

## Martial Unity 651

### Chapter 651: Drastic

"What I need..." Rui explained. "Is to have a team of Martial Squires of the Longranger Sect aid me in building a settlement on neutral territory on the island for the skilled laborers employed on the cruise ship, the diplomatic team, the security team, and the intelligence team. We seek to be self-sufficient, so we would also require the necessary skilled expertise and the necessary supplies and goods needed to build a self-sustaining settlement on the island."

The current personnel as well as the goods and supplies that had been assigned to the mission were very insufficient in accomplishing what Rui was trying to accomplish. He needed more than what he already had.

"Hm, alright. As for the specifics..."

"Those can be haggled over, but the main point is that we need to demonstrate the totality of all the value that our techniques can provide," Rui mentioned. "The most important part of my request is the Martial Squires of the Longranger Sect. Specifically, their Martial Paths need to line up with what we are offering."

"I see, so you want to get the Martial Squires of the Longranger Sect to have Martial Paths centered around the kinds of techniques that the Martial Union is planning to offer to the G'ak'arkan Tribe?" She asked.

Rui nodded. "The techniques we are offering are those that shore up the shortcomings of the G'ak'arkan Tribe. Thus having Martial Squires that are experts in those fields that the G'ak'arkan Tribe is lacking in really allows us to showcase exactly what it is we are offering. The Martial Squires need to perfectly fit our needs."

"That is understandable, I'm sure Senior Ceeran can arrange for that." She replied. "Have him work out the choices of what Martial Squires he thinks are most fit, and send that list to me, and I will see what I can do with assigning them to this mission."

"Thank you, commissioner Derun," Rui smiled.

"Not at all. Is there anything else?" She asked.

"Well, yes. I'm a little hesitant, but I think this next plan has enough merit to warrant mentioning," Rui said. "I wanted to get your opinion on this idea that I had."

She nodded, waiting for him to finish it.

"I was considering the idea of introducing a powerful species of fauna to the Vilun Island that would disrupt the island and would make life harder for the G'ak'arkan Tribe," Rui told her.

The idea sounded so absurd and out of pocket that Martial commissioner Derun was stumped for a second. It was truly out of her expectations that Rui would make a request like this.

"What?" She frowned. "What merit is there in such a pointless plan? You'll simply cause harm to the tribe that we are already struggling to befriend."

"Yes, but the species of fauna that I'm considering must be one that can easily be dealt with by the kind of long-range techniques that the G'ak'arkan Tribe is lacking in, the kind that we are offering to them because they are lacking in. If we do that..."

"Then the value of our techniques would be much greater," She quickly understood. "You want to introduce a brand-new problem and crisis that would increase the value of what we are offering and introduce an additional need for the G'ak'arkan Tribe to accept our proposal to trade techniques."

One of the problems that Rui had highlighted earlier was that the G'ak'arkan Tribe had no driving motivation to accept the trading offer that the Martial Union had made for them. They were satisfied with their Martial prowess and had great pride in their own techniques. There simply was nothing strong enough to put down that pride and take interest in the techniques of the outsiders.

Rui had recognized this and realized that there was only one viable solution.

If there was no driving motivation for the G'ak'arkan Tribe to accept the trading offers of the Martial Union, then Rui realized that he need only introduce a reason for the G'ak'arkan Tribe to develop a driving motivation into accepting the offers of the Martial Union.

"You're plotting against them, if the G'ak'arkan Tribe discovers or suspects your ploy, then you will have forever destroyed the relationship between the tribe and the Martial Union, do you understand?" She warned him.

"I am aware of that," Rui nodded calmly. "Of course, it cannot be done in haste. And it will require some preparation and a lot of deception. But I am confident that as long as we plan thoroughly, and execute the plan thoroughly, we can be reasonably confident that the G'ak'arkan Tribe will eventually acquiesce to our trade offers."

She considered his words quietly for several seconds. "I will get back to you on this, I am afraid I cannot make a decision regarding this request of yours on the spot,"

Rui understood why, of course. If the plan failed, then the Martial Union could forget about getting all of its techniques through diplomatic negotiations. The G'ak'arkan Tribe would instantly become sworn enemies of the Martial Union, and hostilities would break out immediately.

In the worst-case scenario, they might break out into a war with the diplomatic convoy of the Martial Union then and there, leading to the entire convoy being ravaged.

Rui was not optimistic about Senior Ceeran's chances of taking on three Martial Seniors at once. Although Martial Seniors of the G'ak'arkan Tribe were much weaker than that of the Kandrian Empire, on average, three-on-one was still very one-sided as far as the odds went.

Of course, he was quite certain that Senior Ceeran was probably very strong even for a Martial Senior of the Martial Union.

Even if he could win, the destruction of their battle would be immense and would likely end up hurting the entire convoy. Furthermore, the G'ak'arkan Tribe outnumbered the diplomatic convoy as far as Martial Artists of lower Realms went, too.

The consequences of being discovered would be devastating, Rui wasn't sure he would even survive in such circumstances.

## Chapter 652: Perspective

Life in the G'ak'arkan Tribe was quite simple.

One ate, slept, and fought.

This was their daily cycle and everything else in their lives revolved around it. Each day they would prepare the entire day to engage in some physical conflict with another Martial Tribe that also occupied Vilun Island, or they themselves would find themselves to be the target of some attack or assault of another Martial Tribe.

The G'ak'arkan Tribe were mountain folk, although the Vilun mountain was not too large, it was the sole mountain on the island and the G'ak'arkan Tribe occupied it. The mountain gave them a natural advantage as they could leverage their long-range specialty the best with the natural inclination that the terrain gave them.

The conflicts between the Martial Tribes of the island were straightforward and head-on. They did not ever seem to engage in asymmetric warfare and covert operations that could turn the tables in their favor, for some reason. The outcomes of conflicts were largely contingent on the quantity and quality of warriors involved. An overwhelming proportion of the conflicts that occurred on the island were limited to human-level and Apprentice-level spats.

