly continued. "But to me, it is more than any of you could even begin to fathom. Thought is the source of my power. It always has been. My Martial Mind is yet to be completed and unlocked...but do not presume that limits my understanding of thought."

He eyes all the Martial Masters in the Martial Union. "You all may have adopted thought, but I was born in it. Molded by it."

A few Martial Masters widened their eyes, stunned at the sheer audacity of the brazen declarations of the impudent Martial Senior.

"Each of you has a choice," Rui replied calmly, growing more confident. "I offer thought. Not to each of you, no. But to the future of Martial Art. Bodily power is a power that has already been explored to its depths. There isn't much left to be found. It has reached its limit, and I say that as someone who has made the singular greatest contribution to bodily power."

His words pricked at many of the Martial Masters who had an affinity for the Squire and Senior Realms rather than the Master Realm. Unfortunately, his statement was rooted in absolute fact. These sects with an affinity for the Squire and Senior Realm were extremely grateful to Rui for the Hungry Pain technique. A fifty-percent jump in power was almost unprecedented historically.

"And now, I offer to enrich the Martial thought as I did Martial Body," Rui replied. "The distinguished Masters of this committee is far from lacking in insight. I'm sure each of you understands the weight of my words simply by looking at me, at my mind."

He had long learned that Martial Masters were able to somehow detect thought or something similar to that. He still didn't understand how or why, but he knew that Headmaster Aronian had long detected something akin to a prototypical Martial Mind within Rui at a young age.

"I hope that this committee of Masters accepts my humble offer to spread the seeds of thought in exchange for the resources I desire. I hope that Your Masteries deem me worthy of investment for the sake of the future. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me." Rui brought a hand to his fist, bowing to the Masters, before heading off stage.

An applause ensued, yet Rui was unable to figure out how much was obligatory and how much was sincere.

He had decided to avoid the kiss-ass speeches that they were undoubtedly accustomed to receiving. Instead, he decided to be bold yet truthful. Truthful to an edge.

Soon, he would find out whether or not he had done a good job. At the very least, he didn't seem to have angered any Martial Master. He would be sure to have noticed that. It did seem as though they were taken aback, yet it was not easy to scoff his words away because there was more than just an ounce of weight. It was substantiated and even known, especially since he returned.

From the testimonies of many Martial masters to their own senses and the well-known rumors of the incredibly intricate and almost scholarly Martial Art techniques that were rarely seen in the Martial world.

Considering the records of him doing such things extended to his Apprentice days, it was just a testament to how aberrant Rui was as a Martial Artist.

He had the capital to say what he did and get away with it.

Now, it was time to see if it was a good idea to do so. Perhaps he just ruined his chances of getting into the committee with this little bold stunt of a speech.

It remained to be seen very soon.

"And now, we shall commence the voting session," The speaker calmly continued. "All in favor of the motion to induct nominee Rui Quarrier into the committee?"

Chapter 1682: Outcome

One by one, hands rose into the air.

Master Ceeran.

Master Zentra.

Master Vericita.

Headmaster Aronian.

Master Krakule.

Master Master Iskan.

Master Revona.

Many of the friendly acquaintances that Rui had made were rather quick to make their decision, firmly voting in favor of him. Yet they weren't the only ones. The entirety of the Fire Sect had voted in favor of Rui, as did the Earth Sect.

The Lightning Sect was more divided. It appeared that not everybody in the sect was in favor of Rui becoming a member of the fiscal committee.

The Breathing Sect also firmly supported him, as promised.

As did the Balance Sect.

The screen behind him featured a diagram containing every research and development interest for which the committee would be voting to allocate budgets.

Rui wondered if it was the most optimal to allow Martial Masters to handle the allocations. It would probably be better if there was an objective statistical model that would allow them to measure the impact of budget allocations and their resulting outcomes, but he knew that that was never happening. After all, the Martial Union existed by, for, and of Martial Artists. There ought never come a time when it would find itself at odds with the intentions of the Martial Masters of the union.

"With that, we have concluded all preliminary proposals," the speaker announced. The next proposal is, of course, the Net Budget Allocation Proposal proposed by this committee for the fiscal year 534-535."

The speaker gestured with his arm as the screen behind him changed, featuring a pie chart. "Twenty-five percent of the Martial Union's income has been invested in research and development," the speaker explained. "Another nine percent of budget capital has been secured through debt in the form of martial bonds of volunteering martial artists."

Rui raised an eyebrow. The Martial Union, like all organizations and nations in the world, undertook debt to get forward in its agendas. It issued millions of Martial bonds worth a million gold coins at an interest rate of one percent per annum.

It appeared that many Martial Masters and perhaps even a Martial Sage had volunteered to bring in an immediate flush of funds.

"The total budget for Martial research and development this fiscal year is 787,657,847,298,429 Martial Credits," The speaker proposed.

Rui inhaled sharply at that figure, still reeling from the sheer amount of wealth that was. "Without any further ado, let us begin with the first round," The speaker calmly announced. "The first round of budget allocations are between offense, defense, maneuvering, supplementary, and miscellaneous. Let us begin with offense. All those in favor of allocation of budget to offensive Martial Art?"

Twenty hands out of a hundred and two flew into the air.

Rui glanced at all of the Martial Masters who had voted for offense. He spotted Master Ceeran, Master Iskan, and some others that he was vaguely familiar with. It was a no-brainer that these Martial Masters would vote in favor of offense.

"Twenty votes out of a hundred and two," The speaker noted. "Therefore, this committee allocates 154,442,715,156,555 Martial Credits for research and development of offensive Martial Art."

