

Martial Unity 761

Chapter 761: Pipe

While the Tethered Bellhorn Steel blade was one of his trump cards, it was not the only one.

He had come up with two ideas when he finished his long research endeavor. These two were the most promising of ideas, and when it came down to it, he was unable to choose between them.

The second idea after the blade was something he had managed to dig up on another Shionel esoteric called Mercurite, a semi-solid esoteric substance known for its elasticity. He had stumbled upon an experiment surrounding the substance that involved subjecting it to high pressures and to high-temperature air in a gas chamber. Mercurite, known for its elasticity, would immediately grow rigid in these circumstances, developing a temporarily high tensile strength for the duration of the experiment and some a brief time even after being returned to standard pressures and temperatures.

The fact that this substance existed on the skin of the monsters after being secreted along with sweat made it something that Rui could use.

The question was how he could subject monsters to high-pressure and high-temperature air.

('The pressure is honestly manageable...') Rui's eyes narrowed his eyes.

If he could adapt the Tempestuous Ripple technique from when he was a Martial Apprentice, he could subject the skin of monsters to high-pressure air, but he wasn't sure about pressure.

('Should I just purchase a bunch of hot air grenades or something,') Rui laughed, before shaking his head. There were too many impracticalities even if he took the idea seriously, which he simply couldn't as a Martial Artist.

Instead, what he had sought to procure was a device that could take in air, heat it rapidly and supply it to him if he needed it.

('I can inhale it and use the Squire-level version of the Tempestuous Ripple technique to blast it into the monsters at a high pressure, but...') Rui narrowed his eyes. ('It has limitations.')

The first problem was that the hot air technique would lose heat very quickly. Rui had already conducted several experiments that revealed the projectile was useless outside of roughly seven meters. Which was a lot less than the maximum range before it lost all force.

Still, the ability to hamper the monsters within seven meters with ease was quite good.

At the end of the day, when it came down to choosing between one of them to form a technique, he ultimately decided to go with both.

('I can use the Mercurite on their skin to paralyze or hamper them when they enter within seven meters before slashing at them with the Tempered Bellhorn Steel blade,') Rui had spent quite some time refining his strategy and tactics.

After nearly two weeks, he had come up with a model of solutions that allowed him to deal with a ridiculous number of monsters all by himself.

('If I'm not wrong... not even high-grade Martial Squires will be able to match the efficiency that Project Monster Repellant will give me when it comes to killing monsters in the Shionel Dungeon,')

The only thing he couldn't be certain about was grade-ten Martial Squires. He already knew that the Squire Realm was a wide plane, thus he couldn't really figure out what grade-ten Martial Squires was capable of.

He had once been told that even a squadron of grade-five Martial Squires would get annihilated by a grade-ten Martial Squire, thus he couldn't be sure that he was more effective than those powerful Martial Artists who stood at the precipice of a higher Realm of power.

"Ah, Squire Quarrier, welcome back!" An employee of a large store greeted him the moment he walked in. "The product you commissioned is ready just like we informed you!"

"That's great to hear," Rui smiled in response. "I'd like to see it as soon as possible."

"Of course, please come this way, just one moment,"

Soon enough, she fetched a small box, bringing it over to Rui, before opening it up.

Inside was a smoking pipe that looked to be made up of wood with a relatively ordinary design that wouldn't really raise an eyebrow.

In reality, it was the device that Rui had brought to heat air to extremely high temperatures and supply it to Rui on the inhaling end.

Rui would simply need to suck in hot air and employ it in his technique. Anyone who saw Rui would only think he was being irresponsible by smoking on the job. No one would think that this was an instrument that would allow him to deal with the Shionel monsters with a level of efficiency that one simply could not fathom coming from a grade-six nineteen-year-old Martial Squire like him.

This way, he could keep his abnormal success more inscrutable even if people started getting suspicious.

