

## Martial Unity 191

Chapter 191: Less and Less

The two dashed towards each other.

('I'm faster.') Rui realized.

Yet despite this, Gale's strike reached first.

WHOOSH

Rui dodged the strike.

Gale continued dishing an onslaught of strikes and Rui avoided all of them cleanly. Ever since he mastered Primordial Instinct, his timing had grown much sharper and more accurate. Its synergy with the VOID algorithm was truly impressive.

Gale didn't stop, his strikes were straight forward and had a huge range. He launched all of them from outside Rui's striking range, so Rui wasn't able to do much.

('He's a long-range striking specialist.') Rui realized. Each strike had a huge reach, and he launched them in a way that deliberately prevented Rui from reaching close enough to launch his own attacks.

Rui keenly observed this before making a decision, he stopped avoiding Gale and instead dashed against him once more.

A flash of surprise morphed into Gale's expression as he quickly launched a straight jab at Rui, growing even more surprised when he saw Rui didn't avoid them, and instead ran into it even faster. Just as the strike was about to hit Rui

WHOOSH

Rui disappeared.

('A feint!') Gale realized.

BAM

A meteoric impact struck him!

Rui had feinted with Phantom Step to draw his strike away while simultaneously using Flowing Canon once he reached striking range.

The combined power of Flowing Canon, Outer Convergence, Parallel Walk and Balanced Direction had crashed into Gale, leaving him reeling. He just barely managed to throw up a guard as Rui pummeled him with short range blows boosted with the power of Outer Convergence and Vital Pressure.

Gale leaped back, grimacing.

Yet Rui wasn't kind enough to let him recuperate and regain his bearings, he rushed in. Gale panicked when he saw Rui dashing in, feeling an immense amount of mental pressure from Rui's Martial Path.

He threw a cautious strike at Rui, expecting another feint. This time he was a bit more prepared, he didn't want to be caught off-guard yet again.

Yet Rui didn't dodge or feint.

CLASP

He let the strike hit him, moving with it to reduce the impact while simultaneously grasping Gale's arm with all four limbs.

The Binding Lash technique.

In this situation, the VOID algorithm outputted a grapple counter as the most apt way of defeating Gale, dragging outside the realm of striking which is where his specialty lied. In the domain of grappling, Rui had a clear undeniable advantage.

CRACK

"ARGH!" Gale grimaced in pain as Rui managed to cleanly dislocate his arm. The Binding Lash technique allowed the user to dislocate and break arms as long as the timing was perfect and the physicality gap wasn't too much.

Both of these conditions were satisfied.

The Primordial Instinct technique had improved not just his defense but counter-offense as well, allowing him to increase the accuracy of his timing immensely. The VOID algorithm allowed him to consciously and actively analyze, evaluate and make a decision, while the Primordial Instinct technique allowed him to execute the decision with great accuracy.

Gale was physically stronger by virtue of being much older, but Rui had nailed the timing too well, that shoulder's fate was already sealed.

Despite the excruciating pain he felt, Gale did give up, struggling with everything he had. Despite the advantageous position Rui had, he didn't give up and ruthlessly pressed and twisted the already dislocated joint, causing unimaginable agony to Gale.

He had no qualms about inflicting pain and damage to Gale, had this been on Earth, this might have been a career ending injury, but in the world of Gaea, within the Martial Art, this wasn't much of a big deal. Healing potions ensured that Gale would make a full recovery.

Gale tapped Rui's arm three times, indicating his resignation. The pain was far too excruciating and even if Gale somehow broke through, he had no chance of winning with a mangled shoulder joint.

Rui immediately loosened his grip with a sigh of relief. He did not enjoy the act of inflicting pain on others. He carefully let go of Gale's arm, not wanting hurt him any further.

"Fuuu..." Gale exhaled deeply, getting up slowly, before throwing a bitter smile at Rui. "You're truly strong."

He meant it.

Between the shackling pressure that Rui was putting on him mentally the entire fight along with the perfect fight that he'd displayed from start to finish. Rui had shown him just how big the gap between them was. Gale had spent a long time in the Academy, and even with his mediocre growth, he had come to accumulate more power than most Apprentices in the Academy currently. But Rui still beat him cleanly, while holding back too, Gale was sure.

"Good fight man." Rui offered a hand to Gale's good hand. "You're strong too."

"Good luck." Gale said, now that he had lost to Rui this cleanly, even if he won every other fight, he almost would not be chosen as the representative of the Academy. "I haven't given up yet though. On becoming the representative, or becoming stronger."

Rui smiled. "That makes two of us."

Rui bade him good luck and farewell as he left him to get medical treatment for his injury.

"Good fight." Kane said to him. "Pretty clean sweep."

"Thanks." Rui replied. "How did your first fight go?"

"Easy win." Kane replied simply. Rui wasn't surprised, at this point there were two or three people at the very most who could possibly pull off a win against Kane in his current state.

BOOM

A minor tremor reverberated across the entirety of the facility

Rui and Kane immediately glanced over at the source of the impact.

Fae.

She was standing at the center of the ring with an outstretched arm with an open palm.

A dozen meters away in the direction her palm was facing was her opponent, knocked unconscious with a palm shaped crater in his chest.

A single attack with untold power.

"He's not dead, is he?" Rui asked as he looked at her poor opponent in worry, before glancing back at Fae with a wry smile. "Seems like everybody is getting less and less weak than they used to be."

He couldn't wait to fight everyone!

## Chapter 192: Spectation

Fae had grown immensely in power in the time that she had joined the Academy. Rui did not forget that even two years ago she was able to compete with Nel on roughly equal footing. She had grown vastly stronger than she was two years ago. That fact along with the ridiculous power she had demonstrated just then truly made Rui excited to fight her once more.

Part of the reason was that he had never actually beaten her in a fight yet. Thought that was also further because they hadn't had a serious proper spar in recent times. After Rui's third training stage, where he had mastered Outer Convergence, he had immediately begun under taking missions and when he returned, he had immediately jumped back into training for the Kandrian Martial Festival and the Martial Contest.

He simply didn't have an opportunity to spar against her.

('I'll get my first win against her this time.') Rui was determined to win whenever they fought against each other in the preliminary contest, whenever that happened.

"Let's watch Dalen's fight with Milliana." Kane said, drawing his attention.

"Oh?" Rui raised an eyebrow. "They got paired against each other? What odds."

"Yeah."

Dalen was a heavy defensive type, he was capable of enduring an immense amount of onslaught, and was one of the very few Martial Apprentices in the Academy that could endure Fae's onslaught head-on.