Rui watched as the rest of the first round unfolded, and five categories of research and development interests were voted upon.

#### Chapter 1683: Allocations

"Twenty-one votes out of a hundred and two in favor of defense. This committee allocates 162,164,850,914,382 Martial Credits to the research and development of defensive Martial Art."

"Twenty-two votes out of a hundred and two in favor of maneuvering Martial Art. This committee allocates 169,886,986,672,210 Martial Credits to the research and development of maneuvering Martial Art."

"Twenty votes out of a hundred and two in favor of supplementary Martial Art. Therefore, this committee allocates 154,442,715,156,555 Martial Credits for research and development of supplementary Martial Art."

"And finally, all in favor of miscellaneous Martial Art?" The speaker commenced voting for the final option of the first round.

Rui's arm shot up, as did several others. He saw some Martial Artists carrying weapons raise their arms. As did a symbiotic Martial Master and several other Martial Masters he didn't recognize.

"...Nineteen votes out of a hundred and two in favor for miscellaneous Martial Art." The speaker announced. "Thus, this committee allocates 146,720,579,398,727 Martial Credits to miscellaneous Martial Art."

The screen displayed the five allocations behind them.

Maneuvering had received the highest of them all with twenty-two votes, followed by defense, followed by offense. Yet they were all nigh equal. Supplementary Martial Art received the least, yet that was still an insane amount of money at about one hundred and forty-six Martial Credits.

"We shall now commence voting on the various subcategories, starting with the various five levels sub-categories within each category, starting with the maneuvering..."

The members of the Lightning Sect glanced at each other warily.

The Lightning Sect was united in wringing away as many resources from the others as they could, but after that, they were now at odds with each other for the resources that they had collectively wrung away. The Lightning Sect no longer mattered. It had broken down into smaller constituent sects, like the Wind Sect, which Kane belonged to, the Speed Sect, the Step Sect, and several others.

Rui didn't really have a stake in the various following voting sessions within maneuvering. He did, however, vote in favor of the Wind Sect for Kane. But it didn't really matter all that much.

"Behind me are the various sub-categories of thought," The speaker calmly announced.

On the list on the screen were 'adaptive evolution techniques.' Rui scanned his competition, which, frankly, was not all that much.

Strategic maneuvering patterns.

Tactical distant management.

Combat liability evaluation.

He scoffed inwardly. He was definitely biased, but most of these didn't sound like they were comparable to the potency of his thought techniques.

The speaker went down each of them, as they received a modest number of votes from Martial Masters with some affinity to them. Soon enough, the most important moment of the committee had arrived.

"Sub-category 'adaptive evolution techniques.'" The speaker announced calmly. "All in favor of budget allocation to the research, dissemination, and development of adaptive evolution techniques?"

A whopping majority of Martial Masters raised their hands. Expressing full support for the budget allocation to Rui's Martial Path.

"... Seventy-eight votes of a hundred and two," The speaker calmly announced. "This committee allocates 31,899,456,997,301 Martial Credits to adaptive evolution."

Rui's arm fell as the outcome left him in a daze. He had always known he was going to be securing some budget for the dissemination of his Martial Art.

Thirty-one trillion Martial Credits of research and development was going to be invested into his Martial Path. They would most likely not only use it to aggressively spread the techniques he developed but also invest heavily in developing training methodologies and resources that would increase the ease of mastery of the techniques that he had provided them.

With just this single year's budget alone, Rui couldn't imagine just how much adaptive evolution would be spread through the Kandrian Empire, potentially even further beyond!

Chapter 1684: Fearful Excitement



The R&D fiscal year was settled. All budgets had been allocated across all interests, and everything had received the share that the Martial Masters deemed worthy of it.

Rui had gained an enormous amount of power, one that ordinarily only Martial Masters were entitled to.

Considering that he did not spot any other Martial Senior in the Martial fiscal committee, he could be sure that he was the only Martial Senior who had been successfully inducted into the Martial fiscal committee.

It required overwhelming support from too many Martial Masters for any one sect to simply bring in members with their own votes; whoever was inducted was truly someone acknowledged by the entire Master class to have something worthy to offer to Martial Arts.

It was an honor.

It also increased his social standing and prestige. Not only was he an approved ambassador of the Martial Union, but he was also a constituent of the Martial fiscal committee.

He was sure that the princes and the princesses of the Martial Union were going to put even more effort into wooing him. Gaining his support would give them control over trillions of Martial Credits and their allocation. That was something that not even the princes and princesses could ignore.

He shook his head. He had more or less given each of them a chance, and they failed. Nothing they said or did could bring him over.

"...And with that, the final allocation had been passed," The speaker announced after concluding the final voting session. "Having fully allocated the fiscal year, this committee is hereby adjourned for the year. Thank you for your services."

He walked off as the Martial Masters got up from their seats, immediately intermingling with one another.

"Congratulations!" Master Ceeran wished him enthusiastically. "That was an enormous victory in your favor."

"It's actually surreal," Rui murmured, still half-dazed and lost in thought.

"Your speech appears to have been just impactful enough to get you the support that you needed," Headmaster Aronian approached him, smiling. "In addition to the straightforwardly effective presentation that highlighted the merit of your contribution, it was effective enough to convince many Martial Masters."

Rui nodded, heaving a sigh. "Still, thirty-one trillion Martial Credits."

