

Martial Unity 751

Chapter 751: Classified

For example, simple misdirection would be way more effective against almost all of them based on the intelligence that he had bought from the Martial Union. The kind of tactics that he would never use against an adult human because humans were intelligent enough to see through blatantly obvious tactics unless they were mentally challenged.

Thus Rui could be a lot less stringent on the quality of his tactics as long as he was cautious and careful despite that.

Though he highly doubted their lowered intelligence alone was enough to develop a technique that allowed him to be extremely effective against them by itself.

('Which means I need to exploit the fact that they have somehow integrated esoteric substances into their bodies.') Rui concluded.

This would require some research on Rui's part. One thing he needed to was gathered more detailed information on the esoteric substances and compounds that the beasts had ingested, turning them into monsters.

If he was not wrong, then there likely was something about these esoteric substances being in their blood that he could exploit to use against them.

STEP

That was why he was currently standing before the Martial Union, once again. He needed the data they had on the esoteric substances that were abundant in the Shionel Dungeon and in the monsters of the dungeon as well.

He quickly headed towards the Martial exchange counter after having passed the security check-ins.

"Excuse me, but I would like to purchase esoteric material science information and data on the following esoteric substances and compounds," He addressed an employee before handing her a list of the following substances and compounds.

She took the list, before turning to him.

"May I see your Martial license, sir?"

Rui obliged, before receiving it back after she verified his identity.

"Unfortunately, this will take some time to confirm and procure, some of the data you have requested, while within your confidentiality clearance requires some due processing regarding approval," She informed him.

Rui sighed.

He had half-expected that. When it came to information that wasn't related to Martial Art and also around strategic matters, it wouldn't be so easy to gain access to information.

Just based on her reply alone, Rui had inferred that the esoteric substances and compounds that were highly abundant in the Shionel Dungeon were probably quite important significant, and were of strategic importance.

Basically, he was probably asking for something close to the equivalent of data and information on radioactive isotopes and their applications. Such information could allow one to develop nuclear technology which was detrimental to the one providing the information.

Thus, he wasn't necessarily surprised when he learned of the restrictions.

"That's unfortunate, how long will the process take?" Rui asked.

"It should happen within twenty-four hours, sir," She informed him. "We will notify you if and when it is approved and you will be able to access the information through your accouter,"

"I see, thank you," Rui sighed before taking his leave.

('The first two projects are a little stalled by the delay of information, but it's fine, I need to dedicate time towards the third project as well, after all.') Rui noted.

Project Keep Up With Kane was not going to be easy. Kane was extremely fast, even if Rui could not match his top speed, he needed to at least be able to keep up with Kane's run.

('A technique that improves my travel speed is definitely worth it,')

Currently, his top speed was born from a combination of Wind Breathing, Outer Convergence applied to run, and Parallel Walk, which he had managed to naturally adapt to the Squire Realm over the years. It was one of the first techniques he had ever learned and it had been with him for a long time.

Yet even these three techniques were nothing but slowpokes compared to Kane, he needed an extra technique that, together with the others, would allow him to keep up.

He also had the advantage that his body was more mature in the Squire Realm due to having spent more time in the Squire Realm, though Kane's Martial body is dedicated to speed and motion countered that advantage. That left the comparison of techniques, where Kane would still win when it came to travel speed.

('I need to figure out the general nature of the technique,') Rui mused. ('Unfortunately, in this case, I don't think my mental faculties can possibly help me.')

This was because running was not a mentally strenuous or demanding activity, thus there was really no area for his mental faculties to shine.

('That's a shame, but my mind isn't the only thing special about me,')

He had also inherited his scientific background from his previous life. This wouldn't be the first time that he's developed a technique centered around a scientific principle that wasn't known yet in this world.

('Still, what principle can be applied here to create a maneuvering technique?') Rui's mind brushed through his scientific acumen, which took a lot of time due to how much of it he had.

('Maybe something from human anatomy or physiology?') Rui frowned.

Unfortunately, the relevance of his knowledge of human physiology and anatomy had lost a lot of its value ever since he had become a Martial Squire and had become an evolved human being.

Unfortunately, the fact that he was no longer a homo sapien meant that he could not entirely apply the knowledge he had on homo sapiens to his body. At the very least, he needed to extensively test whatever it was that he hoped still applied to his body. Because any project based on human biology had a chance of failing miserably due to how evolved past human limits his body was at this point in time.

It was a shame because there were a lot of cool techniques that he could think of at this point in time that could work really well with the human body with the experience that he had with creating new techniques. He found it to be a real shame.

Chapter 752: Drag

('It really is a shame because had I possessed the knowledge and experience with creating techniques that I possess now, back when I was a Martial Apprentice, I would have come up with a lot more techniques that would have been quite amazing at the Apprentice-level,')

Unfortunately, in the Apprentice Realm, his familiarity with the concept of individuality was incomparably lower than it was today as a Martial Squire. Back then he underestimated the importance of it as far as creating techniques that progressed one's Martial Path due to the individuality and creating techniques that were compatible with his Martial Path and his Martial Body.

Back then he had been too fascinated with the techniques that the Martial Union possessed and had still been exploring what Martial Art was even capable of in the first place. By the time he had obtained

enough experience and understanding of Martial Art and Martial Art techniques, he had already reached the peak of the Apprentice Realm when he created the Hungry Pain technique, his altered version of the Mind Switch technique.

('Maybe I can create techniques for Max and Mana,') Rui shrugged.

Given the fact that he had a good understanding of their Martial Paths and had already made updated predictive models for their Martial Art in the Apprentice Realm.

('I could potentially create techniques that have a high affinity and synergy with them but...') Rui sighed

They would gain zero individuality from such a technique, even if it made their immediate power jump, it would hinder their long-term growth.