In comparison, Milliana was a stamina-oriented Martial Artist, whose fighting style was centered around outlasting her opponent.

('Not a good matchup.') Rui mused to himself.

They were both passive fighters for the most part, this would usually lead to a slow long fight.

As they reached the ring, what Rui had predicted came to pass. The two of them were having a staring contest instead of an actual fight.

"As expected." Rui sighed.

He couldn't blame them for this, they were only being true to their Martial Art. And neither of them launched belligerent attacks.

Eventually Dalen shuffled and began throwing a few jabs. The problem was, he needed to take initiative because if they just kept staring at each other, she would win simply by outlasting him, even when standing.

Someone who dedicated themselves to stamina would be able to complete every action with the least amount of energy needed.

This is why Dalen had to break character and attack. Even if he was a defensive Martial Artist, he needed to attack. With his sheer size, it was guaranteed he would tire faster than she did, he needed to exercise some flexibility. Even if he didn't launch a belligerent offensive attack like Fae did, he at the very least could not allow a standstill stalemate.

He constantly engaged in an exchange of blows, forcing Milliana to at least engage with him, giving him an opportunity to potentially win the fight.

"This is going to take a long time." Rui sighed. The matches of the preliminary contest didn't have a time limit. This was because time limits affected certain Martial Art more than others, and negatively affected several Martial Artists.

Milliana alone was a good example.

Victory would be nigh-impossible for her in a tournament with a half-an-hour time limit. She would be able to beat no one besides from the weakest of Martial Apprentices. This was extremely unfair towards her, and thus the rules would not restrict the time period of fights.

Rui estimated that Dalen's fight against her would take at the very least quarter of a day to end. As for who would win, he found it hard to say. They were both close enough that the probability for either side winning wasn't extremely high or low. It would come down to the specifics and how the fight actually unfolded.

As he observed them clash, he could see both of them had improved.

Dalen had diversified his Martial Art a little, he had always been exclusive defense. Up until recently, he had had only one foundational technique for the other fields such as offense, maneuvering, supplementary and grappling etc.

His offense being the weakest, up until very recently he had nothing going for offense besides from Vital Pressure. The most foundational striking technique in the entire library

This wasn't particularly his fault. Only Rui was a freak who could master a whopping seventeen techniques in eighteen months. Everyone else would only be able to master four-to-five mid-grade techniques on average in that same timeframe.

It had taken him a few years build his foundation, to have a defense technique for a large variety of attacks, to ensure that he would be able to defend against as many possible types of attacks and increase the probability he would be able to cope with them just fine.

Only after he built this foundation had he decided to dedicate some time and energy mastering techniques of other fields and classes.

Milliana on the hand was the exact opposite. She was already diverse from the very beginning, as far as her weightage on the different aspects of combat. She did not place any extra weight on offense, defense or maneuvering. She placed all her weight on supplementary techniques, specifically; stamina supplementary techniques.

While Rui only had one stamina supplementary technique in Helical Breathing, she had seven. Seven techniques that all boosted her energy reserves, efficiency and longevity as much as possible. When it came to stamina, she was utter unmatched by any other Martial Apprentice in the Academy, probably even Nel, at this point in time.

Nel did not have a single stamina-oriented Apprentice-level technique, and even though his stamina was initially superior and had likely grown due to age, the astronomical boost that Apprentice-level techniques caused could not be underestimated.

Her energy reserves, efficiency and minimalization had long caused her overall stamina to surpass the human limit by leaps and bounds.



Ultimately, whichever one was able to leverage their strengths to the best of their abilities, while mitigating their shortcomings to the best of their abilities would win the fight.

Chapter 193: Good Fight

POW POW POW

Dalen threw a flurry of jabs at Milliana, which she simply blocked by putting together guard.

WHOOSH

She dodged an incoming kick, before once again blocking a few more jabs.

POW POW POW

She didn't attack much, a decision Rui approved.

Dalen's defensive prowess was in the top three within the Academy.

With a six-foot tall gargantuan frame, with heavy bones and muscles, along with eight defense-oriented techniques, he was a sheer tank. Hurting him was an incredibly difficult task. As far as purely the ability to withstand offense went, only Fae and maybe a few others could inflict meaningful damage on him head-on via ordinary attacks.

Someone like Milliana whose offensive measures weren't particularly impressive, would not be able to inflict so much as a scratch on him unless she somehow managed to land her strongest attack on his eyes or another spot that was equally vulnerable.

She had a much higher chance of winning if she simply chose to wait for him to burn himself out.

What Rui found interesting was the manner in which she handled his attacks. Each defense she chose was the most apt as far as efficiency went.

She blocked quick swift jabs because their speed and number made them harder to dodge, she would need to expend more energy. Furthermore, jabs lacked power in exchange for their swiftness.

She dodged more powerful strikes like kicks and heavy swings. These usually required a higher timeframe to land compared to speedy jabs.

This was because they usually were thrown from a greater distance away in order to build up momentum and torque.

She had to find the right balance between what amount of damage was worth spending the energy to dodge instead of block.

She needed to find the exact threshold in order to maximize efficiency to last as long as possible. He wasn't sure if she was entirely accurate, but she seemed to be doing a good job for the most part. It was an ambitious goal, after all. Being one hundred-percent accurate was a tall order and one that Rui was certain he wouldn't be able to fulfill.

WHOOSH

Dalen lunged for takedown which Milliana chose to avoid.

This was another decision that Rui approved from both of them. As a male and particularly big and strong one, Dalen had a significant physicality advantage against Milliana. Physicality mattered much more in grappling than it did in striking.

Furthermore, grappling was extremely energy intensive. It depleted stamina much more quickly than striking did and was aligned against Milliana's Martial Art of stamina conservation.

If she did choose to grapple, there was no doubt she would be severely disadvantaged.

Furthermore, Dalen's grappling defense was no doubt going to be impressive. Milliana's chances of being able to grapple a victory was just extremely low. She would probably lose every quickly if the battle went to the ground and turned into a grappling contest

Which is why it was a good deal for Dalen to try and grapple.

WHOOSH

He tried for another takedown, which Milliana avoided yet again.

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

Kane frowned. "Why is he trying so hard when she's clearly too careful?"

"A grapple is his best way to win." Rui replied.

"Only if it lands, right?" Kane asked.

"Yes, but it also forces Milliana to expend serious energy to avoid him." Rui explained. "She knows the fight will end if the battle turns into a grapple. She needs to avoid it at all costs, but one of those costs is being more energy intensive."