"It is what you deserve," Master Vericita chimed in, reaching out to pat him. "You have already proven yourself to be able to explosively empower all of Martial Art with your Hungry Pain technique. That has given many Martial Masters confidence that you may be able to produce a similar result with thought. Especially as you so correctly pointed out that your Martial Art employs thought a lot more fundamentally than any of ours do. It is the hope of many Martial Artists that thought being your specialty will mean that your techniques will make a similar impact as the Hungry Pain technique."

Rui nodded. "That might be a bit too optimistic, but I have done the best I can."

"And that is good enough, Senior Quarrier," Master Zentra calmly remarked. "It is clear that you were cut from a different cloth as a Martial Artist. That is what gives many of us the confidence that your Martial Art is worth investing in."

Several more Martial Masters stopped by to congratulate Rui on securing a handsome investment for his Martial Art, before eventually taking their leave.

They didn't linger for too long, for every second of their time was invaluable. They were the second most powerful class of warriors of the Kandrian Empire and were an enormous part of the reason why the Kandrian Empire was dominant across East Panama.

They swiftly departed the Vargard, returning to their abodes.

"Huff..." Rui eventually found himself sky-walking back home.

Finally, he no longer had any timelines and dues left.

He had put in enough of an effort for the sake of the distant future of not just Martial Art but his own.

It was time to focus on his short-term endeavors.

First, he needed to finish his domain projects. That would elevate him to an even higher level of power within the Senior Realm.

He had a faint suspicion that the completion of the four domain projects would not yield an ordinary boost in power.

It was another dimension of adaptive evolution. Similar to how strong the Metabody System and the Hypnomatrix altered his combat fundamentally.

Body, Mind, thought, and now, heaven and earth. These were what he would be manipulating to adapt to his opponent.

It was almost like he was adapting reality itself to his opponent. He was altering the circumstances that his opponent found himself in, making everything antithetical to their Martial Art.

What kind of impact would that have on him as a Martial Art? How much further down his Martial Path would it propel him?

Of the four domain projects, the one that excited and scared him the most was Project Reverse Prophet. If completely and entirely successful, it had the potential to extend his dimension of thought beyond three dimensions of space and to the fourth dimension.

A four-dimensional awareness of reality.

His cognition would exist on a higher dimension compared to every other Martial Senior and Master that existed.

Just the thought of it was truly electrifying. He resolved himself to forget about everything to immerse himself in training. He needed to get to the bottom of this no matter what.

Over the next several months, Rui Quarrier almost completely isolated himself in the Great Jrava Mountain range, returning only for family and the occasional training session with Prince Raijun.

Yet while Rui coolly immersed himself in his training, the Kandrian Throne War only grew more heated.

With each season that passed, the sickly Emperor came closer to death, at the mercy of a terminal disease with no known cure. The seven princes and princesses could almost hear the bells ringing.

He had years at most, though he could collapse any minute.

The Kandrian Empire entered a truly brief yet historic period that would define its future for centuries to come.

## Chapter 1685: Alliance

The cold war of the Kandrian Empire was just that; cold.

It was also a deadlock. None of the seven princes and princesses were able to gain a decisive advantage over their siblings. Each of them made progress at a similar pace, for the most part. They all had their strengths and shortcomings.

The deadlock didn't seem like it was going anywhere or to anyone. It seemed almost impossible to grow faster than they were and go ahead of their siblings. The possibility of one of their siblings shooting forward seemed rather impossible.

Until, of course, it happened.

Prince Raijun had gained an alarming boost in his ability to pull over the members of the Martial Union. He had always been stalled and unable to pull a greater proportion of the Martial Union to his side, but things had changed.

None of his siblings quite understood what happened, but in each meeting that Prince Raijun had with members and the portions of the Martial Union that he was previously unable to win over, he slowly started to earn their support.

The meeting was clandestine. He took every ounce of effort to hide what it was that he was doing. But by the time a certain Master exited one with him, they were already a part of his faction.

For some time now, Prince Raijun had also made an effort to hide himself even physically, refusing to allow anybody to get a good glimpse of him.

Almost like he had something to hide.

It was due to these measures that the other princes and princesses were unable to get a concrete grasp on what exactly happened. It appeared that the Martial Prince was extremely determined not to allow his siblings to learn what was happening or why he was able to suddenly make such progress.

He had learned from Princess Raemina's fiasco with the Beggar's Sect. He had minimized his staff to those who were personally vetted by high-grade Martial Masters. He had decided to get off his high horse and personally do the tiresome work that he would normally delegate to other people to minimize the possibility of leaks.

With extremely tightened and even somewhat impractically heavy information security measures of the highest caliber that a member of the Royal Family was able to muster, he managed to successfully contain the information that he sought to hide from the others.

Yet this only worried them even more.

"Based on these projections, accounting for a diminishing returns index of about zero-point-five, it can be inferred that the Martial Prince may have complete support and allegiance over seventy percent of the Martial Union within three years," Princess Rafia explained.

Her face didn't so much as twitch.

Her voice didn't so much as quiver.

She monotonically explained her estimates of Prince Raijun's future progress based on past data made with some simplifying assumptions to convey the gravity of the situation.

"Seventy percent...eh?" A burly man narrowed his sharp eyes, stroking his beard. "That would be game over. I question the accuracy of these estimates, Rafia."

The burly man eyed his emotionless sister with eyes glinted with disgust and disdain.

"As I informed you at the start of this little presentation, these are not predictions, these are possibilities, Randal," Princess Rafia blankly corrected him. "The purpose of this presentation is to highlight that even in the worst-case scenario, Raijun has the power to win the Kandrian Throne War once father dies."

