Chapter 19 Gamble

From what Rui could see, Kane's maneuvering prowess came from both his exceptional muscle mass to body mass ratio, but also because of how light his body was, these two factors combined gave him extremely high agility and speed.

('But that isn't the only cause.')

Rui could see that his dodges were extremely efficient. He moved as little as he could to avoid, or atleast mitigate the effectivity of the strike while setting up strikes of his own with his dodging motion. For example, if someone aimed a strike as his head, he would bend backward while simultaneously launching a straight high kick, while increasing its power and range by torque generated by bending backwards, he'd cleanly knocked out one of his targeters this way, and even took his badge.

Just as Rui was admiring Kane's prowess, he heard a female voice call out to him.

"You're an interesting one aren't you, Rui Quarrier?"

Rui glanced at the person who called out to him as his eyes widened in shock. The silver-haired girl had many badges pinned all over her body, he couldn't even count all of them.

('Just how many people did she defeat??')

"It's not too much of a surprise that the direct disciple of Sage Arrancar made it to the third-round with a high rank while still performing well at the age of thirteen, although still very impressive." She smiled while throwing a gaze at Kane.

"But it's odd some no-name commoner thirteen-year-old boy lasted this long, and even flourish."

Rui heightened his alertness, he recognized her. Fae Dullahan, she seemed to be sixteen-years-old. She was rank number two in the previous round, he'd memorized her face when she collected her badge.

"You flatter me, I just barely made it here all this way, even now I almost lost my badge many times."

"Hmmm..." She gazed into his sharp eyes, taking note off his ominous hair and eyes.

Suddenly;

BAM.

Rui barely managed to block a heavy palm attack with a guard.

('She's fast! And more importantly what the fuck was with that power?") His arms were throbbing with pain.

"Not bad, you blocked that well." She noted as she continued attacking him.

"I don't see why someone like yourself would need my badge." Rui managed to squeeze out.

"Oh I don't care for your badge, you can keep it." She responded innocently even as she pummeled him.

Kane had noticed had predicament but was too pre-occupied. Furthermore he did not think he could defeat Fae, she was too strong, it was too risky. She was the direct disciple of Sage Dullahan, her grandmother, who was an acquaintance of his father.

('Damn, hang in there Rui, the round should be close to over!') Kane pleaded. It had been nearly half an hour since the round had begun and many

applicants had lost their badges. He just hoped Rui would be able to avoid losing his badge before the round was over.

Rui was bruised immensely. In a short time, she had inflicted more damage on him than even an hour of the second-round had.

('Her speed is lower than Kane's but not by much, but her power is far greater.')

Rui had observed that she was only striking him by the base of her palms, reinforced by the Radius and Ulna bones which constituted the forearm.

('It makes sense, her hands are small, palming would be more effective than punching.')

She wasn't particularly muscular but her strikes delivered great force. From Rui could see, there were multiple reasons.

('Her arm is tough and rough. She's conditioned her entire arm.') Rui grimaced as he endured her onslaught.

Conditioning, broadly speaking, was a set of procedures or action performed by a martial artist in order to increase durability, toughness, hardness and pain endurance of the parts of the body the conditioning was performed on, usually over a long period of time.
magic

('Harder and tougher strikes inflicted more damage because they made the collision between the strike and the target increasingly inelastic.')

This was a scientific way of saying harder and tougher strikes hurt more than softer and weaker strikes. If one were to get hit by a beach ball thrown very hard, one would not get hurt, but what if one were to get hit by a steel ball that weighs the same as the beach ball, and was thrown at the same speed? One would most certainly get hurt. The reason was because of the difference in

their collision. The beach ball hit was an elastic collision where the energy of the ball did not get converted into damage, whereas the steel ball hit was an inelastic collision, where the kinetic energy of the ball would get converted into damage, damage inflicted onto the target.

('That's not the only reason this hurts though. She's using her power efficiently, and every power uses her body weight.') Rui noted, even though it hurt a lot. The sheer brilliance of her combat made him, a martial arts/combat sport junkie, extremely excited.

Fae continued her onslaught with an intrigued expression. She noticed something strange.

('He's... smiling?')

It was faint, furthermore it was hard to discern under through his grimaces, but she could just barely detect excitement under all of it.

('Haha, he's enjoying this. He's an interesting ki-')

THWACK.

She froze in surprise. Rui had just dropped his guard, crouched and rushed into her strike, allowing her palm attack to strike the top of his head hard, the sheer force by she had thrown the palm as well as conditioned toughness had caused a wound at the top of his head that had begun bleeding. However, he'd ignored the wound and dashed towards her waist grabbing onto her thighs.

"I have you now!" He screamed as he pushed her upper half while pulling her lower half.

A takedown. This was what Rui had aimed for.

He had not made this decision lightly.

Prior, Rui made several astute observations

('She's throwing straight palms and nothing else, it's likely because while palms are good at delivering impacts, they have very little inherent variation because other types of trajectories require too much flexibility to be used regularly. It's also because she's holding back against me a bit. Another thing is that every strike she throws is close to max power from what I can tell, she twisting her body, drawing power from her core and her legs. This delivers great power but it must be difficult for her to counter if someone avoids it.')

Problem was, Rui didn't know how to avoid her strikes fully.

('She has too much speed, furthermore, palms have a wider range of effect than fists. Dodging a fast wide strike like that requires preparation that she will definitely notice, I cannot take her by surprise if she notices, thus dodging and then closing the range is impossible. That leaves only one strategy but it's a gamble.')

Dodging fast and wide strike required pre-mediated movements that would tip her off on his intentions. But allowing her to hit him did not. If he could simply rush in, endure the strike, not get knocked out by it, then he could attempt a takedown and grapple with her.

('But what are my chances of not getting seriously wounded by her attack without a guard?')

Non-existent, he would definitely get hurt, worst case scenario he would just get knocked out. But he didn't really have any other choice.

('If I continue taking these palms, I'm doomed. This is risky, but it's better than certain defeat.')

He waited for a strike that had been aimed high. When it came, he dropped his guard and dashed to her legs, pretending the strike aimed at him did not exist. But it did, and it grazed a streak of skin and a little flesh off the top of his head, causing bleeding instantly

("FUCK THAT HURTS.") But, he endured. Rui rushed in grabbing her legs.

He had fullfilled the plan, the question is whether the plan was good or not.

He had few options in the first place. He could continue taking her attacks as she pummeled him to oblivion.

He could run away even though she was faster than him and could attack his back and head.

Or he could take a gamble that was risky and still very difficult, even if it succeeded

He had to choose the lesser of three evils, did he choose correctly?