Kane nodded as he observed her evasion technique. As an evasive maneuverer specialist, he could see that she was expending a lot of energy as she avoided the shoots from Dalen. "Her evasion definitely is energy intensive. I can tell she doesn't have much experience in high-energy evasion at all. She also hasn't mastered any Apprentice-level techniques specialized in that regard."

"Makes sense." Rui nodded. Kane's insight in regards to the analysis of her evasion was definitely helpful as an expert in that regard. "What do you think she could be doing better?"

"She's moving too early, her timing is off." Kane explained. "That doesn't help, because if you move too early, then your opponent would just delay the attack, that's why I always move at the earliest moment when it's too late for my opponent to cancel the attack. Still, her timing is honestly awful."

"She's paranoid." Rui explained, observing her with Primordial Instinct. "She's overcompensating, but that isn't the worst part."

"Then what is?" Kane raised an eye.

"At this rate, she'll end up burning more energy than Dalen is." Rui answered.

"Hmmm.." Kane narrowed his eyes as he observed their movements. "You would think she would have a countermeasure for grappling."

"Evasion is her countermeasure." Rui noted. "Problem is, Dalen has a huge wingspan because of how big he is. He doesn't need to expend much energy to reach her, but she does need to expend energy to avoid it. Her paranoia plus Dalen's huge reach are what's screwing over her game plan."

They both continued observing the fight.

Dalen had also realized that his only way to win was through grappling. Milliana began sweating more and more. Dalen needed only to employ his size and wingspan to threaten cornering and grappling her, whereas she needed to spend energy retreating and circling away from him.

Although she had many stamina-oriented techniques, they were meant for different situations. A good portion of her stamina-oriented techniques were for offense, another good chunk were for parrying, one of them was for a different environment and that left only a few for maneuvering. Meaning a lot of her techniques weren't doing her much help in this particular regard.

They were both burning a lot of energy, but eventually, she made a mistake.

CLASP

Dalen managed to get just the slightest grip on her, and that was enough.

They wrangled on the ground, while Dalen exploited his physicality advantage to the maximum while also employing his grappling defense techniques to counter locks and holds.

And within five minutes, she tapped.

Rui had already expected this result, and was only waited for the inevitable to occur.

"Good fight." Rui nodded.

Chapter 194: Kane

"Cheer up." Fae said. "You did a good job."

Dalen nodded. "It was a hard fight. If I hadn't gotten you by the end, you had a solid chance of winning."

Milliana sighed mildly, nodding slightly. She wasn't very expressive, but everyone could see she was dejected by her very first match resulting in a loss.

"The best part is that you can make improvements rather easily, just by shifting your tactics a little." Rui told her, trying to encourage her.

The fight had ended, and all five of them had gathered after their first fight.

Just as Kane was about to try and console her, a voice interrupted him.

"Apprentice Kane Arrancar." A staff member addressed. "Your second official match is ready."

Kane's expression drooped, as he nodded wordlessly. "I'll catch you guys after."

They all bade him good luck, before heading to his ring. Kane had finished his fight earlier than all of them, thus it made sense that he was assigned a fight sooner than all of them, especially, he was assigned his first fight the latest.

"His opponent..." Rui glanced at the boy, recognizing him instantly. "Gale!"

What odds. What was probability that Gale would get matched up with Kane immediately after Rui?

('What terrible luck, too.') Rui thought. He knew Gale's strength as well as Kane's prowess well enough to know Gale had almost no chance of beating Kane.

"Take your stances." The supervisor instructed.

"Looking forward to a good fight." Gale took his stance, as stance that allowed him to launch ranged blows with the greatest of ease.

"Yeah." Kane impassively replied, before taking an even balanced stance that allowed him maneuver with the greatest of ease.

"Begin!" The supervisor commenced the match.

And that was when it happened.

Kane disappeared.

He didn't run.

He didn't bob and weave.

He didn't dance around his opponent like he normally would.

He simply and irreconcilably, disappeared.

Fae, Milliana and Dalen were shocked.

"Where did he go?!"

"What kind of technique allows for such absurdity?!"

"...!!" Even the impassive Milliana expressed visible incredulity.

Rui on the other hand, wasn't even watching.

Or to be more precise, he wasn't watching with his eyes. He had wordlessly closed his eyes the second Kane disappeared from his vision.

He had immediately maximized Primordial Instinct and Seismic Mapping.

The Void Step technique applied psychological tricks to minimize one's presence, as well as maneuvering-based misdirection techniques to draw the target's attention away from the user subconsciously whenever the user began moving.

It was truly absurdly powerful technique when mastered since it meant you were effectively invisible when you moved, and it was an absurdly difficult technique that made you extremely difficult to deal with when mastered.

The reason Rui shut off his vision was because he knew he would not be able to sense Kane at all with his normal senses, the misdirection was too strong and Rui had not trained in any anti-misdirection defensive measures, nor his normal senses to a superhuman level with sensory techniques.

But he had honed two new senses in the form of Seismic Mapping and Primordial Instinct.

He had primarily wanted to test how effective they were at combating the Primordial Instinct technique.

Up in the ring, ten seconds had passed since the fight had begun. To the ordinary observer, Gale was merely getting pummeled by an invisible force. One could only see Kane momentarily appear when he paused briefly after smoothly evading Gale's haymakers.

His friends continued gaping at the sight.

Rui on the other hand, was still motionless with his eyes closed.

"Incredible..." He finally muttered.

He wasn't able to precisely sense Kane's attacks.

He wasn't even able to precisely sense Kane's exact position.

The only thing he could properly sense was the direction Kane was in, and an extremely vague and unclear sense of distance.

That was all.

It was like watching a censored video. Asides from direction, everything else was almost entirely unclear!



He was truly shocked that Void Step were able to obfuscate Kane to such an incredible degree against two roughly high-grade sensory techniques. Seismic Mapping was above average, while Primordial Instinct was a thorough and unshakably high-grade technique. Seismic Mapping had huge range, environmental mapping capabilities as well as object detection while Primordial Instinct had given him extremely heightened instinctual senses and evaluation as well as predictive measures. Together these two techniques should have ensured nothing could possibly obfuscate his senses.

Yet both of these techniques combined were barely able to make a dent against the Void Step technique!

('Thank god I mastered these two techniques.') Rui mused. He would have been utterly screwed had he not mastered them. Kane would have thoroughly bullied him from start to finish.