Prince Randal narrowed his eyes, yet he didn't attempt to refute her words.

It was not only futile but counter-productive. One needn't be a data scholar to realize that Prince Raijun's pertinent acceleration in political expansion was a trend of concern for those who sought to win the throne.

"I, for one, am rather curious about the driving force behind his recent progress in the past few months," Princess Raemina remarked.

She skimmed through the data with wide eyes, and a strange, soft smile rested upon her face. Randal's eyes deepened with disgust as they beheld his other sister.

"It's obviously related to Martial Art," Princess Ranea remarked with a bored expression. "Not that I care. It's actually amusing to see all of you fret over it. What's the matter, scared you'll lose?"

A smirk appeared on her face as she taunted her three siblings.

"Of course, you wouldn't care," Prince Randal snorted with contempt. "You've got protection from all offense from him. Your bravado is as ridiculous as your ambition."

"I don't want to hear that from a warmongering fool who seeks endless conquest," Princess Ranea's eyes sharpened to slits.

His eyes glinted with rage and bloodlust.

"You should watch what you say."

"Or what? You'll wage a war against me?" She snorted with derision. "We're literally at war, you fucking oaf. You assassinated my chief of staff!"

"You took out my personal advisor," Prince Randal glared at her.

"I see neither of you has lost your propensity for pettiness," Princess Raemina chirped with eyes widened with inhuman interest at the joust between her siblings.

"Enough." Princess Rafia's emotionless tone cut through the taut atmosphere. "Abstain from engaging in meaningless discourse. I did not call for this meeting to indulge this belligerent confrontation. "

"And just what is it that you sought to achieve by calling us here?" Prince Randal glared at his emotionless sister.

"My intentions should be rather transparent," she replied in a monotone. If left unchecked, Prince Rajun will win the Kandrian Throne War. That is an outcome that must never occur, no matter the cost."

Her eyes steadily met those of her siblings one by one. "...No matter the cost. Even if it means forming an alliance between us, it is the most rational and logical course of action."

An air of seriousness overtook the other three.

"Why only us four?" Prince Randal narrowed his eyes.

"Rajak and Raul refused my invitation," She informed them in a monochrome fashion.

"Good," Princess Raemina remarked as what appeared to be contempt flashed across her face. "I refuse to ally with that piece of filth covered in the sewage of the Kandrian Empire."

#### Chapter 1686: Dawning Realization

None of them were surprised at Princess Raemina's scorn for Prince Rajak.

As the Finance Minister and someone who sought to turn the Kandrian Empire into a communist regime where the government gained absolute control over the economy and capital, the very existence of the Underworld hurt her.

Randal's eyes glinted with disgust as he beheld inhuman hatred crumpling his sister's face. "He is definitely a bastard. I am not surprised he refused to even speak to us, considering how much he hates the Royal Family."

Princess Ranea snorted. "On that note, I'm not surprised Raul refused to indulge us as well. He probably hates us, too."

Prince Randal shook his head. "He is not capable of hatred. He just does not like us and does not care to spend any time with us. He would rather spend his days humping peasants."

"The reasons for their refusal are irrelevant to the agenda of this meeting," Princess Rafia's featureless voice steered the conversation back on track.



"You have yet to say anything worth addressing," Prince Randal snorted. "What alliance? What are our objectives? What is the scope? What is our commitment? And what do you do about the fact that we are, as the little ocean girl put it, literally at war with each other?"

Princess Ranea glared at him.

"Those are pertinent questions," Princess Rafia assured him. "The answers to your questions are rather straightforward. Our objective is to hamper Raijun's growth. The scope of our involvement as members of the alliance will be limited to aiding with sabotage and sharing intelligence on the Martial Prince. No other measure is necessary. As long as we pool our resources and work together to restrain his growth, we will succeed."

Prince Randal heaved a sigh as he considered her words.

He had to admit that, as much as he was disgusted by her inhuman rationality, her suggestions were exceedingly logical. The growth that Raijun had been showing over the past few months was too much for him to be able to confidently assert that he would be able to win with his own efforts.

"What is the endgame?" Princess Ranea narrowed her eyes. "An alliance sounds fun and nice until you remember that we are sworn enemies who would love to kill each other at any moment to get to the throne."

None of them even denied her words.

In the room were sixteen Martial Masters. Each of them was highly vigilant and was extremely protective of their guards. The round circular table that they were seated at was rather large to ensure that there was distance between the princes and princesses and that the other Martial Masters weren't in too much proximity to the other princes and princesses.

"We need only stay allied until we have contained Prince Raijun's political expansion," Princess Rafia informed them. "In order to truly get rid of this issue, we need to identify the cause of Prince Raijun's political expansion and eliminate or invalidate it. He has put in immense effort to hide what is responsible for his growth, but there are several possibilities. An access to greater wealth, an access to

greater authority, an access to greater personal power. He could also have made even greater concessions than he already has."

"Such as?" Princess Raemina tilted her head, her wide eyes filled with curiosity.

"Such as sacrificing even more individual autonomy for the sake of more support from the Martial Union," Princess Rafia remarked. "In the most extreme case, if he allowed a mind Martial Artist to hypnotize him for greater credibility and reliability, he may have been able to reel in more support from those who were skeptical of him."

"Hmm..." Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "It's not impossible, but it's too unlikely...It has to be something more simple. Something that would explain why the Martial Masters of the Martial Union have approved of him now when they didn't before."