A smaller proportion of conflicts involved the Martial Squires that fought independently, for their destructive power was too strong to be fighting between humans. None of the Martial Tribes of Vilun Island wanted their own Martial Squires accidentally massacring their own people inadvertently in the middle of fighting against Martial Squires. This was a universally undesirable outcome, thus across time, an unwritten agreement had naturally formed between all of the Martial tribes of the island.

Conflicts need to be segregated by Realm.

Every day, human-level clashes would spark between different Martial Tribes, and Martial Apprentices would frequently also get into fights with the Martial Apprentices of other tribes.

The deployment of Martial Squires was much more special and was reserved for targeted moments. These conflicts were much more destructive and every Martial tribe needed to be careful with where and when these Martial Artists fought.

However, the most destructive fights in Vilun Island were between the leaders of each of the Martial Tribes; the Martial Seniors.

These exalted beings were so far above everybody else, that the rest may as well have been no different from insects. These warriors did not pick fights frivolously, even if there was an opportunity for a Martial Senior to wipe out hapless Martial Apprentices or Martial Squires of enemy tribes, they would not bother lifting a hand themselves to destroy the lessers. It was beneath them, no different from an adult bullying little children.

The few times they did fight against Martial Seniors, the entire island would sit tight and grit its teeth.

Such was the power of the most powerful warriors of the island, even separating one's self from the battlefield of these mighty warriors to the other side of the island did not guarantee safety. Their power was too oppressive.

The few times that they did fight would leave scars on the island that sometimes never faded away!

It was the pinnacle of physical conflict

Such was the life of the Martial tribes of Vilun Island.

A static monotony of head-on and straightforward physical conflict that all participating tribes had grown not only intimately familiar with but also comfortable with. It was all they had known, and all they would know; eternal conflict on this chunk of land that was surrounded by infinite seas.

Or so they thought.

The arrival of aliens to the island was one of the most shocking events to have ever happened on the island.

They arrived on a strange, large vessel that lumbered aboard water towards the island. Not a single Martial tribe on the island had missed the arrival of the original ship of the Kandrian Empire and the Martial Union that first discovered Vilun Island. Their innate fears had largely been dispelled when they saw that even the Martial Apprentices and Martial Squires of their tribes were able to obtain a dominant victory against the outsiders who had boarded onto the island and had begun exploring and even extracting resources aggressively the moment they arrived.

A single attack sent the hapless aliens packing where they came from, but not before a lot of them, died because they weren't strong enough.

They weren't much of a threat, it seemed.

Yet despite getting beaten black and blue and running away entirely in a shameful display of cowardice, the aliens returned. This time, they smiled, offered gifts that the Martial tribes appreciated, and even attempted to hold dialogue, as difficult as that was initially. They went all out in pleasing the Martial tribes and making friends with them despite their fellow aliens being killed by their people.

In the eyes of the Martial tribe, this was a sign of weakness and cowardice.

What kind of tribe befriended the murderers of their own tribesmen?

It became clear to the tribe folks that the alien tribes were probably weak and cowardly, and not worth paying much attention to. They strongly rejected the strange contraptions and objects that they brought along, disdaining them as a pathetic means to cover up for their weakness.

They scoffed when the aliens sent mere ordinary humans as representatives of their entire tribe, or their 'union' as they insisted on calling it. Only the strongest of the tribe could represent the entire tribe.

Yet the aliens sent a bunch of ordinary humans to represent their entire tribe?

What a joke.

Furthermore, these humans were not even Martial Artists, but they had no combat ability whatsoever. Even the children of the Martial tribes were strong enough to beat them up.

What the Martial tribes found to be most humorous was that despite being so weak and cowardly, the alien tribe had the gall to offer a trade to obtain their techniques.

The sacred techniques that they had inherited from their powerful and glorious ancestors?

The diplomats were laughed away.

Yet their laughter froze when the aliens seemed to regain basic common sense and sent a Martial Artist to represent them for the first time.

#### Chapter 653: Changes

These weak aliens suddenly seemed to bring about a Martial Artist out of nowhere. Furthermore, A Martial Squire, not a Martial Apprentice.

That caught the attention of the Martial tribes of Vilun Island.

Power was all that mattered to them, which meant that those that had power definitely were much bigger in their eyes.

The Martial Squire offered to trade them the techniques of his 'union' for the techniques of the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

Yet that was not what had angered the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

"Our techniques are much superior to your primitive techniques, so you have every reason to accept our offer." The alien Martial Artist told them with a contemptuous expression.

The Martial Squires of the G'ak'arkan Tribe felt boundless rage boiling from deep within their being as they exerted superhuman willpower to control themselves from attacking and tearing the fool apart!

If not for the fact that they were too close to the ordinary tribe-folk of their village that would die from just the minutest fraction of their power, they would have killed him on the spot.

What followed was even more bewildering to them.

The ordinary humans that had accompanied the Martial Squire chastised the Martial Squire in their native tongue!

They dared to adopt a strong tone with the Martial Squire despite being ordinary humans.

This was unheard of to the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

What dumbfounded them, even more, was that the Martial Squire heeded their words and apologized for the insult. Later that day, they sent even more gifts as a token of apology.

Truly incomprehensible behavior.

Yet what was even more shocking was that much later after several more attempts, they returned with a Martial Senior!

Now, this was a jolting event even to the highest leaders of the Martial tribes of Vilun island. The birth of a new Martial Senior was always a defining and significant event on Vilun island and one that could influence the power dynamics of the many Martial Tribes.

Every Martial tribe paid close attention as the Martial Senior specifically headed towards the G'ak'arkan Tribe.



The offer was the same as before; their techniques for the techniques of the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

This time, there was more gravitas to the offer.

Yet the problem was the phrasing. The previous Martial Squire was bad enough, but this one was far worse.

"Your primitive techniques are much weaker than ours, the only reason we want them is that you have certain novelties that we are interested in. Don't be stupid and accept our offer." Senior Ceeran had conveyed to them, despite his pleasant smile.

Hostilities had nearly broken out then and there, frankly, it was a miracle that they hadn't. If not for the fact that N'Kulu, the leader of the G'ak'arkan Tribe, had more maturity in him than his clansmen, it may very well have turned into a war then and there.