The Martial Academy gave them enough support and help, he did not want to give them anymore.

After all, none of the Martial Families of the Martial Apprentices at school ever intervened to boost their growth at school. Not even Fae's family, a prestigious and powerful Martial Family in the Kandrian Empire.

('Anyways, putting that thought aside, I should focus on getting the third project off while the first two stall,') Rui focused. ('For now, I guess I can focus on exploring the potential ways I can improve my speed.')

He had ruled out biological mechanisms, which left him with physics for the most part. He highly doubted that there was anything in chemistry that could help him, he was never that good with it in the first place either.

('Physics it is,')

Could he somehow increase the efficiency of the power used to accelerate his body? It would result in a greater force that would increase his acceleration and top speed.

('Hm, I can't think of any good way to do that.')

It was true that the human body was not the most efficient, but his movements had already been quite refined as they would for quite some time, and no principle of physics he could think of could improve that at the moment.

('If I can't increase the force that propels me forward, then maybe I can decrease the hurdles that hamper my speed,') Rui wondered.

Friction was something that opposed all motion fundamentally, but it was actually not something that was bad in this case. It was quite necessary. Without the friction of the ground, people would not be able to even stand straight.

However, that was not the only kind of friction that opposed movements. There was also the friction generated by the atmosphere known as drag.

Drag was inconsequential to slower movements, that's why normal humans did not notice it on a daily, but it became more relevant the faster one was. This was because the drag was proportional to the square of the speed of the body experiencing the drag. Meaning, if one became twice as fast as before, drag would be four times greater than before. If one grew to be thrice as fast as before, then drag would become nine times greater than before.

Now, what would happen if a human ran one thousand times faster than before?

Drag would follow through and become a literal one million times greater than what they would be experiencing before.

That is the situation that Martial Squires had found themselves in. They experienced a drag that was millions of times greater than what normal humans experienced. What was a pleasant breeze to the latter, was an oppressive force and a wall that constantly opposed their motion.

('What if I created a technique that mitigated that?') Rui's eyes lit up with interest.

If he could, he would become substantially faster due to the lack of resistance. The only question was how would he go about manipulating the air such that the air would no longer hinder him. The problem was that he didn't know of a way to do that.

('Breathing techniques!') Rui's eyes lit up with excitement as he finally came up with an idea that was exciting enough to have him fully motivated. ('Breathing techniques allow for extensive manipulation of the air!')

He was quite confident that it was possible to do what he was looking to accomplish.

('What if I go further than just getting air resistance out of the way?') The idea further developed in his mind. ('What if I make the air not just not hind my movements, but also propel me forward?')

This was where he was entering dicey territory, he had to admit that he had no idea whether this was possible or not for the most part.

('Then I'll have to get to exploring and testing existing breathing technique models and see if it is possible to manipulate the air in such a way that I can erase air resistance and instead, have the atmosphere propel me forward towards the direction that I want to move in.

('This probably still won't be enough to beat Kane,') Rui noted. As long as Kane had the Godspeed technique, he would forever be ahead of Rui as far as peak speed went and was still beyond Rui's reach even without it, but Rui was content not being embarrassingly slow compared to him in travel.

Chapter 753: Experimentation

Ironically, he figured out the mechanism and the principle of the technique of Project Keep Up With Kane earlier than he did the other projects despite focusing on it last.

('If I'm able to use a breathing technique to get rid of the air resistance, then that would be perfect. But really, the only way to get rid of air resistance is to get rid of the air or get rid of the laws of physics,') Rui sighed.

The latter was out of the question. Although Martial Artists seemed like they broke the laws of physics on Earth, it had become clear to Rui that this was not the case. Just that the laws of physics had an additional element beyond what he just knew that allowed Martial Artists to perform ridiculously superhuman feats without breaking the laws of physics.

Not even Martial Artists violated the laws of physics, and not even Martial Artists could warp reality. At least, none that he had ever seen thus far were capable of such feats.

Thus, for now, he could only think about the former.

('Getting rid of air in my path; in other words a vacuum,') Rui's eyes lit up. ('That's definitely quite practical in comparison. After all, all breathing animals do that to a certain extent.')

When inhaling, the part of the air closest to the nose or mouth would immediately be sucked in, and for just the briefest of moments, there would be a small vacuum or area with less air density before the atmosphere would refill the area and return it to normal air density.

That was the limit to what ordinary humans could do, but that limit was irrelevant to Martial Squires like Rui.

('Creating a vacuum before me would not only help with getting rid of air resistance, it would also accelerate me due to the pressure difference,')

The air was constantly exerting pressure in all directions, the reason it was rarely noticed was that the same air pushed back against itself in the opposite direction on the other side of the body, air on the opposite sides pushing against each other.

Yet what would happen if the air in front of Rui was removed, and only the air behind him was pushing him?

He would not only be unhampered by air but would also end up being accelerated by it.

('Brilliant! I have to start immediately,') Rui grew even more excited.

He needed to work out the mechanism that he would be using for the breathing technique.

Normally, he would need to purchase a technique from the Martial Union that possessed principles and mechanisms somewhat to what he was looking for, then master them and then finally adapt and change them to become a fit building block for his new technique.

This was time-consuming, he would also have to return to the Martial Union after just having returned from it.

Thankfully, he did not feel the need to do that this time.

He mastered many breathing techniques throughout the years. Harmonic Breathing, Final Breathing, Wind Breathing, and the breathing techniques used in Tempestuous Ripple technique he had mastered as a Martial Apprentice, the breathing mechanism in the Sonic Bullet technique as well as the Mighty Roar Flash Blast technique from the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

Together, these had given him a good understanding of how to manipulate the skies with one's breath. As long as he dedicated enough time to trial and error and continued to make enough progress down this path, he was confident that he would develop a sound and viable breathing technique mechanism that suited his needs.