"A Martial Master in my faction informed me that one of the reasons they previously disapproved of him was because of his Martial Art or something like that," Princess Ranea frowned, narrowing her eyes.

"Interesting," Princess Raemina murmured. "A Martial Artist in my faction reported to me that he had been looking hard for a great trainer for many years before he found his current one in the golden boy."

"Those are crucial pieces of intelligence," Princess Rafia remarked monotonically.

"There's also the fact that he has been religiously avoiding any public appearance or any appearance at all. It's as if he doesn't want anyone to look at him," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes, growing suspicious as he began putting the new information the others supplied him together. "Wait a minute,"

He turned to his sisters. "Are you absolutely positive about the intelligence reports the two of you just mentioned?"

"Uh, yes?" Princess Ranea furrowed her eyebrows.

"Indeed," Princess Raemina nodded, her wide eyes fixed on him.

"Looking for a tutor...Flaws in his Martial Art...?" Prince Randal's eyes widened as realization dawned on him. "I see...It makes sense."

"What does?" Princess Ranea narrowed her eyes.

Prince Randal's eyes sharpened to slits.

His expression grew grave. "He's...probably very close to the Squire Realm. Any Martial Master would be able to notice that with a single glance. Which is why he doesn't want anyone to even catch a glimpse of him."

The other three princes considered his words as the gravity of the situation dawned on them.

"Closer to the Squire Realm?" Princess Raemina remarked, her wide eyes boring holes into Prince Randal. "Is that enough to explain his growth?"

"None of you understand Martial Artists like I do," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "Most Martial Artists of the Martial Union are judging him as a Martial Artist, not as a political candidate for the throne. The fact that he stalled in his Martial Path in the Apprentice Realm probably gave them a poor impression of his Martial drive."

"Martial drive?" Princess Ranea.

"I don't care to explain the nuances of Martial Art to you," Prince Randal snorted. "You need drive to grow stronger, and the fact that he stalled so early as a mere Martial Apprentice makes them think lowly of him regardless of how much effort he put in as a prince. That is why his success didn't go very far beyond the Martial Supremacist Faction."

"That sounds extremely irrational," Princess Rafia remarked.

"That's how Martial Artists are," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "I have spent enough time around them to know their thinking patterns. They think differently from human beings, and they suck at communicating their thoughts to anybody, not a Martial Artist. But more importantly..."

"If Prince Raijun has somehow made great progress in the Apprentice Realm towards the Squire Realm then we need to curb the source of his success," Princess Rafia completed his statement. "However, I am unable to identify the source of his success due to a lack of data on Martial Apprentice growth data patterns at the moment. I will have to consu-"

"No, you're unable to identify it because as intelligent as you are, you're an idiot without common sense who is helpless without data," Prince Randal snorted. "Think!"

He turned to Princess Raemina and Ranea. "Assume what you two said before is true, then we can assume that the reason he was looking for a great trainer is because of the issue with the Martial Artist you mentioned. And if we put that together with the fact that he's been hiding his appearance the entire time. Then...the timelines make sense."

The three women stared at him, puzzled.

"...He hired Rui Quarrier as a trainer more than a year ago," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "Six months after that, Raijun's campaigning progress within the Martial Union started growing tremendously, and he made great headway even though he was in a bottleneck prior."

He turned to Raemina. "A bottleneck because of his Martial Art, as you informed me."

He turned to Ranea. "A bottleneck that he was looking for a trainer probably for just that, according to you."

He turned to Princess Rafia with narrowed eyes. "Putting all the information that each of us supplied, what do you think can be concluded?"

"Your logic is a tad contrived and lacking in empirical evidence but..." Princess Rafia met his gaze with emotionless eyes. "The possibility of Senior Rui Quarrier being responsible for his growth is indeed very real."

Prince Randal's mouth curled with disdain. "This is why you're an intelligent idiot. It's not a possibility, it's the only explanation that fits the puzzle."

"I don't get it, not gonna lie," Princess Ranea stared at him, puzzled. "Raijun has the highest number of Martial Masters in his faction. Are you telling me Rui Quarrier did a better job than the esteemed Martial Masters of the Martial Union? That sounds extremely questionable and unlikely. How can a Senior surpass a Master in tutelage?"

"I am inclined to agree with her," Princess Raemina nodded.

"He already defeated a Master in combat, pound for pound," Prince Randal growled at them. "He's an anomaly. In every sense of the word. He revolutionized the Squire evolution breakthrough process with some mysterious technique. His so-called voidlet techniques earned thirty-one trillion Martial Credits half a year ago at the fiscal budget allocation meeting of the Martial Union. He earned the position of Senior ambassador from the Martial Union. He is the youngest Martial Senior in history, shattering the previous record by a whopping twelve years. That's historically unprecedented. He also had an extremely high reputation for tutelage even before he began training the Martial Prince and then there's the strange deal he signed with Prince Raijun more than a year ago."

His siblings knew what he was referring to.

"In exchange for something, Prince Raijun was willing to completely cease all offensive campaigning and sabotage against Ocean girl here and the peasant-humper upon Rui Quarrier's demand," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "I never understood it back then, but...think about it. Just what could be so massive that he willingly agreed to stop keeping two of his rivals in check, allowing their growth to be less hampered. It doesn't make sense unless..."

"Unless he knew that he would be able to grow even faster if he agreed to the deal." Realization dawned on Princess Raemina.

A chill went down Princess Ranea's spine. "...So that's why he agreed to not campaign against me. He knew that his agreement with Rui Quarrier would bring him closer to the Squire Realm, making the concessions invalid."