Of course, he also intended to hide under the grade-ten Mind Mask he had created such that his success would not be too odd. He had already fooled an entire island of Martial Artists that he was a grade-ten Martial Squire, he was pretty confident that he could pull it off yet again.

He quickly paid for the pipe before leaving with it for home.

He wondered what the Orphanage would say if they saw it. He could already imagine the various funny and amusing reactions that would follow.

Still, he didn't intend to tell anyone about it besides from Kane.

The many preparations that Rui was making were all starting to come together. With one project completed and the other project approaching completion, he only had one project that was still a little past midway.

Project Eyespy was definitely the most difficult project, in hindsight. Rui had been carefully forming a blueprint for the technique as he performed research while also working out what esoteric substances he would be using, how much, and where he would be integrating them into their body. Trying to optimize the end outcome such that it reduced the difficulty and burdens of the technique was an extremely difficult process, even for someone like him.

Chapter 762: Sensing Mechanism

The techniques yielded by Project Monster Repellant were not really techniques as much as they were tactics and strategies. Furthermore, they were tactics and strategies that were exclusive to the Shionel Dungeon for the most part.

They were quite different from what Rui would normally attempt, but his circumstances demanded that he go beyond his comfort zone and develop a way to make his objective of being the first to clear the Shionel Dungeon more realistic.

In order to master the two techniques that were born from Project Monster Repellant, he needed to engage in a decent amount of training. He had already been dedicating quite some time to mastering the foundations of a sword identical to the ones that he would be commissioning.

On top of that, he had been subjecting himself to some light conditioning. Specifically, he wanted to grow completely comfortable with extremely hot air in his lungs. While he found out that his Martial body was durable enough such that even the more delicate tissue inside his respiratory system, it was still hot enough to cause a lot of discomfort and could cause burns or blisters over time.

Thus he had been conditioning his respiratory system to handle the heat without experiencing any issues to any degree. He had to ensure that he was ready rapidly fire his heated air Tempestuous Ripples, which he also needed to focus on adapting to the Apprentice Realm.

The project was coming along very well, he had already reached a stage where he was absolutely certain that the project would be a perfect success. There was no ounce of uncertainty in that regard.

However, the same could not be said for Project Eyespy.

He had more or less figured out the esoteric substances that he would be using to create the foundation for the technique.

Cryllin Stone and Grainer Pollen were two esoteric substances and compounds that individually lacked what he needed, but together, they could provide him with what he wanted as long as he applied them correctly.

Cryllin Stone was an esoteric substance whose temperature was entirely a product of gravitational field strength. The closer it was to the source of gravity, such as a body of matter or energy, the colder it would get.

Yet what ultimately made Rui go for this esoteric substance was the mathematical relation that was empirically observed to exist between temperature and the distances between the stone and the source of gravity.

It was observed through rigorous experimentation and observation that the temperature of the body was proportional to the fourth root of the distance between the Cryllin Stone and gravitational sources.

What that meant was that if the distance was increased by twice, then it would not grow twice as hot, it would grow sixteen times as hot. If the distance was increased by thrice, then the temperature would grow eighty-one times as hot compared to before it moved.

It was precisely because of this radical relationship that Rui had decided to use it. The fact that it was so sensitive to even the slightest shift in position and would react drastically, made it extremely useful to Rui who needed sensitive data. He could rely on the clearly radical shifts in the temperature of the Cryllin Stone inside his body to understand the distance between him and some body/object that was obviously producing gravity.

However, while this told him the distance between him and his surrounding objects, it did not tell him what direction they were in. Without knowing what direction his surrounding objects were located, he could not pinpoint their locations, and thus could not form an image of his surroundings.

This was where Grainer Pollen came in. This esoteric moved away in the exact opposite direction of the direction of the gravitational pull caused by the curvature in space. This meant that he could obtain the directions he needed.

Together, he could find out both the direction and distance of the closest body or mass, and when applied to all directions, he would be able to picture his environment quite accurately.