At this point, the G'ak'arkan Tribe was very confused.

Its lack of understanding of the aliens which stemmed from having dismissed them for many years after their initial underwhelming appearance was starting to get in the way of how they ought to deal with them.

At the very least, they never showed any overt hostility to the Martial tribes of the island. They maintained a peaceful relationship and continuously made offers to trade Martial techniques.

Alas, the G'ak'arkan Tribe, at least, was not interested in sharing their techniques to obtain the techniques of people whose Martial Artists were disrespected by normal humans. How could such Martial Artists have worthy techniques?

They may have reached higher Realms, but their conduct with lessers gave the Martial Artists of the G'ak'arkan Tribe very little confidence that they had any merit in them.

Then came the latest Martial Artist in the long line of ambassadors.

A Martial Squire with pitch-black hair and eyes. He blazed with more power in a Martial Squire than any Martial Artist on the island had ever seen. It was a wonder to them how he was still in the Squire Realm.

For the first time, the G'ak'arkan Tribe had a serious discussion with the ambassador of the 'union' that managed to actually end on a peaceful note. The G'ak'arkan Tribe skeptically listened to his tale of offering techniques that covered some of the shortcomings of the G'ak'arkan Tribe in exchange for some techniques that covered their shortcomings.

There was only one problem.

What shortcomings?

The G'ak'arkan Tribe did not see any of the so-called shortcomings that the ambassador had suggested that their techniques had; their range and power, among other things.

This made no sense to the G'ak'arkan Tribe. Their long-range techniques had more range and more power at range than any other long-range techniques on the entire island!

This was naturally true since they were the only Martial tribe that developed an affinity for long-range techniques that other Martial tribes did not, due to their environment.

Long-range techniques were particularly useful at elevated heights and distances.

Regardless, the G'ak'arkan Tribe simply failed to make heads or tails of the mentality and thoughts of the relatively friendly but strange aliens that continuously had been pestering the G'ak'arkan Tribe to obtain their techniques for quite some time now.

At the very least, their talks had made more progress than in the past, but it had become very clear that both sides were nowhere near each other on the same page. This was the fundamental barricade between a fruitful negotiation session.

Soon after, the alien outsiders seemed to receive reinforcements that brought over more people to the island. This was an alarming development. If not for the fact that the outsiders had spent many years slowly building up goodwill with the Martial tribes of Vilun Island, they would have long kicked them all to the curb as they did many years ago the first time they stumbled upon the island.

The vigilance of the G'ak'arkan Tribe grew stronger as they closely observed what the outsiders were up to on the island, whatever it was, it was not insignificant.

#### Chapter 654: Requirements

"This is quite the novel idea," Zeyra, an assistant diplomat of his, remarked after Rui finished explaining his initial idea.

"I agree," Stemple, the other assistant diplomat, nodded. "Did you really come up with this sir?"

"I did," Rui nodded. "I proposed it to Martial commissioner, and she approved after giving it some thought. There are many merits to the plan I have proposed, after all. The best way to demonstrate the value of our techniques to the G'ak'arkan Tribe is by putting ourselves in their position and showing them the value that our techniques bring us when we are in their position. I have already identified some areas in which we can make very demonstrable impacts that will no doubt make all of their Martial Artists quite jealous. I'll have to rely on the intelligence team to aid me in uncovering more ways in which we can demonstrate the power of our techniques. As long as we can sufficiently sway over enough stakeholders of the G'ak'arkan Tribe we can move past the biggest hurdle hampering our discussion."

They were both speechless. For a moment, Rui sounded like an actual diplomat rather than a Martial Artist. It was hard for them to reconcile his remarkable insight with his being a Martial Artist.

"So, I guess we'll be settling on Vilun island for the time being?" Zeyra asked.

"That does seem to be the case," Rui nodded.

"We'll need to be careful while selecting the location of our settlement," Stemple noted.

"That's true," Rui nodded. "Ideally, we can look to settle on a different part of the Vilun mountain, but I am unsure about how the G'ak'arkan tribe will react to that."

The G'ak'arkan tribe was most certainly not large enough to occupy the entirety of the area on the mountain. However, the mountain was viewed as the G'ak'arkan Tribe's territory. It would be a foolish move to rashly build a settlement in their own territory without permission.

Rui was sure that regardless of all the goodwill that the Martial Union had spent building with the G'ak'arkan Tribe, they would not hesitate to drive them out of their territory. It was one thing to engage in discussions and talks about the mutual trade of Martial Art techniques with the Martial Union, it was another thing altogether to start building a house in their front yard.

"I think they are quite likely to accept that, sir," Stemple said thoughtfully. "The Martial tribes of Vilun island have all demonstrated a high value for the sovereignty of their territory."

"That is the troubling part," Rui sighed. "I think getting them to agree to us building a settlement on the mountain that they have claimed as their territory is unrealistic. However, building a settlement at the mountain base or on the surrounding hills should not be that much of a problem," Rui explained.

"The further away we are, the longer it will take for this plan to take effect, sir," Zeyra chimed in. "The plan would be most effective if we are able to be as close to them for them to observe us with the greatest amount of ease and thoroughness."

She had a good point. The entire point of the settlement plan that Rui had come up with was to thoroughly demonstrate the tangible and intangible benefits and utility that the techniques that they were offering to trade, provided to them when they were in similar enough circumstances as the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

However, consequently, the time period for this plan to succeed would stretch out increasingly further away from the G'ak'arkan Tribe that they were. How could the G'ak'arkan Tribe effectively surveil the settlement if they were on the opposite side of the island? It would be many, many years by the time the G'ak'arkan Tribe naturally came about to discover the value of the techniques that the diplomats of the Martial Union were offering to trade to the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

"That is also a valid point," Rui sighed. "We'll have to find a good spot that is able to fulfill our requirements. The two of you and the rest of the diplomatic team will have to help me chalk out a list of requirements and conditions for the potential locations that we could inhabit so that we can provide this to the intelligence team and have them discreetly conduct surveys across the island for locations that could fulfill our requirements."