As long as he wasn't too unlucky anyway.

He secluded himself in the forests of the Mantian Region as he dedicated himself to refining his breathing to learn to create the vacuum that he was looking forward to.

He tried varying his inhalation between different speeds, forces, angles, and patterns, making observations regarding the outcomes of each experiment.

('Inhaling through the nose seems universally less effective than that of the mouth when it comes to creating vacuums or areas of less air density,') Rui noted as he ruled out the former. ('Which means that I'll have to create the vacuum with my mouth.')

He had run into several issues when doing that. He wasn't inhaling air swiftly enough while in motion to be able to create a sustained vacuum before him. Furthermore, he wasn't able to isolate it to just the area right in front of his body making contact with him, instead, he inadvertently created areas of less air density momentarily that were spread over a wider area.

These were the two issues that he needed to focus on, otherwise, he had no hope of formulating the technique that he was looking for.

While he inhaled with his mouth for being able to create the vacuum the way he desired better, he exhaled through his nose, pushing the air down rather than forward. If he exhaled with his mouth, then he would generate a recoil pushing him back and obstructing his sprint.

Pushing it downward would have no effect on his horizontal speed.

He grew so absorbed in the training that he had secluded himself for a week, relying only on food pills and Hungry Pain's autophagy to sustain himself the entire time.

In just a week, he had made commendable progress.

('This technique will take less time than the remaining two projects,') Rui had already realized that. Not only had he completed the theoretical structure of the technique fully, but he had also taken a step or two, albeit the easiest, towards completing the technique. In fact, he was quite certain that Project Keep Up With Kane would take the least amount of time to be completed in all the projects he had attempted.

The other two projects were more complicated, and most likely would require much more extensive research since they required knowledge outside of his knowledge base and would most likely require more extensive research and experimentation.

He was quite satisfied with the progress that he had made in a week. It was very rare that he would flush through so much of the process of creating a technique from the very get-go. The beginning was usually the slowest and the hardest, fleshing out the technique from a simple idea.

He returned back home after a week, before heading straight to Julian's room.

"So you've come back," Julian gave him an amused smile. "Right on time too, that's why I assured everybody you would be back within the week. I know you wouldn't want to delay getting your hands on this even by a single minute."

Rui smiled wryly, not addressing that. "Thanks, brother. Much appreciated."

He took the documents that Julian handed to him.

They were quite thick, all in all. Rui would need to spend quite some time reading them. It seemed as though Julian had not held back on the amount of information that he had extracted.

Of course, this was no doubt that Julian was quite confident that Rui would have no problem absorbing all the information. Despite being a Martial Artist, Rui possessed the most powerful mind that he had ever come across.

Rui bade him goodbye before isolating himself in his room and taking a good look at the documents present before him.

It was quite likely that the information present in these documents would decide the outcome of Project Eyespy. He highly doubted that there was any recourse beyond the idea that led him to get Julian to compile data about esoteric substances and compounds that were highly reactive to gravity in some way or the other.

Rui opened up the document at the top.

"Oh...?" He raised an eyebrow. ('He's given me a run down on esoteric material science as a field of science before actually diving into the information that I requested. That's actually quite useful.')

The document spoke about the basics of esoteric material science. The field of science was essentially dedicated to substances, materials, and compounds whose properties and fundamental nature were a complete mystery.

Thus, the only thing that all substances and materials that were deemed as 'esoteric' had in common were that they were strange in nature and largely a mystery.

('That probably means that radioactive isotopes would also be considered an esoteric substance,') Rui mused with intrigue.

The world had many strange compounds and substances that had all kinds of strange and bizarre properties. Until they were understood, they would be considered esoteric substances.

"Interesting..."

The document then went on to lay out the ways in which esoteric substances were classified. It turned out the field was even more sophisticated than he had ever given it credit. They had truly approached it with the scientific method; the principle of scientific induction.

Rui briefly familiarized himself with the basics before jumping into the empirical data surrounding the many esoteric substances, the information around which Julian had given Rui.

[Freren Ore]

Freren ore was an ore that was abundant across the continent. It was tough while still sufficiently ductile and malleable to have widespread applications in esoteric engineering. It was classified as an esoteric substance because its state become increasingly less solid and tended towards becoming a liquid, the higher it was above sea level for reasons that were not understood.

It even turned into a gas at extreme altitudes.

Rui's eyes rose in interest. According to the document, one of the prevailing hypotheses was that its state of matter was, for some unknown reason, tied to gravitational force. This would principally explain why its state of matter changed with altitude.

It was previously suspected that air pressure was the reason for a change in its state of matter, yet when subjected to vacuum through Martial Art techniques, its state of matter remained unchanged. Since then, the hypothesis has been considered to be disproved.

"Interesting..." Rui skimmed through the document. There had been many many such experiments that had been conducted for freren to disprove or provide evidence for many hypotheses and theories, at the end of the day, it seemed that gravity was the most likely explanation based on all the data and evidence there was at hand.

"It's interesting... but, probably not usable," Rui sighed.

Of course, this was not too disappointing. It would be awfully convenient if the very first esoteric compound he ran into was the solution to all of his problems. He was a realist in that regard.

There were dozens of such documents for dozens of esoteric substances.

He intended to go through all of them very carefully and ensure that he had not left a single stone unturned. He did not want to read this more than once, after having already inputted all the information into his Mind Palace.

[Grainer Pollen]

It was an organic compound that was repelled by gravity, rather than being attracted towards it. This hypothesis was arrived at after many continuous experiments, the same as with Freren.