The problem was that he needed to distribute the esoteric across his body in the right way, otherwise, it wouldn't work the way he wanted it to. What he was applying was a principle of triangulation and the Parallax Method, one that was frequently used in astronomy. Astronomers, when wanting to pinpoint the location of a celestial body, would record it with observatories from opposite sides of the planet. If the triangle formed between these two points and the celestial body was thin and sharp, then it could be concluded that the celestial body was very far away. If the triangle formed by these three was short and stout, then it could be concluded that the celestial body was closer.

He was effectively applying this principle with all of his environment, using the distribution of esoteric substances across his body.

It had taken him quite some time to design the distribution configuration of these esoteric substances. He couldn't just blindly dump them all across his body, that would take a longer time to master and the sensory input would be too much. He needed to find exactly the optimal amount to ensure that he can still make out all of his environment precisely and accurately without an excess of sensory input.

It had taken him two months, but finally, he had completed the blueprint for the procedure. He had completed sensory details of the positioning of the esoterics within the body, he had gotten Martial doctors to overlook the procedure and vet it to ensure that it would not impact his health or life in any way. That alone had required him to revisit the blueprint several times due to some health hazard or the other. This process had happened several times until he had finally created a satisfactory blueprint for the space-curvature sensory technique.

Now, all that was left was to undergo the procedure and begin training to master this new sense that he had given his body.

Chapter 763: Procedure

Eventually, the time for the implantation procedure had arrived. As brilliant and competent Rui was, he could not complete a medical procedure of such a scope by himself by any means. He needed help.

Much to his surprise, the Martial Union swiftly proceeded with the process without too much delay. He had already been surprised that the Martial doctors were so easily offering their consultancy on the distribution configuration of the blueprint of his technique.

However, in hindsight, it shouldn't have been so surprising. While it was a little unusual for Martial Artists to create their own medical procedures to allow them to utilize a technique, it was not too unheard of. A system already existed in place to help Martial Artists develop such procedures with the help of medical experts and implement them with the help of qualified surgeons.

Though, based on the reactions of the consultants, it was rather clear that they hadn't run into anything quite like what Rui had sought their consultancy over.

"Squire Quarrier, pleasure to meet you. I am Dr. Dranim Vel, I will be the lead surgeon of the medical procedure that you're scheduled to undergo, you've arrived just on time," A doctor bowed to him courteously when Rui reached the medical wing. "Please follow our team's instructions to have you prepped for the surgery according to our guidelines."

Rui, who had just walked into the room, nodded. "Pleasure to meet you as well, doctor. I'll be in your care."

Thankfully, the preparations were limited. The main pre-op procedures had already been completed ahead of time. Rui had already had several tissue and blood samples collected to ensure that there weren't any concerning issues surrounding his compatibility with the esoteric substances that he would be implanting into his body at the moment.

Rui was guided into a separate operation chamber that was isolated from the surgical team that would be operating on him remotely. Based on Seismic Mapping, there was a three-meter barrier between them constructed from low-grade Squire-level esoteric alloys. It could very briefly contain even high-grade Martial Artists.

"Squire Quarrier, if you could please lie down on the operating table," The doctor courteously requested him.

CLACK CLACK CLACK

Several cuffs locked him into place automatically the second he lied down.

"We will soon begin the procedure," The doctor informed him. "Proceeding with the administering of a general anesthetic."

Rui huffed, unsatisfied as a breathing mask latched on his face, covering his nose and mouth before administering him a gas. Rui had objected to the administration of a general anesthetic but had ultimately had no choice when this was one of the iron-clad guidelines for deeply invasive procedures like the one Rui was about to undergo.

A dozen seconds passed since the gas had been administered to him, Rui just sat there awkwardly.

"...Squire Quarrier, are you employing a Martial Art technique at the moment? Please desist from resisting the procedure. This violates the terms and conditions," The doctor's tone was stern.

"I'm doing no such thing, doctor," Rui furrowed his eyes in confusion.