"That's a rather large burden to place on the intelligence team, sir," Stemple remarked. "This island is small only in the context of a continent map," Stemple glanced over to the gigantic map of the Panama Continent in the conference room. "It is still a gigantic amount of area that the intelligence department will have to surveil. Furthermore, this island is dangerous not only due to the Martial Artists but the abundant fauna that inhabits the natural uninhabited portions of the island."

"I am aware of that," Rui nodded. "Thankfully, they don't have to scour the entire island literally, as Zeyra pointed out, the location cannot be too far from the G'ak'arkan tribe. This means there is a hard limit to the distance from the G'ak'arkan tribe beyond which it is no longer able to fulfill our requirements. It significantly cuts down on the area that they have to surveil, and the risk associated with surveilling the area around the mountain is lower considering that the G'ak'arkan tribe is unlikely to go out of their way to kill simple scouts of ours."

Rui continued fleshing out the list of requirements that the land that they would eventually inhabit would need to have. The list turned out to be longer than expected, but that was not entirely disadvantageous since that would mean making a choice would be easier due to the fewer choices.

Their work wasn't done just by locating a place, however. They would need to gain a very thorough understanding of the final location in order for the settlement construction process to proceed smoothly.

## Chapter 655: Location

Before long, the intelligence team received a full list of requirements in order of importance that needed to be scouted within a certain range of the G'ak'arkan village. The intelligence department got to work immediately, there was a lot of lands to be covered, after all.

Furthermore, they needed to take the environmental survey and recording devices with them that would allow them to measure the environmental parameters of the candidate locations for their soon-to-be settlement to occupy.

However, that alone wasn't enough. Once the choice was made, the diplomatic team would need to send the data of that location back to the Martial Union, to commissioner Derun who would then make the necessary preparations and dispatch another cruise ship with the supplies and personnel that would be necessary to make the settlement work.

"I had suspected it would be the case, but I guess that hill paralleling Vilun mountain is indeed the best choice," Rui sighed.

He was in a meeting with his diplomatic team in the conference room as they piled through all the reports and data that the intelligence team had painstakingly gathered across twenty days. They had curated and sorted all of the viable venues within range of the G'ak'arkan Tribe

"There are many merits to colonizing the G'una Hill, but there are other candidates as well, sir," Stemple remarked. "For example, the flattened crater at the center of the island seems like a good place to settle."

"No, that's a bad idea." Rui shook his head. "Haven't you memorized all the previous anthropological and environmental data the Martial Union has collected on Vilun island?"

"Uh... no?" Stemple sheepishly admitted.

Of course, this wasn't necessarily a fault of his. It wasn't really his business as an assistant diplomat to memorize data that was well outside his expertise and purview and did not possess any direct relevance to his job as a member of the diplomatic team.

"That crater... was created by the clash between Martial Seniors," Rui smiled weakly, sighing in admiration.

The many assistants in the room jolted as they halted their work, turning to Rui in shock.

"Tha-That's impossible!" Zeyra's eyes widened. "That crater is nearly two kilometers in diameter and nearly a hundred meters in depth at the center!"

Rui couldn't blame them for their shock, he hadn't been any less shocked himself when he had come across the report himself.

He had never seen a Martial Senior in action, but now he realized that may not have been a bad thing. If he stood too close to a fight between them, significant injury from just the aftereffects was guaranteed. Death was the worst-case scenario.

The assistants assigned to the diplomatic team began to gain a clearer understanding of why hostilities hadn't broken out in the previous diplomatic endeavor with Senior Ceeran. If they had broken out, the G'ak'arkan Tribe would be annihilated through and through barring the stronger Martial Squires.

"Regardless, the other Martial tribes avoid that spot because it served as a battleground for some of the powerhouses to intercept enemy powerhouses before the battle takes off into the air, building our settlement there is utter suicide," Rui shook his head.

That was a pretty good reason to avoid that location.

It took a while, but the diplomatic team finalized the location. As Rui had predicted, choosing a hill, that too one that was closest to the G'ak'arkan Tribe was the best idea. The elevation was important to Rui because it allowed them to demonstrate the utility of their techniques at a height, which was relevant to the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

Once the decision had been made, Rui sent the data to Martial commissioner Derun.

"Hmmm, definitely a logical choice," She told him when he called and informed her of their choice. "I'll start making preparations immediately. It shouldn't take too long, as long as Senior Ceeran sends me the profiles of Martial Artists of the Longranger Sect as soon as possible."

Rui nodded. "Understood. I haven't had a chance to inform him of the choice of locations yet, but I will let him know as soon as possible."

"Good," She nodded as she read through the data that Rui had sent her.

"Another thing," Rui remarked. "I wanted to inquire regarding the matter of authorization of the second plan of action that I had proposed to you."

Her expression did not change at his words, but Rui could sense the hesitation in her demeanor.

It was understandable, what he had proposed was much riskier than the more innocuous plan of building a settlement on the island to show off the explicit and implicit utility of the techniques of the Martial Union on a day-to-day business as well as their value in physical conflict.

"Unfortunately, your other proposal and request are not nearly as easy to grant as this one. It will take more time for me to come to a decision on that. Thankfully, it is not something that can be rushed anyway, I want to make sure that I am absolutely certain before using my authority to facilitate something of that sort," She replied.

"That's understandable," Rui nodded. "Personally, I think that your prudence and thoroughness are quite apt. I myself am bogged with the mission so I do not have much time to speculate on the pros and cons of yet another potential plan when I am burdened with having to manage the execution of the ongoing mission at the moment."

"Good, be sure to focus on making sure the settlement operation runs smoothly. I cannot guarantee I will approve your other plan if the settlement operation succeeds, but I can definitely guarantee you that it will never receive my approval if you are unable to make sure the settlement runs smoothly. Although you have received some basic training and tutelage from Carl in the humanities and social sciences in one month, do not think that running a self-sufficient settlement on a foreign island is simple or easy."

"Of course, I can assure you I don't have any hubris in regard to this matter," Rui nodded.