"This conjecture is unsubstantiated and without empiri-"

"Oh, shut up," Princess Ranea glared at Princess Rafia, cutting her off. "It's common sense when you pool together our information."

"Tsk, had I known that he was looking for a tutor even before and the reason behind the disapproval of him from the rest of the Martial Union, I would have come to this realization even sooner," Prince Randal cursed.

"The question is... what do we do?" Princess Raemina's eyes widened with interest.

"It's simple," Prince Randal narrowed his eyes. "We cut the source of his growth at its root before he reaches the Squire Realm."

His three sisters narrowed their eyes at those words.

He had just made an extremely controversial proposal.

It was beyond controversial.

It could very well provoke a war.

To say that Rui Quarrier was the golden boy of the Martial Union was an understatement. Not only was he the only Senior to have received the status of Senior ambassador, he was also the only Senior to be inducted into the Martial fiscal committee.

In addition to the many revolutionary contributions to Martial Art and the Martial Union that he had made that earned him the affection of the Martial Union and most of its Martial Masters, he had also become important to the Kandrian Empire as a whole simply by virtue of his alleged bottomless potential and status as the youngest Senior in Martial history.

That didn't even cover the economic contributions he had made to the Kandrian Empire.

The proposal of killing Rui Quarrier was so far beyond just controversial that the three princesses didn't even dare to agree to it. Just the thought of facing the wrath of the Martial Union inspired a lot of fear in them.

"...There must be other ways." Princess Ranea squeezed out.

"There is no other way," Prince Randal gritted his teeth, clenching his fists.

"Rui Quarrier must die."

Chapter 1688: Considerations

"He is an asset to this nation," Princess Rafia replied. "Killing him would hurt the Kandrian Empire in ways that we are unable to even estimate."

"He shouldn't have gotten in my way," Prince Randal's eyes narrowed. "Anybody who stands in the way of the throne and me is an enemy."

"The Martial Union will have our heads," Princess Ranea's expression grew grave. "The best-case scenario would be that the Martial Artists of the Martial Union that we have secured to our side would immediately leave."

"That's only if they knew we did it," Prince Randal calmly remarked. "As long as there is enough uncertainty, they won't know who it is. Even if they did, we are of the Royal Family. The power of the Royal Emperor is on par with that of the Martial Union. If any of the Martial Sages were to come after me, General Aramoeous of the Hawk Faction is more than willing to deploy the hundred and eight Apocalypse-class Armageddon siege weapons of the Kandrian Empire, each with the power to reduce an entire nation to dust in an instant."

"Do you want to cause a civil war of unprecedented scale?!" Princess Ranea stared at him in disbelief. "You will destroy Kandria!"

"Relax, it won't come to that," Prince Randal's eyes sharpened to slits. "The Martial Sages of the Martial Union will not move for a single Martial Senior. Probably. However, the Martial Masters will. They're the issue. However, there are ways around this. As long as the Martial Union doesn't know who killed Rui Quarrier, there won't be any issues."

"The Martial Union has an extremely deep profile on every Martial Artist in Kandria," Princess Rafia remarked. "Especially Martial Masters. Employing our Martial Artists would give us away."

"The problem is actually even worse than that," Prince Randal's expression grew ugly. "As you all know, one of the Masters in my faction picked a fight with Rui Quarrier after inadvertently threatening him. Since then, the Martial Union has been spooked and extremely sensitive about a Martial Master harming their golden boy. There are a hundred and fifty Martial Masters in the Kandrian Empire, and the Martial Union knows the location of almost all of them. You can bet they will intervene if a Martial Master moves towards Rui with the intention of killing him."

"In that case, we would not be able to use Martial Masters at all," Princess Raemina remarked with eyes widened with intrigue. "Martial Seniors, then."

"That runs into the issue that Rafia mentioned," Princess Ranea shook her head. "Using Kandrian Martial Artists will get us identified and that's not something we can allow."

"That is why we should hire Martial Artists from outside Kandria," Prince Randal's tone grew even more severe. "Perhaps the Derschek Region or the Shadow Isles. We could even try contracting the Silent Shadow, Master Reina Cara. She is a legendary assassin in the industry even among assassins of the Master Realm."

"The Panamic Martial Federation has disclaimed that," Princess Rafia pointed out.

"They frown upon unjustified and open bullying of Martial Artists by a Martial Artist of a higher Realm," Prince Randal corrected. "Assassinations are a gray area because every force in this world needs them, including the constituents that founded the Panamic Martial Federation. As long as it is not exposed, they will turn a blind eye."



"Still," Princess Ranea shook her head. "Martial Master assassins from abroad are too much. There are very few who are freelancers. An overwhelming majority of Martial Master assassins belong to some group or entity that we will have to reach out to and bargain and negotiate."

"You're right," Prince Randal remarked. "Master assassins like the Silent Shadow are said to be impossible to find. We can begin the process, but it will take months and even years. There is no point in waiting that long because, at this rate, Raijun will become a Squire. Senior assassins are much easier and quicker."

"If we do this, and I'm not saying I've agreed yet..." Princess Ranea carefully spoke. "We're going to need to do it extremely cautiously and carefully. Neither the Martial Union nor the Beggar's Sect can know."

Prince Randal glanced around the room at the sixteen Martial Masters guarding their respective marks. Thankfully, these were among the most loyal Martial Artists each of them had and were not of the Martial Union. Prince Randal would not have dared to bring up the assassination of Rui Quarrier if even a single Martial Master of the Martial Union was around. That would be incredibly stupid.