"Are you experiencing no side effects?" The doctor's tone was incredulous.

"I suppose I am feeling a little drowsy," Rui admitted.

He was curious why he was able to resist it to such a degree. He suspected it had something to do with his enhanced neurological parameters, however this was much too outside of his area of expertise to be confident on.

"...We will be administering an undiluted dose since the Squire-grade version does not seem to be effective on you. I'm afraid if even this doesn't work, we may have to delay the procedure,"

('Damn, it's at times like these my stranger qualities are a burden," Rui tutted.

Suddenly, he felt a strong wave of drowsiness wash over him as the world went dark.

...

"Mmm..." He got up with a bit of a headache, being greeted by a white ceiling.

He got up massaging his forehead.

His body felt strange.

"Ah, Squire Quarrier, you're awake?" A voice called out to him.

"Hm?" Rui looked up.

A nurse greeted him as she walked over to his side.

"Your procedure was a success," She informed him. "I just have to conduct some basic check-ups and then you can be discharged as long as there isn't anything wrong.

"How long have I been asleep?" Rui asked.

"Around half a day. Please open your mouth," She began as she conducted a basic check-up.

Rui couldn't even voice out the surprise from knowing he had been asleep for that long. He closed his eyes he focused on the strange sensations within his body. The Cryllin Stone and Grainer Pollen inside his body stirred and shifted in position and temperature with his own movements. They were no

different from his other senses which were also stirred by his movements, and the movements of the world around him.

He tried focusing and applying the Gravitational Sensory System that he had developed applying the data of the two esoteric substances, the equations of relativity, and the Parallax Method to try and perceive the world through the curvature of space. But alas, it was extremely difficult.

It took him nearly two minutes, but eventually, he succeeded

Rui gasped as a black-and-white image of the world formed in his head, mapping out the world around him. The room he was in, the nurse skimming through some paperwork, and the furniture.

Even if it was his very first try, the time it took him as well as his range were very poor, but he intended to fix that over time.

('So this is what it feels like to sense space itself,') Rui grinned.

"There are no issues surrounding your health, Squire Quarrier," She replied. "Please sign these papers if you wish to be discharged immediately."

Rui found himself leaving the Martial Union a few minutes, later as he closed his eyes, trying his best to grow familiar with the new artificial sense that he had embedded in his body and the new stimuli that his brain was indirectly receiving.

Chapter 764: First Day

Max and Mana felt a little strange with all the stares at them. Ever since their names had been called out when they were assigned their dormitories, a lot of the other students had been staring at them with amazement and awe, whispering to each other.

"I heard that they're HIS siblings..."

"Do you think that maybe they'd let us meet him...?"

"Uhm, why is everyone staring at us and whispering?" Max scratched his head feeling awkward.

"Because they heard our last name," Mana sighed.

She had already realized that this was coming based on the experience of the induction ceremony, thus she had been more composed.

The two of them quickly headed to their dormitories, before unpacking their things.

"Er, what should we do now?"

"We have a mandatory sparring session with the combat Squire instructor," Mana replied as she went through their schedule.

"Right, what was her name, again?"

"Squire Kyrie..." Mana replied. "She's been teaching in this academy for nearly fifteen years. They say she was one of the top Martial Squires in this town back in her prime. They called her the Berzerker of Hajjin."

"I remember big brother telling us about her," Max nodded, before grinning. "He said she was very strong! He said that he couldn't beat her even after he became a Martial Squire."

"She was a high-grade Martial Squire, apparently," Mana replied as she went through the rulebook of the Martial Academy. "Come on, we should get going for the sparring session already. We don't want to be late on our very first day."

The two of them quickly changed into their sparring attire before heading toward the Apprentice-level sparring facility.

Inside were a large number of Martial Apprentices, either sparring with each other or waiting on the sides.

Yet their attention was immediately drawn by a powerful presence at the center of the facility, overseeing some fights.