## Chapter 656: Issues

"So, your plan is to form a settlement on Vilun Island?" Senior Ceeran frowned even after Rui thoroughly explained everything.



"As I said, there are many merits to this plan that I just laid out," Rui neatly disguised his exasperation with patience.

"How long will be settling on the island?" Senior Ceeran wondered.

"For however long it takes," Rui replied calmly. "But I am predicting for several weeks to potentially a few months. Worst case scenario it would take years of grinding at their reluctance before we succeed."

Of course, Rui did not think that would happen. Frankly, he was most optimistic about wearing down the G'ak'arkan Tribe's continuous refusal to trade techniques with his second plan, more than anything. The settlement plan only addressed one hurdle out of the several that blocked the path to a successful and fruitful trading agreement with the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

"And you said you wanted me to compile a Martial Artist profiles for commissioner Derun whose expertise and Martial Paths are centered around the kinds of techniques that we are offering to the G'ak'arkan Tribe?" Senior Ceeran turned to Rui with an inquisitive look.

"That's right, you can limit to Martial Apprentices and Martial Squires only," Rui nodded. "From what I have concluded from a preliminary analysis, the G'ak'arkan Tribe is lacking in range and power, compared to our techniques," Rui remarked. "So perhaps getting a lot of Martial Apprentices and Martial Squires who greatly excel in these two parameters specifically would suit our needs the best."

"Those aren't the only avenues that they are lacking in," Senior Ceeran snorted.

"Then feel free to include any additional parameters that they are lacking in additionally, as well," Rui replied. "I'd suggest picking Martial Art techniques that are low in difficulty as possible while still having a high enough potency grade to be significantly superior to the G'ak'arkan Tribe in any given avenue or parameter. We want to impress them with how powerful our techniques are, but impressing them with how manageable they are to master is also equally important. They will not be receptive to trading techniques with us if our techniques will be damn near impossible for them to master. At most, the high-difficulty and high-grade techniques can be used additionally to impress them."

"That's a shame, they would certainly be very impressed with your Pathfinder technique that just so happens to cover one of their weaknesses," Senior Ceeran smiled, turning to Rui.

Of course, Rui had long realized this himself. It was most certainly true that his Pathfinder technique ought to be nothing short of shocking to the G'ak'arkan Tribe. He wasn't even sure if even the Martial Seniors of the Martial Tribe could replicate its feats.

Rui did intend to leverage it to seduce the G'ak'arkan Tribe into having a trade with them. He only needed to figure out the best way to make the most lasting impact on them. He hadn't yet come up with an aptly satisfactory timing and situation yet.

"Regardless, please be sure to send the Martial Artist profiles to Commissioner Derun as soon as possible," Rui requested him. "The sooner she gets that information, the sooner she can put together a team for the mission."

"This mission has escalated more than I ever imagined it would, I never realized that facilitating diplomatic relations with foreign parties can be accomplished through such indirect methods as well," He noted. "As expected, Derun made a great choice by assigning you to this mission."

"The two conversed before going separate ways.

Rui's immediate work was done, now he just needed to make sure he was informed of all the latest updates to the settlement operation preparations.

It wasn't as simple as rounding up some skilled laborers needed to build the basic infrastructure of his settlement from the natural resources abundant on the island and manage the logistics of the settlement, he would need to rely on the ecologists of the Ministry of Environment and Ecology that would be dispatched and figure out a way to build a self-sufficient settlement. They would need to secure food and water supplies, they would need to establish security measures based on the fauna of the island.

Thankfully, Rui's plan involved building only a highly primitive settlement. He was not adept at statesmanship, if he had to build a modernized settlement, he would probably fail as he struggled to build viable mini communications, energy, and transportation sectors.

Still, just because he was building a simple settlement did not mean his job was simple. The G'ak'arkan Tribe made it look simple because they were highly unified in their warped culture, and their hierarchy of authority was entirely centered around Martial prowess.

The same could not be said for the settlement that Rui needed to construct. Things were more complicated, unfortunately. As the lead diplomat and the initiator of this operation, he was the highest in the chain of command, despite neither being the strongest nor probably sufficiently qualified.

He would most be delegating almost all of the work to the settlement team that Martial commissioner Derun would dispatch, who had their own orders.

It was messy and complicated.

Still, as long as it looked nice on the outside, Rui was fine. They were not trying to create a settlement that was highly efficient and viable forever in the long term. It was merely a means to show the G'ak'arkan Tribe exactly what they were in for if they decided to accept the trading offer that the Martial Union had repeatedly made to them.

"Those techniques better be worth all this effort," Rui sighed in frustration.

The workload, even when he delegated a lot, was not easy. Just staying on top and making sure things were in order took much of his time. Yet Rui did his job diligently until the Martial commissioner informed him that all of the final preparations had been made and the settlement team was soon to be dispatched to Vilun island.

Within two weeks, a new and larger ship arrived at the island.

## Chapter 657: Plan

"Squire Quarrier, I am captain Shevy Leola, the interim leader of the Vilun settlement team, sir," A tall sharp-eyed woman greeted him straightforwardly.

"Pleasure to meet you, captain," Rui shook her hand. "The settlement operation is an attempt fulfilling a mission of significant importance to the Martial Union. I hope to work with you to ensure that it is a success."

"Martial commissioner has informed me of the purpose of this operation, and I have been briefed about your mission. I have also been highly familiarized with all of the protocols surrounding the execution of the settlement operation from the very first to the last step, all of the details of the operation as well as the authorized chain of command. I am second in command after you, I hope to work by your side to ensure this is a success as well sir," She replied curtly

Rui nodded, appreciating her professional conduct. It was good to have somebody who knew exactly what she was doing.

"Alright captain, commissioner Derun has already briefed me, but let's go through the settlement building operation thoroughly," Rui suggested.

She nodded curtly, before beginning. "The Vilun settlement operation begins with the preliminary security measures, such as security perimeter, patrol and scouting deployments. Building a settlement without some guarantee of security is a foolish move. It is unknown whether we'll be targeted by other Martial tribes and predators of the forests of Vilun island."