BAM

Gale collapsed to a swift kick to the chin, shaking his brain enough to cause enough brain trauma to knock him unconscious.

Only half a minute had passed since the fight had begun, and it was already over.

Rui opened his eyes with a wry smile only to find Kane throwing a pointed meaningful look at him, before exiting the stage.

Even before Kane had actually exited the stage and reached them, they had begun pestering him with question.

"What was that??"

"How did you do that!"

"Hey!" Calm down." Kane raised his arms, exasperated. "It's just a peak grade technique, that's all."

Contrary to calming them down, it caused an even greater commotion.

"Congratulations Kane." Rui wished earnestly. Even though he knew Kane didn't care for his victories in the contest and would rather lose, Rui still believed he ought to be proud of his accomplishments.

"Thanks." Kane replied, before returning to pacifying his over-excited friends.

Meanwhile Rui simply smiled wryly as he pondered to himself.

('Alright now...') He thought to himself.

('How the fuck am I going to deal with that?')

He wasn't entirely sure about how he was going to deal with Kane's newfound prowess. But, he did have a few ideas.

('We'll see if they're good enough when the time comes.') He mused.

## Chapter 195: Right in Front of You

Rui needed to create some concrete countermeasures against the Void Step technique, but so far all he had were scraps of ideas.

('The biggest threat of the Void Step technique comes from its ability to bypass defense first, allowing the user to launch lethal attacks, and the second most annoying part about is the fact that it's exceedingly difficult to harm the user because they cannot be perceived.')

Rui needed a solution for both of these problems.

('Thankfully, Kane's offense is mediocre at best.') Rui sighed in relief. Kane spent most of his time on maneuvering techniques centered around evasion, agility and speed. His offense was nowhere near as

solid as his evasive maneuvering. He also didn't have any high-grade lethal techniques like the Stinger, nor did he have any high-grade potent offensive techniques like Outer Convergence.

He had a much harder time mastering techniques that were not maneuvering or evasive in nature, since that was where his talent and affinity lied. This was also proven by how long he took to beat Gale, if he had a technique like Stinger, the match would have ended in seconds.

What this actually meant was that even if he could make it much more difficult for Rui to defend, it would still take him some amount of time to beat Rui, especially when Rui's defense was as solid as it was.

"What are you so engrossed about?" Kane asked, noticing Rui had zoned out of their discussion.

"Just thinking about how I'm going to fight you." Rui replied. "You've grown incredibly strong Kane."

"You'll figure it out." Kane shrugged, before smirking. "Probably. Maybe. Well, we'll see."

"You sure have faith in me." Rui grumbled grumpily, earning a mischievous chuckle from Kane.

"Don't worry." Fae interjected. "Even if Rui fails, I'll be sure to pummel you to the ground. You can thank me later."

Rui sighed as the two of them immediately began arguing and trash-talking each other again. Just as he was about to resume his brainstorming session on how to beat Kane, a voice drew his attention.

"Fae Dullahan." A staff member called to her. "Your second match has been scheduled."

"My, it's that time already." Fae mused, before nodding. "Catch you later."

The four of them immediately head to witness her match. Fae was a real contender and candidate for the representative position, and everyone wanted to see how strong she'd grown.

"Her opponent..." Rui murmured recognizing her.

"Tarah Meinfeld." Dalen supplied. "She's a senior Martial Apprentice of the Academy, a strong counter-offensive specialist."

Rui immediately thought about Neira, who was also a counter-offensive specialist.

('She'd probably do well in this setting.') Rui mused.

"Take your stances." The supervisor instructed.

Fae took her standard stance, with one upside-down palm at her waist and her other palm pointed straight at Tarah, with her legs spread and crouched.

Farah brought both palms in front of her at chest-level, with one foot forward and the other back.

"A non-offensive stance." Rui noted. "She can't easily launch a single attack worth anything in that stance. That's stance meant to intercept incoming attacks."

"Makes sense." Dalen nodded.

"Will she be able to intercept Fae's attacks though?" Kane wondered out aloud.

All of them could feel the coiling power in Fae's frame, especially Rui. The sheer amount of potential energy in her muscles was tingling and prickling Rui's Primordial Instinct.

"We'll see." Rui said open-mindedly. He didn't think it was really possible, but decided to reserve his judgement.

Counter-offensive specialists could be quite tricky, because their battles were inherently asymmetric and soft.

What this meant was that they used a combination of their own energy as well as their opponent's energy against them.

"Begin!" The supervisor commenced the fight.

BOOM

Fae dashed at Tarah, the force of her leap, sent a mild reverberation across the ring. Just as she reached Tarah, the coiled palm tucked at her waist lashed out like a viper. It was an incredibly powerful blow that even Rui did not think he would be able to endure very well even with all three of his techniques.

FHWOOP

Tarah's arms stretched, reaching for Fae's palm. But she did not strike or push against it, nor did she try to block or stop it. Instead, she pulled it in, manipulating the trajectory of her palm while also partially side-stepping.

WHOOSH

Fae's body twisted midair, rotating as she summersaulted, landing on the other side of the ring.

"Woah." Kane raised an eyebrow. "What the hell was that."

"Redirection." Rui replied, as he scrutinized Tarah's form. "Counter-offensive redirection, specifically."

"What does that even mean?" Kane tilted his head confused.

"She used Fae's momentum against her." Rui explained. "She redirected a bit of her momentum and energy and used it to try and throw Fae to flip and throw Fae down to the ground in a grappling maneuver. But she failed, she underestimated Fae's sense of balance as well as her exquisite control over her power."

"Hmmm..." Kane narrowed his eyes as he digested what Rui told him.

"Fae's improved. A lot" Rui nodded. "When she joined the Academy, her style was still full of holes. But she's improved all round. Furthermore, she's mastered some high-grade offensive techniques and her power has since skyrocketed. She's going to be a menace to beat. But..."

"But?" Kane asked.

"But Tarah is extremely compatible with her." Rui sighed. "A bit unfortunate for Fae, but Tarah is probably one of three or four Martial Apprentices in the Academy who can handle Fae's power head-on. She specializes in using her opponents' power against her after all."

"Do you think Fae will win?" Kane asked.

"She can if she chooses the right course of action." Rui replied. "For now, all we can do is watch and see whether she does."

Their attention returned to the fight. Fae had not yet resumed her attack. She was merely shuffling around, testing Tarah's reactions to feints.

('She's calm and composed.') Rui nodded approvingly. ('She's taking her time to think this through because she knows she can. Tarah is a counter-offensive specialist, which means Fae inherently has the initiative.')