It moved away from gravity regardless of temperature and pressure, this applied to both the gravity of Gaia and the Sun, but also other objects with their own minute gravitational fields. The second existing hypothesis was that it was repelled by radiation rather than gravity, but this was contradicted by the fact that it was repelled away from the Earth than it was from the sun. This strongly implied that

electromagnetic radiation was not what caused it to have motion in the direction furthest away from the source of electromagnetic radiation.

('This one... might be a little useful,') Rui's eyes lit up in interest. Although he didn't think that this alone would be able to give him what he wanted, it was a good sign that he found something that was at least partially useful on the second try, it made his search more optimistic. As long as he could just find something that would give him the edge that he needed, he would be able to perhaps formulate a sensory technique based on one of these compounds.

Chapter 755: Steps

Over the rest of the day, Rui rapidly consumed the many research journal documents that Julian had handed to him. Each of them was surrounding an esoteric substance or compound, and each of them was an esoteric compound that was strongly suspected to be tied to gravity in some form or manner.

Rui was quite impressed with the quality of the science, he didn't think he would do too much better if he only knew what they did. He had to admit, his inner scientific curiosity was roused to a little extent after his desire to build a sensory Martial Art technique centered around gravity.

He had to admit, esoteric science was fascinating, based on what he had seen. Had Martial Art not existed, he certainly would have enjoyed becoming an esoteric material scholar.

Yet by the end of the day, he found himself closing the last of the documents that Julian had given him, before sighing and massaging his head.

"Tsk," He tutted. ('Not a single one of them could fully give me what I wanted.')

It was unfortunate, but such was reality. They are all reactive to gravity in some way that could allow him to indirectly detect gravity, but they were all lacking in the details that he desired.

He specifically needed two parameters; gravitational field intensity and the many gravitational field vectors collectively known as the Ricci tensor.

These two parameters could allow him to figure out the layout of his environment, as long as he had enough data points and detail.

(But even if a single one of them isn't enough... then maybe multiple of them will be!) Rui's eyes lit up.

The many esoteric substances gave him incomplete pieces of the puzzle.

Individually, they could not help him, but if he used the best of them together, then it was possible that he would be able to acquire what he wanted.

('It's not just a matter of picking the right selection of esoteric substances either, though,') Rui sighed.

No, that was just the first step. He needed to figure out exactly how he was going to use and apply these esoteric substances to be able to detect gravity itself.

His organic biological sense organs were directly connected to his brain and directly supplied information through the nervous system. However, this obviously would never be the case with external and non-organic esoteric substances. He could not turn them into organic sense organs that were connected to his brain.

('Good thing I don't have to,')

These esoteric substances may not be connected to the brain or to the body, however, it was still possible for them to serve as indirect pseudo-sense organs. By carefully observing the way they reacted, he could make inferences about the gravitational space curvature field around and on him. Based on the gravitational space curvature, he would be able to infer the layout of his surroundings that produced said gravity.

It was through this mechanism that he would be able to thoroughly improve his sensory range without caring about the sensory jamming of the Shionel Dungeon. This would give him a massive advantage in the Shionel Dungeon that he was absolutely certain that almost no other Martial Squire would be in possession of.

However, he had not yet completed even the first step of making his choices of which esoteric substances to choose, let alone the next few steps. He needed to figure out how to apply them to gain the maximum amount of information on the curvature of space.

('I can't just carry them in my pocket, that would be useless...') He snorted before his eyes grew more solemn. ('I need to figure out a way to integrate them into my body.')

This was a dangerous path, but it was the only way he could be sure to have access to them at all given times.

Of course, he did not intend to go extremely far with the invasive integration of foreign esoteric matter. Even light integration into his body would suffice. This was far less dangerous, and would still play their role and would allow him to perceive them through the sense of touch.

Furthermore, his body was exponentially more tolerant to foreign compounds entering it. While Squire-level poisons had proven to be too much for the most part, no ordinary human poison or Apprentice-level poison technique was going to be able to harm his body.

On top of that, Hungry Pain had given his body even greater nourishment for his body and his healing processes and made him healthier in general.

He just had to pray that none of these esoteric substances were toxic enough to pose any meaningful threat to him in any capacity.

However, even if all of it worked out, he still needed to figure out how and where he was going to integrate them into his body. He couldn't just swallow all these exotics and hope that when the time came he would be able to sense their reactions inside his body. That would be extremely foolish, and extremely useless. He needed to design the integration of these esoteric substances into his body carefully, taking into account Einstein's gravitational field equations to maximize the ease of sensing.

('I need to turn my body into the equivalent of a gravitational radiation sensing receiver dish,') Rui mused.

And that still wasn't the end of the process, even once he figured out the optimal integration into his body, he would still need to dedicate quite some time to learning how to interpret and analyze the many new sensations and feelings that he would develop across his entire body.

That last step alone would probably take as much time as mastering an ordinary sensory technique from the Martial Union.

('However... when I'm done, the technique that will be born from this project will be of a caliber that is almost unrivaled in the Squire Realm. My senses will be ever-present, and unextinguishable, not even Kane would be able to hide from them by the time I'm done.')

Chapter 756: Palace Sections

He had spent quite some time absorbed in his thoughts regarding the esoteric scientific data that Julian had given him. While Julian did go through some effort in contextualizing the scientific jargon of this world to help Rui understand, it was still an immense amount of data. Even if he stored it in his Mind Palace, that merely got rid of the need to constantly access the documents.

Though, with his sophisticated application of the Mind Palace technique, there were definitely plenty more advantages. Martial Art techniques theoretically usually didn't have an absolute upper limit to proficiency and degree of mastery, and the Mind Palace definitely fell into the category.

Of the few Martial Artists that had completely mastered it, their application of it was limited to simple and straightforward storage, and nothing more.