"The Beggar's Sect will not stop the assassination even if they find out," Princess Rafia remarked. "They support Raul. Thus, stopping the assassination in some way is against their interests because they are very determined not to allow Prince Raijun to become Emperor."

The Beggar's Sect vehemently opposed Martial supremacy, as one would expect of them. Prince Raijun, who was a Martial Supremacist, ascending the throne was a highly undesirable outcome for them.

Prince Randal was inclined to agree that they would not sabotage any attempt to kill off the source of his growth. "However, they may still expose us after we succeed. The Beggar's Sect would like to see us fail as well, so after letting Rui Quarrier die, they will definitely expose us and get us into trouble. So we still cannot risk them finding out either."

Princess Raemina's mouth curled with disgust at the thought of the Beggar's Sect. "Those filthy beggars..."

"If we have to hide it from the Beggar's Sect, then this is not going to be quick and easy. If we just waltz over to the Shadow Guild and make a commission, the Beggar's Sect and even the Martial Union will be alerted. We have to be extremely discreet and avoid doing anything that could give it away."

"It's best to deploy a Martial Master to do the commissioning," Prince Randal remarked. "Not even the Beggar's Sect can easily learn about them as they do everyone else."

#### Chapter 1689: Completion

In the many months since the Martial fiscal committee that Rui trained, he trained hard and with the intention of not being disturbed. He did not want his immersion and focus to be disrupted.

Yet he was unable to live as isolated as he could.

"We require your input on the research and development of effective and efficient training methodologies for adaptive evolution techniques," a head researcher explained. "This is standard protocol, and we cooperate with all martial artists whose martial art has been allocated a significant budget."

Rui heaved a sigh. "Fine. But I shall only serve as a consultant. And I'm only willing to consult once a week."

"We can manage with that. We generally do not consume too much time so as to not impede the training of Martial Artists."

Thus, much to his chagrin, he was to serve as a consultant for the research and development of his own training methodologies.

Yet, he did not care to waste time while he served as a consultant. This was his domain of expertise; in his past life, he had spent much of his research into more effective and efficient training methodologies.

He swiftly accelerated the projects, offering the expertise he had and shocking the various scholars and researchers who were researching adaptive evolution. He quickly proposed concepts and projects from his various life that could be employed to aid with training adaptive evolution in this world.

"Set the speed parameter of the combat patterns of the training dummy to increase linearly with the proficiency index, and it will allow them to acclimatize better."

"Do not increase the input diversity in the initial training stage; it should arise more organically than artificially."

"No no no. It is better to integrate the Mind Palace technique as a part of a hypnosis technique than to have the technique itself mastered. It will be more efficient and effective to have it done for them."

His insights were undoubtedly game-changing.

The Martial Union was once more astounded by just how much a genius in combat research Rui Quarrier was. Even the deputy director of the director was taken aback by the ocean of knowledge that Rui seemed to have stored in his brain.

It only increased the value that the Martial Union had for Rui Quarrier. They even considered adding combat research dissemination among Martial Artists as an interest in the next fiscal committee meeting.

Regardless, Rui could not be bothered. He simply minimized the time he needed to dedicate to the consultation so that he could get back to his training.

The four domain projects had been developing quite nicely. Malevolent Kitchen had been the first project to reach completion out of all of them.

It had been eighteen months since he started working on domains under Master Gurren. He had first spent three months mastering the foundations of bending heaven and earth. After that, he spent another nine months training the four domain projects that he had conceived, working on them side by side with the voidlet techniques.

It was only after he presented his voidlet techniques to the Martial fiscal committee and successfully lobbied for thirty-

one trillion Martial Credits that he finally had time to focus only on domain projects.

Only half a year later, the techniques had arrived close to completion. Of course, this was after a year of effort prior, but it was still remarkably quick.

Malevolent Kitchen reached completion sooner than the rest because his affinity for sound had allowed him to gain much quicker mastery over it than did the other three techniques.

The other two adaptive domains were quite close to completion as well. He had come very close to smoothly nailing the execution of Speed Prison, allowing it to be combat-viable. Creating the technique was one thing, but mastering it was another.

The third adaptive domain, Skyfall, was in a similar state. He was almost at the point where he could guarantee a hundred percent success rate in terms of execution. He directed the vectors of the pressure of the vast atmosphere onto his opponent's body, forcing them to employ immense force to push back against it and neglecting their offense in turn.

However, while he was very optimistic about Malevolent Kitchen, which had already reached success, and about the other two that were rapidly approaching completion, he was not so optimistic about Project Reverse Prophet.

He was actually fairly successful in creating the technique. That was what surprised him, but the principle of processing vectors and extrapolating them backward to gain more information was not too complicated in principle.

The issue was the difficulty of execution. Firstly, he learned that to have any chance of successfully executing this technique, his mind needed to be free of all other burdens. The VOID algorithm, Greater Phantomind Void, and the Pathfinder; all these techniques could not be simultaneously executed if he wanted to have any hope of executing Reverse Prophet at all.

That was how mind-consuming it was.

However, even with his mind emptied, it had become exceedingly difficult to detect the vast amount of information that he needed to extrapolate the past, and it was even more difficult to process all of it and extrapolate the past.

He had tried his best to minimize the mental burden that the technique was, of course. He got rid of redundant processing. He employed many shortcuts to the output, skipping excessively heavy processing for simpler and straightforward ones.

Yet even after all that refinement...

"Ngh..." He grimaced, meditating in the Great Jrava Mountain range.