('The answer is right in front of you, I'm sure you can find it.')

Chapter 196: Cards

Fae resumed her offense, launching yet another heavy blow.

FWHOOSH

Tarah redirected her energy yet again, flipping her with. Thankfully, Fae's sense of balance and control over her power always allowed her to ensure she landed on her feet each time.

('My most powerful attacks take too long to land.') Fae realized. ('It seems her counter-offense needs great timing, which is easier to achieve with slower attacks.')

Fae intuitively figured out one of the answers Rui was hoping she would. She immediately stopped launching fearsome singular attacks and instead launched a swift barrage of shorter palm attacks. These attacks contained less power than her strongest full-body palm strikes, but they were much quicker and she could launch a greater number of them than her most powerful attacks.

Immediately, she noticed a difference.

Tarah resorted to redirecting them away, but she wasn't able to use Fae's energy against her like she had.

"She's switched to defensive redirection." Rui said, having anticipated it. "Redirection is delicate and requires a lot of precision, it won't be easy for her to be able to redirect all of Fae's power when there's so many different attacks all coming at her extremely swiftly."

"Doesn't seem like a capable technique." Kane commented. "She should stop relying on it."

"Redirection can be quite powerful when mastered." Rui disagreed. "But the problem is Fae's offense is just too strong. The greater the amount of power, speed and number, the harder it is to defend via redirection alone."

Rui was sure that Tarah would be able to redirect most of his attacks head-on. His offense was inferior to Fae's and she should have a much easier time than she was having against Fae.

Of course, Rui wouldn't fight her the way Fae did head-on. Analyzing and evaluating Tarah with the VOID algorithm yielded a pretty interesting solution. The anti-Tarah fighting style that the VOID algorithm developed relied on Rui abusing his Parallel Walk, Balanced Direction, Blink and Phantom Step together

to launch tricky attacks, through holes in her defense that Rui had picked up via the VOID algorithm, that she would have trouble intercepting.

Counter-offensive required the user to intercept offense at the right timing, to perform whatever counter-offensive maneuver the user would perform, but the interception was the most important part of counter-offensive Martial Art techniques.

Drastically raising the difficulty to intercept was the greatest way Rui could hinder her.

He would launch a large number of weaker but quicker attacks like Fae did, but he wouldn't launch them head-on but instead would use his maneuvering and stealth to launch unpredictable and difficult tricky attacks.

He would eventually end the battle with a takedown via Mirage Dive or pierce her with the Stinger.

That was just him, of course. Furthermore, he had already resolved to hold back his more potent trump cards for important fights, and preferably win without them so that the surprise affect was maximized whenever he faced future opponents within the Academy.

Fae launched a curling palm strike.

FLICK

Tarah failed to redirect a strike fully for the time, the palm bypassed her interceptions and struck her cheek, bruising it.

POW POW POW

Fae pressed upon the opening launching a flurry of strikes.

Tarah grew more and more flustered as never-ending waves of powerful blows washed over her.



Although Fae considered these shorter swifter blows to be weak, that was by her standards.

By everyone else's standards, they were still incredibly strong.

BOOM

Just the slightest of slip-ups from Tarah and Fae exploited the opening to launch a heavy blow, the sheer impact blew the air out of Tarah's lungs, leaving her even more open.

BAM BAM BAM

Fae abused the gaping holes in Tara's defense, pounding her as much as she could.

BOOM

CRASH

A final close-range wound-up strike landed against Tarah's hastily construed guard, sending her crashing out of the ring.

Fae sighed.

"She won." Rui grinned.

"And she sent her opponent flying out again." Kane grumbled. "Can she just not win in a sane way?"

"It's part of her Martial Art." Rui shrugged laughing. "You can't hold that against her."

"Hold what against me?" Fae's voice suddenly appeared behind them.

"Holy fuck!" Kane jumped away. "Stop creeping on people woman!"

"My, that exaggerated reaction." Fae said with a hint of suspicion creeping into her tone. "What did you say to Rui?"

"Nothing at all." He shrugged nonchalantly.

He played it cool as she stared at him with sharp eyes. Rui shook his head with a wry smile.

"Congratulations." Dalen said. "Your offense is as absurd as always. I look forward to testing my defense against it."

"Nice win." Milliana nodded.

"Good tactic you employed there." Rui offered. "Your fighting approach has grown a lot more flexible since before."

"I realized I was too rigid a year ago." Fae replied. "Ever since then I've put a lot of weight into improving my flexibility and versatility."

Rui nodded. Fae was definitely in the top three threats, this was reaffirmed. Now that he had seen all three of the Martial Apprentices he considered to be the hardest to beat fight, he needed to start thinking about how he was going to deal with them.

Although he would have liked to have obtained more data, it was best to have some plans anyway. After all, he may not have that luxury.

It was very possible he would get paired up against one of them in the next few rounds, he didn't want to be unprepared for when that happened.

('I don't think I can hold back against any of them.') He sighed inwardly. His plan was to hide Blink and Stinger as his trump cards for as long as possible. But the strength these three had displayed was now causing him second thoughts. These two trump cards might be the only way he could possibly beat them, holding back was extremely risky. If he ran into them, he would use them whenever necessary.

Although he would be revealing all his cards, that was still better than losing.

## Chapter 197: Second Match

As Rui pondered about the solutions he would need to develop against Fae, Kane and Nel, a voice called out to him.

"Apprentice Rui Quarrier." A staff member addressed. "Your second match has been arranged. Please follow me."

Rui nodded, turning to the others. "Catch you guys later."

They bade him farewell and good luck, before heading to his match to spectate. Rui was on their list of greatest threats in the Academy, and none of them wanted to miss seeing how strong he'd gotten. Only Kane had caught the latter half of his first fight having finished early, the rest were still fighting.

Rui glanced at his opponent, recognizing him. "Gheelain Marckle, it's been a while."

"Rui Quarrier." He nodded. "Today is the day I beat you."

Gheelain was a senior Martial Apprentice that Rui had run into many times. He was a grappling specialist, specifically, a strangling specialist.

He excelled at restricting the blood flow and breathing of his opponents when grappling with them. Rui immediately applied the VOID algorithm and subsequently began thinking about how to adapt to and defeat him. The answer of course, was the same as in the past.

The first principle his adaptatively evolved fighting style would need to have was maintaining distance. The intrinsic weakness of grapplers were that they had a short range outside of which they were unable to attack their opponent with grappling.