She had a heavy presence, weighing down on the minds of all Martial Apprentices, including them. They instinctively felt that she was, at the very least, as strong as their brother, perhaps even stronger. Her aura oozed with the grizzled confidence that came with a lifetime of physical conflict. She did not hold back her mental pressure, uncaring for the chills she sent up their spines.

"So you've come," She glanced at the two of them the second they walked in, sizing them up the second she laid her narrowed eyes on them. "Max and Mana Quarrier."

"Squire Kyrie," The two of them bowed deeply. "We look forward to your guidance."

"Get in the center ring," She instructed curtly. "We'll be beginning soon."

Soon enough, the two of them entered the large spacious ring along with nine other Martial Apprentices.

The two of them ignored the stares of all the other Martial Apprentices, to the best of their abilities, yet there was one that refused to look away from them.

A small petite girl looked at them oddly with intense eyes and a surprised expression.

"Wait a minute," Max's and Mana's eyes widened as they recognized. "You... were the one who beat us in last year's entrance exam!"

Crea was about to open her mouth to address them when suddenly she was interrupted.

"You don't have time to chitchat with each other," Squire Kyrie sternly quashed the interaction. "From now until the end of this sparring session, you won't have time to do anything other than fight me with everything you have."

Her eyes sharpened as a heavy wave of pressure descended on all of the Martial Apprentices.

Max and Mana gulped as they did their best to maintain their pressure. Rui always hid his mental pressure with the Mind Mask because he disliked the mixed looks of awe and fear that he got from everybody in the vicinity, especially because he did not want to subject his family to that pressure.

The only time he didn't was when he was training their mental fortitude.

Yet it was clear that Squire Kyrie had no intention of doing that.

She was merely oppressing their minds within reason.

"Your goal is to defeat me making me leave this ring," Squire Kyrie explained impatiently. "I will be restricting myself to Apprentice-level parameters. Do your best."

CRACK

She cracked her neck, before continuing. "In the long time that I have been conducting sparring sessions, no one has managed to succeed. Though..."

She glanced at Max and Mana pointedly. "...There was one Martial Apprentice who forced me to go all-out in his time here."

Max and Mana's eyes widened as they realized who she was talking about. The other Martial Apprentices stirred at those words.

Forcing a Martial Squire to go all-out at their level? They would not survive such an accomplishment, even if they managed to accomplish it.

"If you hope to have any desire to replicate his feat," She growled lightly as the pressure she exuded grew even more perilous. "Then push your mind and body to the absolute limit."

She took a stance, causing the others to do the same, "Come."

The battle broke out as all of the Martial Apprentices forced themselves forward, launching themselves at her.

Squire Kyrie mercilessly beat them up for the next four hours calmly.

Unsurprisingly, none of the Martial Apprentices managed to replicate the feat that that one Martial Apprentice she spoke of did. Squire Kyrie went around in rounds, thoroughly breaking down the weaknesses and blindspots that each of the Martial Apprentices had that they ought to work have worked on.

In the end, she finally rounded up three Martial Apprentices separately

"Crea Geringan. Max Quarrier. Max Quarrier," Squire Kyrie addressed them. "Given your age, time spent in the Apprentice Realm and stage... I have no overt recommendations to pass on based on your performance. Train as you see fit. Martial Apprentices are genuine Martial Artists, unlike the foundational students. You must forge your Martial Path. I may only pass on my observations."

Crea did not look surprised, having already experienced this.

Max and Mana were flummoxed on the other hand. "Uhm... We just became Martial Apprentices... Shouldn't we be filled with weaknesses and shortcomings?"

The mildest of smiles broke onto Squire Kyrie's face. "Given who has trained you, I am not surprised in the slightest. I look forward to seeing how far you three will go."

Chapter 765: Priority

Rui had taken the day off, something he almost never did. But he wanted to spend at least twenty-four hours gaining some basic acclimatization with his strange and new body. While the change wasn't anywhere nearly as drastic as when he broke through to the Squire Realm, it was not insignificant.