Rui nodded. Security was certainly one of the most primary concerns of building any establishment in a potentially hostile environment. Rui recalled his discussions with Carl regarding security being one of the primary interests of any third-party groups above a certain scale. He was seeing that discussion manifest in real-time.

"Once the necessary preliminary security measures have been deployed and undertaken, we will establish a transportation channel between the ship and the island to be able to transport goods and people up and down the cliff. Relying on Martial Artists may have worked when the only thing being built were several tents, but it is far too impractical to expect Martial Artists to undertake all of the heavy lifting," She told Rui.

He nodded, this definitely made sense. "Manual labor is outside of the purview of the Martial Artists anyway, and I think it would have been much more difficult to get the Martial Artists of the Longranger Sect on board if they were going to simply be engaging in mundane manual labor."

"Once security and transportation of goods and resources are taken care of, we can move on to the construction phase. Our laborers and esoteric machines will engage in the necessary development of basic infrastructure. The settlement will be divided in the following manner; housing, storage, and security blocks. The latter will form the outermost layer, while the former two will be separated and will occupy the optimal proportions of the area within."

"The best part is that the housing and storage units can easily be converted into each other to suit whatever need arises," Rui nodded. "Allowing for a flexible infrastructure."

"Indeed. The housing and storage are further divided into subsections such as housing for the different teams that are partaking in this operation and in your mission. The storage will also be further divided into further sections for storage of different groups of goods, resources, and other material needs."

"That will more or less conclude the construction phase, I believe," Rui noted.

"Correct, sir," She nodded. "Once that's done we'll simply have all personnel occupy the settlement, and then bid the ships goodbye."

"Hm," Rui nodded. "What is the estimated time for completion of the construction phase?"

"About three months," She curtly replied.

"Then we don't have any time to waste, I'm afraid," Rui sighed. "Let's begin immediately, I'll familiarize myself with your team on the run."

"Understood sir, the security teams are already finishing their preparations to begin," She gestured around at the bustling personnel running around the ship.

"Good, I believe the Martial Squires have moved to the Veomine Eagle to meet with Senior Ceeran, correct?"

"They took the liberty of doing so as soon as we reached," She sighed disapprovingly. Unfortunately for her, as an employee of the Martial Union, she did not have much authority over them.

"I see. Well then I ought to meet up with them as well, I'll see you later captain."

He bid her farewell as he took his time making his way to the Veomine Eagle. All of the new incoming Martial Artists were of the Longranger Sect, meaning they definitely possessed a high degree of deference towards Senior Ceeran, who was part of the upper echelons of the Martial Sect.

Rui was worried that despite having to report to him officially, they would dismiss his word over that of Senior Ceeran. Rui wasn't even naive enough to believe that this wouldn't happen, they were far too beholden to Senior Ceeran for him to expect anything else. It was definitely frustrating, but it wasn't too bad.

Thankfully, Rui could reasonably expect Senior Ceeran to cooperate with him on this matter and ensure that the Martial Artists did not disregard the chain of command. Much to his surprise, Senior Ceeran had surprisingly been on his best behavior during this entire mission. He did not disobey Rui's request to remain as scarce as possible, nor did he try to butt into the mission or try to reign the mission out of Rui's control. He only asked to be kept in the loop on all of the happenings, which Rui was more than happy to oblige in return.

Now he had to hope that Senior Ceeran would ensure that his lackeys would play ball with Rui. This entire plan would go to shit if they ran around doing whatever it is that they wanted rather than following the plan.

He intended to speak with Senior Ceeran and them separately and remind them that obtaining those techniques was most important. Thankfully, they were long-range Martial Artists, so that wouldn't be too difficult to do.

## Chapter 658: Construction

The Martial Union had dispatched dozens of Martial Apprentices, and several Martial Squires, all of them belonging to the Longranger Sect and each having a Martial Path centered around long-range techniques.

Rui could sense the dense sense of power emanating from the Veomine Eagle. "Those idiots, they were told to lay low until authorized otherwise."

He quickly headed to the conference room, where they had all gathered to meet Senior Ceeran.

"But sir, why can't we just take over-!"

THUD

Rui slammed the doors open, inspecting the Martial Artists who had arrived.

They all stared at Rui as their eyes scanned him from top to bottom, sizing him up. Rui could sense surprise and caution in their demeanors, and it was understandable. He was supposed to be a grade four Martial Squire, but for some reason, he had an overwhelming aura that they had seldom sensed within the Squire Realm.

Rui had still donned his mind mask from the moment he had arrived at the island without ever having taken it off. Appearing much stronger than he was gave his words more gravitas, and certainly helped him in being taken seriously by the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

And it would be of invaluable help in the Squire Realm as well, being taken seriously by these Martial Squires who mistakenly thought they were weaker than him thanks to the projected power that came with the technique.

"Ah, Squire Quarrier, you're here," Senior Ceeran smiled well-meaningly. "Allow me to introduce these good Martial Artists; they're good members of the Longranger Sect that I have handpicked as recommendations for Derun. I'm sure you'll get along with them."

"I'm sure you're correct," Rui lied, before turning to all of them. "I am Squire Quarrier, the leader of this diplomatic mission. As I'm sure you've all been informed, the objective of this mission is to obtain several potent and exotic long-range techniques. The settlement operation that you have all been deployed as a part of is our plan at obtaining the techniques they want. When the time comes, you will all have the opportunity to show off your long-range prowess, be sure to go all out when that happens."

Rui turned around, leaving abruptly. He did not expect them to warm up to him on the first day, or ever. He could try and earn their respect by demonstrating the Void Pathfinder technique, but that ran the risk of revealing it to the G'ak'arkan Tribe. He decided to trust Senior Ceeran with ensuring they all remained in line. No matter what they thought, Senior Ceeran was determined to obtain their techniques, and would not allow lower members of his sect to get in the way of that.

The construction began immediately, yet steadily. Rui did not want to accelerate the construction too much because that would draw too much attention. The machinery and equipment needed to finish all of it within a month would be particularly eye-drawing. He did not want to inadvertently provoke a Martial Tribe into attacking them.