However, this was not the case with Rui. Rui's mastery of the Mind Palace had reached a level that was entirely uncharted by human cognition in the history of Martial Art.

He didn't just merely store data. He distinguished, organized, and categorized data extensively.

The size of his Mind Palace had now gone from just being the size of the Martial Academy that it was when he first mastered it to becoming as large as the town of Hajin. He had divided his Mind Palace into many different sections.

The first Section was the chronological section. Any and all important and significant data was organized in order of his learning of it, he also made sure to document the time and place of learning said data as well. This helped him remember what happened when and where.

The second section was the same data but organized into categories surrounding their topics. For example, the information that he had just mastered fell into the esoteric material science category and the gravitational category that overlapped with each other at the avenue in his Mind Palace where he had stored the information.

The third section was by lettering so that he could access words and sentences as long he knew just a little about them. He had 'tagged' the information in this section with the tags of the categories they were in, in the second section.

The remaining sections had to do with different types of sensory data, as well as records of his own internal thoughts among other things.

This was a level of application of the Mind Palace technique that turned his mind into a quasi-computer. It was a level of mastery that no other being on the continent would even be able to begin to fathom.

It was one of the reasons he excelled at data processing and management in his previous job. There were times when both the diplomatic and intelligence teams had grown utterly bewildered by his cognition.

Yet, while all of this was useful, it was not helping him make much progress on things like progressing with his projects beyond these benefits. The core progress needed to be done.

Still, he felt that it was very convenient, especially when he was gobbling down even more information regarding Project Monster Repellant.

This time also, he was processing the information that he had purchased from the Martial Union to assess whether he could exploit the fact that these esoteric substances were present in their body with a technique.

These creatures were not evolved to handle such strange and bizarre substances running through their body, Rui was sure that there was some way to use that against them.

What he was specifically looking for was violent, or unstable reactions that could potentially be applied to stop them.

"Hm?" His eyebrow rose as he came across something interesting.

[Grocher Iron when coming into contact with heated Sentiol Gust leads into an exothermic and exovolumetric reaction where the Grocher Iron reactant expands instantly and rapidly. Its volume tends to increase by a factor of a hundred in less than a millisecond. This is suspected to be due to the...]

His eyes lit up with interest as he tagged the information as a potential solution to developing an offensive technique that was extremely effective against the monsters of the Shionel Dungeon, and added it to the appropriate section of his Mind Palace.

By scouring through the noted reactions of esoteric substances in contact with other reactants and in different circumstances, there was a wealth of data on all of these esoteric substances.

('Well well, this search is going easier than the search for appropriate esoteric substances for Project Eyespy,') Rui noted optimistically.

He was glad. He had thought that after how difficult and troublesome the search for appropriate esoteric substances for Project Eyespy was that this would be just as difficult, but it turned out that this wasn't necessarily the case.

('Well, the theory of General Relativity is much harder than basic and elementary chemical reactions,') Rui smiled.

With this, he had taken steps for all three projects within the first week of officially beginning them. He suspected that these projects probably wouldn't take as long as the projects that he had done when he first broke through to the Squire Realm which led him to create Flux Earther and the Pathfinder techniques.

('It probably won't be too long before Kane and I are ready to undertake an adventure in the Shionel Dungeon.

('Hehe... I can't wait,') Rui smiled as he quickly assimilated the information that he had purchased from the Martial Union. What he was truly looking forward to was the actual implementation and practice of the techniques whose blueprints and conceptual functioning he will have fleshed out. He was already doing so with Project Keep Up With Kane, but that technique was much more ordinary and grounded to Earth compared to the remaining two techniques that he intended to create. Practicing those two would require a genuine amount of hard work and perseverance, probably even more so than the Flux Earther technique required. He suspected that both projects would yield something tremendously important and valuable to the world as long as he saw them to the very end.

Chapter 757: Freshmen

Two months passed.

Rui spent the time mastering Project Keep Up With Kane while he conducted extensive research with the remaining two projects, he had nearly come to an end with the theoretical and research phase and had almost fleshed out the entirety of all of the chinks of the technique blueprints.

Project Keep Up With Kane on the other hand, had already nearly reached flawless proficiency.

Compared to the other two projects, he was able to master this technique at quite the pace since he first began.

WHOOSH

He dashed through the woods at top speed.

"Fwuuuuu..." He inhaled with his mouth at just the right pace while his arm movements were positioned such that the resulting vacuum was formed right before him. His body posture was such that he maximized the volume of the vacuum.

Suddenly, his speed more than doubled as he shot through the woods even faster! The lack of the oppressing drag caused by the atmosphere and the atmospheric pressure pushing him from behind led him to move much faster than he normally was limited to.

"Fuuuuu..." He exhaled as he dispelled the technique allowing drag to slow him down and stop him

STEP

He paused as he looked at his pocket watch before turning back to look at the distance he covered.

"That's fifty in a row without a single collision, I guess that makes this a wrap. I'm glad I was able to overcome the discrepancies between this technique and Wind Breathing," Rui casually remarked.

The problem with creating a breathing technique to use when maneuvering was that he was already using Wind Breathing while maneuvering. It was not easy to use two breathing techniques simultaneously due to clashing requirements of timing, frequency, and force among other things.

Thus Rui had created a technique that was compatible with Wind Breathing, to the point where he ended fusing the two techniques to create a single maneuvering technique.

Gale Bolt Breathing.

('I wonder how this corresponds with Ian Nepomniatchi's Lightning Breathing,') Rui casually pondered the matter.

The Wind Breathing that he had mastered was actually merely a downscale of a much more potent version of the technique; Lightning Breathing, a technique that Ian had used in the Martial Contest.