Thus, the first trait that the adapted fighting style that the VOID algorithm would create was being a long-range fighting style.

The second trait it needed to possess was difficulty in intercepting. As a grappler, Gheelain possessed anti-striking countermeasures without a doubt. The most common countermeasures were intercepting and grasping strikes forcibly turning the battle into a grappling contest.

Thus, Rui needed to increase the swiftness and agility of the strikes to make it harder for it to be intercepted, at the cost of power.

This strategy was what Fae had used, the difference here was that Tarah was purely counter-offensive whereas Gheelain was an aggressive offensive grappler, making it much harder to avoid playing onto his opponent's playing field.

The third trait his adapted style needed to have was evasive maneuvering capabilities. Gheelain was prone to chasing after him and try and use shooting maneuvers to take him down. Shooting maneuvers were essentially charging bullrushes aimed at grabbing one's target for a takedown or a throw. His adapted style would need to use Primordial Instinct, Balanced Direction, Parallel Walk and Phantom Step to avoid pursuit and ensure that Gheelain wouldn't be able to get a hold of him.

The fourth trait his adapted style needed to have was a stamina advantage. If the fight would turn into a cat and mouse chase, then having a stamina advantage was vital. Since Gheelain was a grappler, he could forgo some of his striking defenses in order to conserve energy.

He could also reduce energy-intensive attacks, and focus on simpler low-risk low-energy Vital Pressure attacks that would eventually allow him to win. He ought to drastically cut down on Outer Convergence which was extremely energy-intensive as well, and use it only when an opening presented itself. Helical Breathing needed to be used continuously as well.

"Take your stances." The supervisor instructed.

"Fuuu..." Rui exhaled as he constructed a fighting style that possessed all of the traits that he and the VOID algorithm had created.

He adopted a new stance. Feet centered and shifting, heels off the ground and hands close to the body. This was a stance that best catered to the four traits his adapted style needed to possess.

Gheelain on the other, crouched with both elbows at his ribs and open-handed arms that were looking an opportunity to grab and choke Rui. He intended to dash after Rui the moment the match began.

"Begin!" The supervisor commenced the match.

DASH

WHOOSH

Gheelain executed a shoot maneuver, launching himself at Rui reaching out to grab him, only to clutch at air. The Primordial Instinct technique ensured that such simplistic maneuvers would never ever be able to tag him in a million years.

DASH

He chased after Rui yet again, not willing to give up.

WHOOSH

Rui feinted him into grasping thin air.

POW POW

The briefest and quickest combo jabs with Vital Pressure, exploiting the opening the failed shoot maneuver created, irritating Gheelain.

"He's not fighting like he normally does." Dalen noted, watching Rui. "It's remarkable how often his fighting style changes, almost like he doesn't have a fixed Martial Art or a Martial Path."

"That is his Martial Art and Path." Kane corrected. "He adapts and evolves his fighting style to suit his opponent. We stick to a single style the moment we become Martial Apprentices because that style is our greatest affinity, and we would be extremely weak if we fought with a drastically different style. But what is our weakness, is his strength. Being able to change styles smoothly like flowing water is his greatest strength."

Kane gazed at Rui with intensely with sense of hope in his eyes. Rui had already begun bullying a senior Martial Apprentice while holding back. Only someone of this caliber could beat him as it currently stood.

WHOOSH

POW POW POW

WHOOSH

BAM

"Fuck!" Gheelain cursed in frustration, he raced in as fast as he could at Rui's retreating sight.

That was his final mistake.

Rui's retreat itself had been a feint, he was actually standing still. But Gheelain had timed the shoot for the feint, meaning his timing was off far too early.

The last Gheelain remembered was sense of absolute dread as an immense amount of pressure from Rui pressed down on his mind.

"Got you." Rui whispered.

BOOM

A combination of Flowing Canon, Vital Pressure and Outer CONvergence crashed against Gheelain's solar plexus. Gheelain had timed the shoot maneuver too late because he thought Rui was further away due to the feint.

And Rui had ruthlessly exploited the opening and blasted him with his most powerful technique.

The combination of using Phantom Step to feint in a way that threw off the timing of his opponent's attack while then exploiting that mis-timing to finish the match with a pre-planned attack was a combo that Rui had created in that very moment with the processes of the VOID algorithm.

Gheelain collapsed like a puppet with cut strings.

"Winner; Rui Quarrier!" The supervisor declared.

Chapter 198: Musings

"Good fight man." Kane complimented. "That was clean."

"Thanks." Rui replied.

"Good application of Phantom Step." Kane noted. "I never thought about using it like that."

"It was the fastest way to end the fight." Rui lied. If he truly wanted, he could have ended the fight in ten seconds with either Blink or Stinger. But Gheelain was too weak to force him to use it. He didn't mind taking longer to win, what was three minutes versus ten seconds? It didn't make any significant difference. In exchange, his trump cards weren't revealed.

As time passed, they all got assigned their third fight one-by-one. Dalen and Milliana had fought only once, and they went onto fight two more times.

At the end of the day, out of all of them, only Rui, Kane and Fae got perfect scores with three clean victories. Milliana won only once out of three times and Dalen won two out of three in total.

The scoreboard was revealed by the end of the day, with all seventy-nine contestants' scores ranked.

Out of seventy-nine contestants, only nineteen contestants had three wins and zero losses, and about as many had three losses and zero wins.

The former nineteen roughly constituted the top twenty-five percent of the Martial Apprentices of the Academy as far as combat prowess went, of course there were some discrepancies where strong Martial Apprentices had run into just a notch stronger Martial Apprentices in the very first round or extremely incompatible Martial Apprentices against whom they had a disadvantage against.

Most of the Martial Apprentices fell in the middle with both wins and losses.

Rui glanced at the scoreboard and at the Martial Apprentices with three wins and zero losses. He was quite sure that the victor of the preliminary contest would go on to be elected. Whoever the victor was, this person could not afford to lose a single battle.

As the days passed on, each Martial Apprentice fought roughly three battles a day. The number of matches per day would reduce until it hit one match a day by roughly around the end of month, by when most matches will have been over.

As the days passed, Rui noticed a peculiar trend. Despite many days passing, he hadn't faced any of the top-twenty contenders besides from Gale. In fact, neither did Fae or Kane. They consistently faced the proportion of martial Apprentices that had much more losses than wins. Rui hadn't run into Nel, Fae and Kane yet.

('Could it be... they're trying to maximize suspense and energy of the event by ensuring the most likely candidates don't battle it out from the get-go?') Rui wondered.