Thus, the reliance on large esoterically-derived machinery was reduced and a larger proportion of the work was done with manual labor.

Rui returned to back to the island before proceeding to inspect the happenings on the hill. The security perimeter was being constructed, Rui could already see the perimeter being outlined as the Martial Artists aided in setting up the lift transportation system between the ship and the top of the cliff above.

Within a day, the goods and supplies to complete the security measures had already begun coming in.

The goal was to create multiple layers of fencing around the marked area. Thankfully, the process was relatively simple as already prepared building blocks for the necessary constructs made assembling the perimeters rather simple and straightforward.

The Longranger Martial Artists also got off their asses as a portion of them distributed themselves across the marked perimeter. Until the security measures were complete, they would take shifts watching over their newly acclaimed territory.

Time flew by as the security measures slowly came into place, and the fences were built rapidly.

A secure route between the ship and the hill that the settlement would be built upon was constructed. The necessary goods and supplies flew through, as the construction of the settlement rapidly began.

The outermost layer of the settlement was for the Longranger Martial Artists assigned to the mission, they would protect the settlement from external threats and thus their quarters were placed in between the inner parts of the settlement and the external parts of the settlement. Before soon, the construction of this had also begun.

Yet, the construction wasn't the only thing that Rui had his hands full with.



"So, most of our food will come from hunting and gathering?" Rui frowned as he skimmed through a document prepared by the many experts gathered for the Vilun Settlement operation.

"At least initially, sir," A man sitting opposite to him nodded. "Unfortunately, the environmental parameters make it somewhat unsuited for a lot of the crops that we grow, harvest, and consume in the Kandrian Empire. It will be a while before we are able to establish an adequate agricultural setup. However, given that this operation isn't projected to extend for too long, it's under question whether even endeavoring to set up an agricultural sector within the settlement at all in the first place."

"I see," Rui mumbled as he was absorbed into the report that the environmental experts had compiled for him regarding the matter of agriculture. "Can hunting and gathering alone take care of all of our nutritional needs then according to the resident nutritional expert?"

"Not easily, no. But it does certainly most of our needs, and the food pills that we have on board can certainly compensate for the rest if need be. It is much more practical to rely on those to cover our shortcomings than to engage in a tedious and painstaking agricultural operation."

"That's fine, I suppose," Rui shrugged. "It doesn't really take away from my mission, thus it's not at all problematic."

## Chapter 659: Choices

The aliens never ceased to confuse the Martial tribes of Vilun Island. Now these outsiders seemed to be trying to build a modest village atop a hill on the island that wasn't too far from the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

All of the Martial tribes knew that for some reason the outsiders held a lot of interest in the G'ak'arkan tribe, more than any other tribe on the entire island. None of them, except the G'ak'arkan Tribe, had any idea why this was the case.

It wasn't as though the G'ak'arkan Tribe was the strongest Martial tribe on the entire island or anything of the sort. It was rather strange for them to constantly be sending people to the Martial tribe.

And now, they were building a small village very close to the G'ak'arkan Tribe. This was certainly no coincidence.

Why were the aliens bothering trying to build a home on the island in the first place? Even if they did, why did they do it so close to the G'ak'arkan Tribe?

While most of the Martial tribes spread across the island scratched their head at this development, the G'ak'arkan Tribe had a slightly better understanding of the situation.

"This must have something to do with that trade offer that they've been pestering us for many years with," N'Kulu, the chieftain of the G'ak'arkan Tribe solemnly said. "They haven't given up it seems."

"Those annoying pests!" Senior K'ahru glowered. "We should treat them like any other Martial tribe and destroy them!"

That earned many nods from the Martial Artists who were a part of the meeting.

Back when the outsiders first greeted the G'ak'arkan Tribe and tried to hold dialogue with them and expressed an intent for a peaceful relationship, many members of the G'ak'arkan Tribe were a little confused and at a loss for words.

Such a thing rarely happened on Vilun Island. To them, everybody else that they had ever known prior were all enemies. The very concept of establishing friendly relations with other parties was largely lacking in their minds.

This was why the process of befriending the G'ak'arkan Tribe took far longer than it would have with states on the Panama Continent. It took a tedious and painstakingly slow build-up to where it was today, it had begun with the smallest of tokens and gifts between ordinary humans for an extensive period of time, before escalating the gestures and tokens that they expressed. It even took providing a little bit of aid to the G'ak'arkan Tribe during certain times of need.

Years and years of doing this was what finally led to a stage where they could even talk to the tribe without being treated like an enemy.

However, despite this, the G'ak'arkan Tribe was simply much more comfortable in picking a fight with the diplomatic convoy than they were trying to maintain a friendly relationship. The latter was something that was uncomfortable and strange while the former was normal and regular.

They were much more comfortable knowing that they were their enemy than wondering if they were friends.

Yet, not everybody was supportive of the idea of engaging in hostilities with their strange alien 'friends'.

"I strongly believe we shouldn't make them our enemy," A third strong voice interjected, drawing all the attention to her.

The third Martial Senior of the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

"Sister K'Mala..." K'ahru gritted his teeth.

"I believe that their offer has merit, I have always said that," She voiced her opinion, uncaring of the frowns that it drew. Her sharp eyes swept across the many members who were an audience of this discussion.

"Hah!" Her brother scoffed. "Their Martial Artists listen to the words of mere humans, even submitting to them! How can such weak and pathetic Martial Artists have anything worth offering to us? It's a miracle that they even managed to become Martial Artists in the first place."

This once again earned many nods from the members of the meeting. K'ahru's logic was sound in their minds.

"Their customs are... strange. But that does not mean they are weak. Have all of you forgotten the Martial Artist of the third rank that sought an audience with us many seasons ago?" She addressed her gathered tribes-folks with a calm and composed voice, striking a chord with them.

She turned to K'ahru and N'Kulu. "You remember how strong his aura was, do you think he has nothing of value to offer?"