Rui had lacked the talent needed to master the technique and thus had resolved to master a more downgraded version to suit his needs.

Now, having ascended to the Squire Realm, he had upgraded that technique by merging it with another one while it was in development.

('It's not the same as his Lightning Breathing in principle, but I don't think it's that much weaker,') Rui smiled.

He was quite satisfied with the outcome of the technique. Although this technique was not revolutionary, or enough to put him equal with Kane, he would at the very least not hold Kane back much when the two of them were in a situation that require escaping at top speed. It had served its purpose, and he did not want or need more than that from this technique.

He had two other techniques that he wanted to work on.

('I'd like to get back to working on them this moment, but...')

Today was the first day of the Martial Academy.

Max and Mana had attempted the Martial Entrance Exam more than a year ago prior and had failed. The two of them had since then grown extremely driven to become stronger and had discovered their Martial Paths at the age of fourteen under the guidance of Rui and his special training.

They had then attempted the Martial entrance exam just a month ago, dominating the exam and passing with flying colors as Martial Apprentices attending the exam always did. One month later, today, they would be leaving the Quarrier Orphanage and would move to the Martial Academy and begin their training there.

('I'm going to miss them,') He sighed as he reached home.

At the entrance, there was a large congregation of children and adults in the front yard. They had gathered in a circle around Max and Mana, exchanging words and hugs. Rui patiently waited for Max and Mana to finish, yet even when everybody else had had their fill, Lashara was still quite stubborn, refusing to let go of them.

"Mom... We're going to be late you know," Max murmured.

Mana didn't have the heart to refuse Lashara, having been quite emotional herself.

"Be safe..." She cupped their faces in her hands before finally letting go. "Goodbye."

It wasn't long after they exchanged a final farewell with everyone else, that they managed to leave the house.

"Are you two ready?" Rui asked as he studied them.

They had changed a lot over the last year. Their first crushing defeat and disappointment had sobered them up and forged their determination. They had matured a lot in the past year as a result.

The two of them nodded wordlessly with solemn expressions.

"Good, let's get going then."

WHOOSH

The three of them took off from the Orphanage, running as fast as horses. It only took them an hour before they reached the Martial Academy.

"The extra traffic slowed us down, but we still got here well within time," Rui nodded.

"Was it necessary to reach here this early?" Mana asked.

"Not strictly, no," Rui shook his head. "But it's best you get acquainted with your environment before things proceed. After all, you'll be under a lot of pressure from your peers soon enough,"

Max and Mana furrowed their eyebrows, giving him an odd look. "I still can't believe how famous you are, big brother."

"Hehe..."

When they attended the Induction Ceremony, they had been surprised by the sheer number of people that recognized Rui and went out of their way to greet him. Even the headmaster himself went out of his way to meet with Rui, even having an informal chat with their big brother. The aspiring Martial Artists stared at him with admiration and awe.

Rui, on the other hand, felt a little awkward and embarrassed by the reactions of his siblings.

Chapter 758: No Choice

"Well, looks like that gate has opened," Rui gestured. "I guess this is it."

He glanced at the two of them who had mixed expressions, sighing. "I know how it feels, but your future is your future. You will have plenty of time to spend time with your family when you graduate, if that is what you desire just like I am doing at the moment. So cheer up, okay?"

The two of them smiled at those words, nodding.

"Thank you, brother, we wouldn't be here without you,"

It wasn't long before he could only watch their figures disappear into the massive crowd that was pouring into the Martial Academy.

('Well, their training is no longer something I will be guide,')

This wasn't a bad thing. Martial Apprentices were meant to make their own decisions when it came to Martial Art. This was a sacred principle that not even the strictest of Martial families violated. Forcibly interfering once the Martial Path was absolutely detrimental to their progress. All influencing of the Martial Path was done prior to the breakthrough to the Apprentice Realm.

The Martial Union even made it a crime that could be enforced and penalized over, by virtue of the judiciary authority they possessed according to the jurisdiction of Martial criminality clause of the Kandrian Martial Covenant, to try and force Martial Artists to change or alter their Martial Path in any way.

('The Squire mentors of the Martial Academy are highly qualified and experienced, they know what lines they ought not to cross,') Rui smiled warmly as he fondly looked back at his time with Squire instructors Kyrie and Dylan.

He had gained a lot more respect for them after having become a Martial Squire and having trained guided Martial Apprentices. He had come to understand exactly what it meant to be a Martial Squire capable of guiding Martial Apprentices to the Squire Realm while also being high-grade Martial Squires themselves.

Rui, at the moment, could not be considered a high-grade Martial Squire. That was reserved for Martial Squires above grade six, which he was not, at the moment.

"Anyways, time to head back ho-... Ah," Rui smiled as recalled something. "I actually have something to check up on."

He sky-walked, uncaring of the attention he drew as he navigated his way through the town of Hajin, before making his way to a weapons shop.

The weapons shop was quite large, featuring a great volume inside, and a great many weapons on the walls and on tabled beneath a glass cover.

A large crowd of people wandered about, looking at the weapons.

Most of them were human, but some of them were Martial Artists, and only one of them was a Martial Squire. Rui ignored them as he went about his business.

He made his way past the showroom as he went deeper into the building, his ears pricked as he heard banging sounds.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

Rui peered into a large workroom at the other end of the building from where a continuous metallic banging sound seemed to originate.

Inside was a huge forge around a gigantic fireplace. The flames were a bright white, rather than orange, Rui could feel the prickling heat of the fire from outside.

BANG!

He turned towards the source of the sound.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

A gargantuan man swinging a big hammer down on a long piece of molten steel at a regular pace.

"Mr. Derkean," Rui smiled, calling out.

"Hm? Who's disturbing my work?" He turned around, glancing at Rui with squinted eyes. "Ah, Squire brat. What do you want?"