The battle between the most likely candidates would likely decide which one of them would become the representative of the Hajin branch. This was true regardless of whether the Martial Artists fought in the



beginning of the preliminary contest or the end. Thus, postponing those battle to the very end would undoubtedly create a much more tense and suspenseful preliminary contest.

This wouldn't affect the end outcome either. At the end of the day, regardless of the order, all martial Apprentices would fight against all other Martial Apprentices. It did not matter who fought who when, at the end of the month, the one with the highest score would be selected as the representative of their Academy

He almost wanted to laugh. Headmaster Aronian sure knew how to keep himself entertained. How else was the old man going to stave away his boredom? He was a Martial Master who had experienced things that none of the Apprentices could even begin to imagine!

Rui would simply have to wait for his time to come. In any case, this was good news for him. The more time he had, the more data he would be able to gather. And the better he'll be able to create counter adapted styles.

He found Fae to be the least difficult. Not because she was the weakest, it was just that she was a much more conventional Martial Artist than Kane and Nel were. Her strength came from having an immense number of potent techniques that she could apply extremely well. She had more defined and conventional weaknesses and strengths. She was generally average in all regards, but her offense was astronomical. Even the weakest of her attacks were stronger than Rui's strongest attacks, barring Stinger, and the sheer amount of force she was able to output was the single greatest that Rui had ever seen.

Nel on the other hand was this powerful because of his absurd physical ability. He had always believed that humans were not capable of superhuman feats without Martial Art, but Nel had shown him how wrong he was. He still didn't understand how he was as strong as he was. Was it just a mutation? Was he just one of the handful of humans who were born with broken limits?

He didn't know. And it didn't matter. His physical prowess was off the charts and Rui needed to contend with that with techniques alone. Thankfully, the lack of techniques meant that the VOID algorithm was actually quite compatible with him, since his fighting style was actually the closest to what humans on Earth would do.

He didn't have maneuvering techniques, he just ran.

He didn't have defensive techniques, he just blocked.

He didn't have offensive techniques, he just swung.

Rui might actually be the most compatible person against him in the entire Academy. The problem was Nel was stronger than him in every regard aside from stealth and perhaps sensory. Being decisively superior to Rui in all major aspects of combat was a huge advantage. Whether or not Rui could compensate and cope with that remains to be seen.

As for Kane...

Kane was actually the most confounding, because he was the most deviant of them all. Rui just wasn't sure how to even begin going about beating him with such a perverse and overpowered ability. Furthermore, as powerful as Void Step was, Kane had also mastered another Grade ten Apprentice-level technique; the Godspeed technique. This technique when executed successfully had knocked out Fae instantly and forced Squire Kyrie to use a Squire-level technique to beat it.

He was an absolute menace.

All three of them were.

Yet, despite this, Rui still found himself grinning uncontrollably when he thought about fighting them.

Chapter 199: Victory

BAM BAM BAM

Rui released an onslaught of heavy blows, each bolstered by Vital Pressure and Outer Convergence. Dalen simply guarded against each of them. He was one of the few people in the entire Academy who could straightforwardly withstand Rui's full power.

Although Rui didn't hit as hard as Fae or Nel, there weren't many people who hit harder than him. Outer Convergence was an incredibly difficult and powerful techniques that was just a few grades short of being grade ten, only senior striking specialists could over power in a contest of blows.

POW

Rui's strike found itself wiggling through his guard and striking his throat, earning a grimace for him. Dalen was just too rock solid, it would take him forever, if ever at all, to wear him down with ordinary strikes.

That's why Rui had aimed for vulnerable and vital areas with Vital Pressure, and tried his best to harm them with Outer Convergence.

Throat.

Solar Plexus.

Testicles.

Eyes.

Even the nose, for momentary incapacitation.

Rui didn't even bother trying to strike his honed muscles or his rock-solid bones. Only through these vital areas could Rui possibly hurt him.

POW

Dalen returned the favour, trying to take Rui down with blows. To his surprise, Rui didn't even bother trying to block his attacks!

Dalen had only mastered Vital Pressure for offense, and that was simply far too meagre to defeat Rui. Rui didn't even bother blocking them, he simply used Inner Divergence, Acute Edge and Elastic Shift to completely negate their impacts.

Rui blasted forward launching waves of attacks on Dalen, who did his best to withstand all of them while also trying to inflict as much damage on Rui as he could, albeit in vain.

A battle could not be fought only via defense, Dalen was very cognizant of this fact. But his offense bounced off Rui like a beach ball.

In comparison, Rui was making meaningful progress. His ability to land heavy blows on vital areas was truly troubling. Although Dalen had heightened his defense, vulnerable areas remained vulnerable areas.

It was almost impossible to train the throat to be able to withstand the power of Outer Convergence nor were there any techniques barring a grade ten technique peak Apprentice-level technique that allowed the throat to withstand such immense absurd power.

Usually when vulnerable areas were targeted, the only realistic solutions that existed was avoid or block.

Had Kane been the one fighting him, he would have avoided. But Dalen was accustomed to blocking and parrying.

Problem was Rui was faster. Much faster. Not only was he quicker because he was lighter, but his movement speed had increased significantly thanks to Outer Convergence. Furthermore, with maneuvering techniques, Rui was able to reposition himself to exploit holes in the defense very quickly.

This alone was very difficult to cope with for Dalen, especially when Rui had extremely impressive and inhumanly perfect timing with the VOID algorithm and Primordial Instinct.

On top of that, Rui made a fool out of him with Phantom Step. Dalen simply couldn't cope with numerous techniques, many of which were very especially powerful.

Eventually, Rui had become so unstoppably dominant that Dalen simply could do no more than turtle up and simply guard against the incoming onslaught. But that had weaknesses as well, weaknesses Rui immediately exploited.

FLICK

He tripped Dalen by intercepting one of his steps with a well-timed sweeping kick. Rui had become so sharp at predicting Dalen with the VOID algorithm boosted by Primordial Instinct that he was able to intercept things that normally would be impossible to intercept.

Dalen's weight fell sideways as he had no crutch supporting it.

BOOM

Rui launched him flying with a double palmed push, amplified with Outer Convergence. With merely one foot on the ground, Dalen simply couldn't prevent being launched. Since Rui pushed instead of colliding a strike against him, all of his defensive techniques were completely useless, since they were meant to work against collisions.

This was what Rui had been aiming for.