K'ahru gritted his teeth. He could not, in good faith, insist that a Martial Senior was useless when she focused on his rank. The Martial tribes of Vilun Island worshipped power more than anything else, after all.

"You both have offered valuable insights," The heavy voice of N'Kulu drowned out the presence of the two younger Martial Seniors. "It is true that Martial Artists of higher ranks cannot be useless."

He nodded towards K'Mala, acknowledging her point. K'Mala smirked as she reveled in her victory over her younger brother.

"Yet, that is entirely different from whether they have enough merit to be able to offer power that is worth our sacred Martial Art techniques," His voice grew graver. "Our techniques are everything, they are the foundation of our power against our many enemies that seek to annihilate us in war. That is what they desire to have from us. Today they have settled near us, tomorrow they will move closer, the day after they may pierce their way into our tribe, or take away members of our tribe possessing the techniques they seek. They have relentlessly chased after our techniques for many years now. I do not believe such a group will be satisfied with our refusal."

The air grew solemn as everybody stared at the elderly warrior chieftain, awaiting his verdict.

"I will not tolerate this forever," He declared. "I will give them one last opportunity to accept our final refusal in the next talk. Should they continue to strive for our technique despite that, then it is clear that they do not respect or fear us enough to ever stop. When that happens..."

He opened his eyes. "We will destroy them. We will hurl our mighty techniques at them from the skies, and wipe them out with the techniques that they desired! Long live the G'ak'arkan Tribe!"

"Long live the G'ak'arkan Tribe!"

## Chapter 660: Conflict

Some distance away in a recently constructed hall, Rui listened to the chieftain declare his ultimatum for the diplomatic settlement that they had correctly guessed had something to do with their techniques.

"First of all, brilliant job Kane," Rui nodded at the Martial Squire. "The fact that the G'ak'arkan Tribe's technology is practically non-existent is very useful when it comes to espionage. It also helps that your stealth has grown to the point where you are able to sneak in and place a wiretap that would have been discovered by most modern security measures!"

Like almost all technology, the wiretap technology of the Kandrian Empire and of the Panama Continent was derived from various esoteric substances that had properties that effectively allowed them to record sound. The wiretap in question was a particular substance whose physical characteristics were partially altered by sound. The wiretap functioned by exposing the substance to sound before figuring out exactly what sounds it was subjected to based on its end shape.

However, it had also become common enough that most security departments or agencies of most states on the continent had developed means to detect it. Thus, it had become a little obsolete.

Yet, they were still useful against technologically primitive groups such as the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

Rui had had Kane sneak it into their little hall at a time with his formidable stealth when each of the Martial Seniors would be assured to not detect him. It was still a risky move to deploy Kane, even if two of the Martial Seniors were outside the village in a rare coincidence and the third was in a slumber. However, after having listened to the entire conversation, Rui could say it was worth it.

"Why was the conversation so grainy? It's hard to make out everything everyone is saying," Rui frowned.

"That's because it becomes increasingly difficult to extract information from the sound recording Derium Jelly that is used to record sound the longer it is exposed to sound," Special Agent Cravis explained to Rui.

"I see, that's a shame. Still, it has served its purpose well, I heard the most important parts after all. And that is good enough," Rui nodded.

He had much to think about. He did not expect the chieftain to take such a bold stance and force an ultimatum such as that. This was not something that he would expect from any normal group that was in a friendly relationship with the Kandrian Empire. Normally, that group would do everything in its

power to ensure that its relationship with the Kandrian Empire was friendly, but Rui had long known that the G'ak'arkan Tribe wasn't part of this group.

Still, he didn't expect them to be this decisive on how to proceed with their relationship with the diplomatic settlement.

"This is going to take a while, that's for sure," Rui sighed. "Just sitting around peacefully isn't going to help either."

He could see that the settlement plan was a little inadequate, now that he actually heard the senior most members of the G'ak'arkan Tribe speak unhampered. He needed something more shocking, in addition to basic demonstration.

His eyes widened as he came up with an idea. "If we want to show them that our techniques are highly useful to them. Then we need to demonstrate its value in the one activity that they spend more energy, time, and power to than any other..."

"Sir?"

"Rui?"

Kane and special agent Cravis exchanged a look before turning back to him.

"We need war. Conflict. Not that different from what they regularly engage in with the other tribes across the island," Rui grew more certain. "That is much more effective than the passive plan of simply hunting and playing defense and safe. That is much likelier to impress them more than anything else is likely to."

"I need to speak with my team, and Senior Ceeran... and commissioner Derun too..." Rui murmured as he got up with an excited expression.

The idea of actively entering into conflicts with the other Martial tribes of Vilun island was one that he should have come up with earlier, but unfortunately, he had never seriously considered it due to the

fact that the Martial Union had painstakingly built even a decent relationship with the native indigenous of the island. Even reaching a stage where they weren't enemies was one that took several years of courting.

Waging war would instantly and forever ruin all of that hard work that the Martial Union had put in, thus Rui never considered it. But now that it was a potential necessity to achieve his mission, Rui had to admit that it was an actually alluring option.

He was also quite optimistic about the chances of it being well-received.

The Martial Artists assigned to this mission were, frankly, bored. There wasn't a whole lot to do, and their presence in the mission wasn't actively needed beyond some mundane duties and some simple hunts to gather food.

Rui knew that because he was starting to feel the same way. Yes, he had been chosen as a diplomat, yes, he was the leading authority in this whole operation. But he was a Martial Artist first, and exercising his Martial Art was something that he needed to do otherwise he would feel suffocated!

He could imagine that even Senior Ceeran wouldn't have a problem with picking a fight with other Martial Seniors if it not only didn't clash with the interests of the mission but also fulfilled them. He simply needed to ensure that it remained in control and within proportion so that it aided the mission, and didn't completely blow it away. If he ended up sparking a conflict with the G'ak'arkan Tribe inadvertently, then he would be screwed big time and would have to take responsibility for the complete failure of the diplomatic endeavor that was of interest to the entire Martial Union, but particularly the Longranger Sect, the Martial Artists of which were all around him at the moment.