His senses spread around him as he employed incredibly surgical minute heaven and earth bending to sense the direction of nearly every vector within a large radius.

The very act strained him, even if reluctantly succeeded.

Yet the hardest part had yet to come.

He gritted his teeth as he applied the Reverse Prophecy, a system of thought to process all the vectors and determine the past.

"Rgh!" He grimaced, clenching his fist as he pushed himself to the absolute limit.

Chapter 1690: Angel of Laplace

1690 Angel of Laplace

Deep in his Mind Palace, a replica of a portion of the Great Jrava Mountain Range was overwhelmed with information.

Information regarding vectors. This was comprised of packets of information that contained two values each: direction and magnitude. A seemingly endless storm of such packets of information converged at the center of Great Jrava Mountain Range in the Mind Palace.

Where Rui meditated.

"Rgh!" Rui gritted his teeth as he struggled to process the endless ocean of information.

It swallowed him whole.

Washed away in currents that were too strong for him.

Yet he weathered.

Drop by drop.

Pail by pail.

He gritted his teeth, painstakingly putting a puzzle together.

The puzzle of the past.

He waded a tapestry of the past, little by little.

The currents of the river were determined to impede him.

The currents of the river of time.

After all, this was the river he was wading against.

Time flowed in one direction. That was a fact of reality. Anybody who dared to peer the other way would face its wrath.

Yet he weathered.

An unfathomable amount of time passed, yet he painstakingly processed every iota of information, every vector within the edge of his senses.

Soon enough, he broke through.

Through the currents.

Through the ocean.

Through the barriers of time.

He had arrived.

His eyes widened as the Great Jrava Mountain Range in his Mind Palace began rewinding in time.

Snow began elevating from the ground, accelerating upwards. Birds began flying in the reverse direction as the motion of their flapping was also inversed. Leaves danced up from the ground, flying back to the trees around them before reattaching themselves to the tree.

The sun retraced its path ever so slowly, returning from whence it came.

He beheld the scene with amazement.

This was the past.

It was overwhelming.

"Huff...Huff..." He opened his eyes in real life as he glanced around him.

Master Gurren was still working on the magnification formula and optics equations. He had been working hard in the eighteen months to learn the mathematics and Physics needed for the telescopic domain.

It wasn't easy, even though Rui had worked hard to simplify the teachings needed. The Master was so illiterate that there was tons of ground to cover.

He glanced at the sky, noting the setting Sun.

It had been a little after dawn when he had begun the execution of the technique, yet it was already dusk.

"What...?" A shocked whisper escaped his mouth. "Just how many hours did I spend executing this technique?"

His body was drenched in sweat.

He felt mentally exhausted like never before.

Even though he hadn't moved, he felt like his body was aching all over.

His head, however, was the worst. A skull-splitting migraine had overtaken him, making it difficult for him to even think properly.

Just a single standard execution of this technique had left him in this state after taking hours to successfully complete.

It was painful, tiring, long, and tedious, but...

"I...succeeded," He laughed weakly. "I can't believe it."



His euphoria was quickly overwhelmed by his heavy headache, leaving him grimacing.

The technique was technically successfully executed, but one thing became exceedingly clear to him.

"I'm out of my league."

If he had to go through so much suffering over extended periods of time just to execute a single technique, then he was not that technique's equal. At least, not yet.

He needed to reach a stage where he could viably employ this technique for combat, which was not possible at his current stage, seeing how difficult, consuming, and long it took.

What opponent would patiently wait for him to finish executing the technique and then continue the battle after he got what he needed?

Yet he couldn't call the technique a failure, either. The technique was a success. It did what it was supposed to do.

He just wasn't good enough. This was a system of thought that exceeded even his ascended mental prowess.

Yet he wasn't entirely dismayed by this outcome.

'I may not possess the brainpower for Project Reverse Prophet today...but in the future...' Rui narrowed his eyes as he had quickly happened upon a way in which he could one day employ Project Reverse Prophet viably in combat.

The Master Realm.

An exponential boost in cognition with astronomically more new neural pathways unlocked that could be programmed with Project Reverse Prophet.

In the first place, one of the necessities in the journey to the Master Realm was employing thought beyond the limits of one's cognition in the pursuit of greater power. Only then could he begin truly tapping and developing his Martial Mind. The first generation of Martial Seniors had done exactly that as they tried improving themselves strategically, inadvertently forming the Martial Mind.

Today, having completely been outclassed, he had made the most significant progress to the Master Realm. Project Reverse Prophet was an upgrade to the pattern recognition system of the VOID algorithm that exceeded his practical cognitive limits.

That made him feel better, though he wished his mind had been powerful enough to handle it. Yet not even the full might of his ascended mind and his extraordinary Mind Palace had been enough to overcome Reverse Prophet.

"Speaking of which, I should give it another name. Reverse Prophet is not worthy of such an incredible technique," Rui stroked his scruffy beard. "Hmm...scientific determinism into the past...that reminds me of Laplace's Demon."

This was a thought experiment where a demon, who knew everything's position and motion at any one point, could then predict the future of the universe for eternity by endlessly extrapolating it from that data.

He was doing the reverse of that, the very opposite, where he was peering into the past rather than the future. Though he also peered into the future using the predictive model, that wasn't based on the same principles as Laplace's Demon.

He made up his mind. "Since it is the opposite of Laplace's Demon...I shall call it the Angel of Laplace."

On that day, Project Reverse Prophet was no more.

It had become the Angel of Laplace.