"I was just wondering how went the forging of two products that I commissioned you for," Rui smiled, amused.

It was rare for a normal human being to treat him rudely, he hadn't experienced anything of the sort in a long time and appreciated the nostalgic feeling of being treated like a normal human being.

In the past two months, Rui had come to a realization while working on Project Monster Repellant.

"My body is too inadequate to be the basis of a technique meant to be extremely effective against the monsters of the Shionel Dungeon," Rui sighed.

It couldn't be helped. He already had resolved to stuff his body with a few esoteric substances for Project Eyespy. He couldn't do the same thing for yet another technique simultaneously. It was too much, and the associated risks had exceeded the threshold that was his limit.

('If my body is insufficient, then...')

There was only one solution.

Something other than his body had to serve as the basis for the technique that he was trying to create.

"Weapons..." Rui had sighed.

It wasn't that he was extremely averse to weapons, certainly not. It was just that compared to his understanding of unarmed combat, his understanding of armed combat was far underdeveloped. It couldn't be helped, given his profession.

But the world did not care about that. Although weapons were not ubiquitous for Martial Artists, they were still a relevant and significant field, and if he truly wanted to be able to adapt to all Martial Artists, then perhaps it was inevitable that he would need to lose his discomfort with them.

There hadn't been any strong incentive to do it thus far.

Until now, that was.

"In this situation..." He had sighed. "There's no excuse. I don't have too much of a choice. It's either weapons or be helpless against herds of high-grade Squire-level monsters. And that's not even a real choice."

Thus, he had spent quite some time on exactly what kind of weapon he wanted, and what it was supposed to do, before taking the liberty of commissioning a renowned blacksmith in the town of Hajin to forge what he needed.

"Weapons don't just take half a month to finish, you think they grow on trees? Do you? HMM?" The man glared at Rui with such a comically exaggerated scowl that Rui had to exert himself to suppress a bout of laughter at the man's hilarious antics.

Chapter 759: Blade

"I'm just inquiring," Rui raised his arms lightly. "I have no intention of pressuring you at all."

"It's taking time because you want such a bizarre esoteric like Tethered Bellhorn Steel," The man scowled. "Why on Earth would you want such a heavy esoteric alloy to fashion the blade out of?"

Rui smiled. "Everyone has their necessities."

"Any why on Earth do you want a scabbard that cools it?" The man furrowed his eyebrows. "That does not help in battle!"

Rui didn't even bother gracing that with a reply, simply smiling instead.

The man sighed exaggeratedly before shrugging. "Whatever, you're paying a huge amount of money, so it's fine I guess. There are all kinds of strange people in the world."

Rui did not mind being perceived that way. He was not going to genuinely inform the man what his intentions were, after all.

Rui had dug deep into the information surrounding the most ubiquitous esoteric substances and compounds of the Shionel Dungeon very thoroughly, going beyond just the information that Julian had provided him. He had found great detail on several phenomena and chemical reactions involving the Shionel esoteric substances as well as others that could potentially serve as the basis of the technique that he was looking to make.

In his deep studies, he had somehow managed to run into one particular obscure journal of a now-dissolved small private research institute in the Kandrian Empire, detailing a series of experiments between one of the ubiquitous Shionel esoteric compound Whitemane Dust and a rarer esoteric alloy known as Tethered Bellhorn Steel. The experiment revealed that a reaction between the two compounds in their natural states at low temperatures caused a violent exothermic reaction where the Whitemane Dust exhibited extreme phobic tendencies towards cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel. The greater the amount and the lower the temperature, the greater the force with which Whitemane Dust repelled away from the cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel.

The reaction was so violent and exothermic that the procedural experimentation chamber that was isolated from the observation lab to protect the researchers was unable to contain the violent reaction. The Whitemane Dust subjected to cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel blasted away with such force that it breached the safety measures and the barrier between the observation lab and the procedural chamber, almost killing all of the researchers in the process. The experiment was called off and the overarching project was deemed a failure and had thus been dismissed in the eyes of the esoteric science community.

Rui had only found this after six weeks of scouring scientific literature for additional information beyond what he had been provided by Julian.

Julian had given him a good place to start, however, the solution that he sought wasn't within the information that his brother had organized for him.

He scoured every library in the country in the span of six weeks aggressively inputting, processing, and assimilating all the information he had come across before finally running into something experiments hadn't even heard of before.

('This is perfect,') He had grinned when he came across the research journal. ('One man's trash is another man's treasure.')

To think that Whitemane Dust, an esoteric confirmed to have been present in the epithelial and blood of all of the species existing in the Shionel Dungeon, was so unstable in such a reaction.

('It's just what I need,') Rui nodded. ('What if a blade fashioned out of cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel pierces their flesh that is saturated with Whitemane Dust?')

The wound would be extremely exacerbated by the cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel reacting to the Whitemane Dust in the flesh and blood of the monster, causing the latter to blow apart from it violently and magnifying the size of the injury while causing a ton of internal damage.

Even if it was a high-grade monster, Rui strongly suspected that even a single swing would be enough to cause a lethal wound and a vast amount of internal injuries. It would allow Rui to exert a level of lethality within the Shionel Dungeon that would be unheard of for a grade-six Martial Artist like himself.

('On top of that, I have had plenty of time to prepare,') He smiled mischievously inwardly. ('Which means the full power of the VOID algorithm could be unleashed.')

Rui had been working on expanding the scope of the Adaptive Evolution model by incorporating simplistic sword-based maneuvers.

He had been scouring through the data collected on the approach to combat the various dominant species of the Shionel Dungeon and had formed basic adaptations to each species with a combination of a thorough analysis of the data as well as some common sense.