THUD

Dalen landed hard outside the ring, skidding some distance away, before finally stopping. Although this was a win by rules, since Rui knocked him out of the ring. He knew Rui could have pummeled him to the ground until he eventually managed to beat him black-and-blue or manage to wiggle in a lethal attack on a vital area causing immense suffering to Dalen. But he chose to win by a ring-out.

The least painful way for Dalen to lose.

Rui was not someone who enjoyed needless tormenting, he chose to defeat Dalen in the most humane way possible, especially since they were friends.

"Winner: Rui Quarrier." The supervisor declared as Rui cleared the ring for the next scheduled fight.

"You won." Dalen sighed. "Good fight."

"Good fight. You were a difficult opponent to beat." Rui smiled at him. "Let's spar again some time."

Dalen nodded, accepting his good will.

"That double-palm push." Fae noted. "That was well-executed. It surprised me because you don't normally use palm attacks."

Rui shrugged. "I used it because it was the soundest solution in those circumstances and parameters."

"You make it sound like a math equation." Kane grumbled.

('That's actually closest to the truth.') Rui mused.

The VOID algorithm was created with cutting-edge data science, statistics, probability, linear algebra and geometry in the twenty-first century of Earth.

It was forged out of more math and numbers than Kane, or anybody else could possibly fathom in his entire life. The sheer amount of information contained in the techniques was one of the biggest reasons that it was unviable in his previous life. No MMA fighter could possibly memorize all the information needed to utilize the VOID algorithm, even if they managed to memorize the entire algorithm, they were unable to memorize all the information about their opponent mid-fight that the VOID algorithm required them to memorize. Rui could only partially use the VOID algorithm even with his reincarnated-boosted conscious mind, he only used the earlier and more elementary iterations and versions of the VOID algorithm.

If the VOID algorithm were a technique, it's difficulty would likely very well surpass grade ten!

## Chapter 200: Scheduled

In the past two weeks and more, Rui had beaten all the small and medium fries with ease. The theory he had come up with had turned out to be remarkably accurate. He hadn't run into a single top-level Martial Apprentice at all in the past two weeks. But he suspected that to change soon, the number of mid-level Martial Apprentices were almost running out, any time now he would begin being pit against the top tier Martial Apprentices.

His prediction had come to be true.

Suddenly, the doors to the facility opened, drawing the attention of the contestants and staff members.

What drew their attention was the force of mind that they'd felt. Squire Kyrie, who was the head supervisor of the preliminary contest walked in. Behind her, a team of support staff members pushed in a rolling notice board.

"Martial Apprentices." She addressed all of them. "Gather around."

Everyone wordlessly heeded, curious as to what was going on.

"The preliminary contest has reached its final stretch." She remarked. "A representative needs to be chosen soon. Thus, the Martial Academy has expedited the scheduling and has pre-scheduled all the remaining matches of the preliminary contest."

She waved her hand, gesturing at the notice board as the staff unveiled it. "All remaining matches have been scheduled. We will provide all of you with a timetable containing the schedules of your own battles. You will be expected to appear ten minutes before your match. Failing to appear at the scheduled time will result in an automatic loss, so do not be tardy. You will have access to healing and rejuvenation potions, so do not be tardy, there will be no second chances."

The announcement caused a wave of tension to spread through the crowd. The staff member immediately began handing the Martial Apprentices their timetables, it was far too inconvenient to skim through the dozens of matchups scheduled every day looking for one's own each day.

"This..." Rui subconsciously murmured as he glanced at his own timetable.

From that day forth, he was scheduled to have only one fight per day. But that wasn't the eye-drawing part.

Each of his opponents were people who had perfect scores!

All wins and zero losses.

This was explicit confirmation of his observation. This would not have been possible if these Martial Apprentices had faced each other at some point. They, like him, had probably built the perfect record mopping up the lower and mid-tier Martial Apprentices of the Academy.

At the very beginning of the preliminary contest, there were nineteen Martial Apprentices with perfect scores. However, since then seven of them had lost atleast one match breaking their win streak. These Martial Apprentices weren't weak, but were clearly one notch below those that had managed to remain unbeaten from the very start.

Rui grew excited, as a grin crept onto his face.

This was where the true battle for the representative would begin!

Everybody knew that the first twenty days of the preliminary contest was merely to filter out the losers who never had a chance in the first place. The scoreboard after twenty days would reveal the elite few that had a realistic chance of being chosen as a representative.

Rui skimmed through the list of names he would be fighting.

Feela Garron.

Jane Francis.

Avi Seth.



Sahar Kal.

Fae Dullahan.

Hever Mendelieve.

Sarron Malcolm.

Vivian Dufresne.

Lala Sec.

Nel.

Kane Arrancar.

Eleven fights in eleven days.

These were the strongest of the strongest. Most of them came from illustrious Martial families in the Martial communities. Nel and Rui being one of the few exceptions.

What he found curious was that his very last match was scheduled against Kane.

And his second-to-last match was scheduled against Nel.

He was scheduled to fight Fae six days from then.

These three were the most threatening to him all out of all of the eleven.

He was curious about when these three would be fighting against each other. He skimmed through the notice board, looking for fights that had two of these three. Quickly noting them and their order.

Fae vs Nel.

Fae vs Kane.

Kane vs Nel.

Kane's battle with Nel was just one day prior to his. Rui was glad that two of his three most difficult opponents were as further away as possible, allowing him to gather all the data he could possibly want. In the past nineteen days, he had carefully observed as many fights of all of them as he could, especially Kane and Nel, since these two freaks deviated too much from conventional.

He had keenly observed their tactics, approach, tendencies and quirks, reactions and responses, strengths and weaknesses. Growing more and more prepared to fight them.

The reason he had focused on Kane and Nel in particular more than Fae was because his previous knowledge on Fae not as outdated as his previous knowledge on Kane and Nel.

He never had any information on Nel in the first place, thus it became much more imperative to gather information on him.

As for Kane, a lot of the old information Rui did have was now simply outdated, or at the very least needed some updating. This was the power of the Void Step technique. This technique singlehandedly changed the entire equation and the entire game! Now, all of a sudden he needed to be extremely careful fighting him, not just because of the Void Step technique, because old information might end up causing his downfall. At the very least, until he was able to account for the Void Step technique, he would need to forget everything he knew about Kane.

All in all, he had a tough time ahead of him.

"Our match is scheduled last huh?" Kane frowned. "That's funny."

"The remaining matches are not going to be easy." Fae noted. "These Martial Apprentices are no jokes, even if I'm confident of victory."

Rui nodded. If he was not careful, one of these might just pull a victory from under his feet!