While this was absolutely by no means a universal solution for all fauna, it was a small first step in that direction.

"You better be practicing hard with that sparring replica I gave you," The man spat. "This sword's center of gravity will be gone completely to shit because you insist on using such a heavy esoteric substance as the main blade," Veins had started popping on his forehead just thinking about it. "Any sword

techniques you knew will become largely worthless with a sword like this. Tsk, it's so horribly off-balance that I almost want to hack at you with it when I'm done for forcing me to forge you this sword."

Rui burst out laughing. "You do realize I'm a Martial Squire, right? What you said just now could be interpreted as a threat, and I'd have the right to kill you without facing any persecution. Perks of being a Martial Squire within the Kandrian Empire due to the Serevian Covenant."

Rui directed just a tiny bit of bloodlust at the man, yet to his surprise, the man was entirely unfazed.

"You're gonna have to do better than that, boy," The man scoffed.

Rui raised an eyebrow. "Seems like you're not just some old blacksmith, are you?"

"Maybe, maybe not," He turned back, returning to banging away at the molten bar of metal before him.

Chapter 760: Choice

Rui bade him goodbye before sky-walking away. The blade made out of Tethered Bellhorn Steel was one of his solutions to the problem of the monsters that he hoped to handle with Project Monster Repellant.

He had commissioned a single-handed curved sword with a blade fashioned out of Tethered Bellhorn Steel. The reason for this kind of blade was rather simple, he would likely be putting himself in a situation where he would be facing multiple threats omnidirectionally, thus he needed a blade whose application was flexible and versatile and could be rapidly adjusted to fit his situation.

In this regard, slashing was a more desirable means of attacking than stabbing or thrusting. The former was much more flexible as it had a large number of directions and angles of attack, and was less committal allowing the swordsman to return back to a guarded stance swiftly and easily. Stabbing and thrusting were more lethal, yet also required more commitment from the swordsman.

The latter style of sword combat was unfit for the circumstances of the Shionel Dungeon. He could not focus on committing everything to a sure-shot way of killing a single opponent when his goal was to cope with the monsters in a situation where he would be facing many, not just one. Furthermore, he did

not need to commit too much inflicting damage why thrusting thanks to the presence of the cooled Tethered Bellhorn Steel blade that would magnify the damage his attack inflicted on the monster tremendously.

Thus Rui decided to go for a basic slashing-oriented sword style. Furthermore, he wanted to minimize the commitment that he gave as far as his body went when wielding it, thus he decided to commission single-handed curved swords that were meant to be wielded by a single arm and were suited towards slashing rather than stabbing or thrusting.

He had even ordered a special scabbard laced on the inside with a rare esoteric that constantly had a standard temperature many degrees below the freezing point of water. Even when heated, it would seemingly violate the Zeroth law of thermodynamics and lose heat to its surroundings before reaching its standard temperature.

Thus he had a natural cooling system for the Tethered Bellhorn Steel blade, allowing him to ensure that it had a low temperature that was needed to obtain the reaction that he was hoping for.

That was his first solution against the monsters. He had already begun training in basic swinging forms for the blade with a replica whose size, shape, and mass distribution of the set of blades that he was commissioning.

He knew his limits, of course. He was not arrogant enough to believe that he could master swordsmanship in a matter of months. Swordsmanship was a field deep and vast enough to be qualified to be the Martial Paths of Martial Artists.

However, he had no intention of mastering the in a matter of months, what he was subjecting himself to was basically the Martial Foundation Stage equivalent of swords. He needed to make sure that, at the very least, his fundamental maneuvers with the sword were solid.

The rest he could make up for to a great extent with the VOID algorithm which would allow him to predict monsters with remarkable accuracy and depth, while his elementary and basic adaptive-evolution model would allow him to appropriately deal with them. Even if the latter was primitive in comparison to the adaptive evolution model that he developed for unarmed humans, it still allowed him to make decisions quicker than if he had to process and make a choice each time.

However, he also was planning to bank on Primordial Instinct which would help him test whether a counter is good or bad.

These were the measures he had come up with for Project Monster Repellant. The unique thing about this project was that, for the first time, he would be creating a technique that wasn't actually a technique, not truly. Technically it was, but it wasn't something he would ever use again after the Shionel Dungeon raid, realistically.

On top of that, he was not interested in pursuing swordsmanship. It wasn't that he particularly disliked it, it was just that it required exclusive commitment for the most part.

Once one picked up the sword, all of one's combat was centered around it. He would not be able to perform unarmed attacks anywhere nearly as well with a sword compared to without it. Punching and kicking became far more constrained when holding a sword since merely holding it was detrimental to the kind of balance and maneuvering needed for unarmed attacks.

He could effectively forget grappling if he ever decided to pursue swordsmanship. The number of times two swordsmen ever got into a wrestling match in the middle of a fight could probably be counted on one hand.

Every other field became much harder to use if he pursued swordsmanship. It was because of this demand for exclusivity that he could never pursue the blade seriously.

That still did not mean that he was against the mastery of weapons in general, just not swordsmanship and similar weapons that demanded an exclusive commitment to them. He did not mind a smaller weapon that could be used in conjugation with his existing unarmed-based techniques.

However, he had not felt the need to adopt such a weapon, nor had he come across a weapon that would suit his Flowing Void Martial Art.

For the purpose of fulfilling the difficult goal of exploring and plundering the entirety of the Shionel Dungeon before all other forces, he was willing to adopt the sword for a limited amount of time.

Yet that was not the only weapon he had readied.

STEP

He landed in front of the Martial Union.

('Time to procure the other 'weapon' that I have commissioned,') He thought to himself with an eager smile.

He quickly passed through the security check-ins before heading straight towards the commercial wing of the Union branch, walking over to one specific store.