"So, how was it?" Julian asked.

Rui immediately reached home, spending time with his family, especially his brother.

"The procedure was a perfect success with no complications at all," Rui explained, sighing. "However, I have yet to grow accustomed to it. And as for mastering it, I don't see it happening any time soon, unfortunately. It will definitely take time."

"That is to be expected," Julian sighed. "The fact that you came up with such a technique surrounding something as immaterial as gravity. Even for you, this is truly remarkable. I'm glad there are no complications, it's a good thing you are a Martial Squire."

A lot of the time Rui had spent on the technique had gone into verifying that his body was capable of taking in the two esoteric substances and compounds without any long-term health detriments. He had had Julian aid him to a degree with optimizing the amount of esoteric mass he would be implanting into his body.

"Work hard to obtain proficiency with your new senses," Julian told him. "I too am curious to know about the end outcome."

"Don't worry, I can't wait to master it," Rui had replied.

Unfortunately, the upcoming part of the training was something that he would rather complete with the help of the Martial Union. While it was possible to train his new sense by himself, it was far more inefficient. The biggest hindrance was that his senses were too strong.

At this stage, he had three sensory techniques and none of them were weak, his mind would not be able to increase its proficiency if he could not stop his existing powerful senses from allowing him to perceive

the world. His mind was subconsciously too dependent on his existing senses to be able to use his newfound gravitational sense to its best.

The Martial Union, however, had come up with the perfect solution. It had developed special training rooms and facilities that were capable of sealing off all of the normal senses that Martial Artists, as well as any of the sensory techniques that existed in the Martial Union.

By sealing off all of the existing senses of a Martial Artist and throwing them into complete darkness, it accelerated their mastery of a new sensory technique significantly.

The principle behind this kind of training was the same as the reason why a human being's other senses grew far sharper once a person lost their sense of vision.

Thus he hastily returned to the Martial Union, applying to book a training session with the resources needed for the special sensory training methodology of the Martial Union.

"I'm afraid, we do not have the available training rooms and slots needed to allow you six hours of daily training," The employee bowed her head when she checked up on his request.

This had initially come as a surprise, but in hindsight, it shouldn't have. It had been five months since the discovery of the Shionel Dungeon, and not even a third of the dungeon had yet been explored to the waves of monsters and the heavily hampered senses within the Shionel Dungeon.

It was only natural that the number of Martial Artists running to master sensory techniques would skyrocket. He wasn't too surprised that even the large Martial Art training facilities were starting to run a little low on the available training and growth resources that were available at any time.

"Is that so..." Rui sighed. "Please allow me to purchase all that is available at the moment."

"Of course sir," She nodded. "Can you please provide me with your Martial license?"

Rui handed over his Martial license glumly. He was not happy with this development but there wasn't much that he could do at the moment. He could simply make the best of what he had at the moment.

"Ah..." The employee turned back to Rui. "It appears that you will be able to procure the daily six hours of training that you have requested after all, Squire Quarrier."

"Hm?" Rui's eyebrows furrowed. "Did the booked slots really clear up in the past ten seconds?"

"Not at all, however, your profile has been marked with a priority tag over the goods and services of the Martial Union over a lot of other external Martial Squires," She explained.

"What?" Rui frowned. "I've never heard of this before."

"It is unusual for the Martial Union to be unable to meet the demand for its Martial Art services, after all."

Rui considered her explanation, it was most likely correct. However, it was also likely that it had contributed to his speedy service with the Martial Union. His purchases were delivered as early as possible while any procedure he booked could be scheduled as early as a few hours later, at times.

These were things that he had perhaps been taking for granted.

"I see..." Rui nodded. "In that case, I'd like to go ahead and purchase six hours a day for the next three months, for starters."

"Will do, sir," She nodded.

Soon enough, Rui found himself in the sensory training facility of the Martial Union's training wing.

He quickly donned a special suit that suppressed the five natural senses of the human body. Rui had a lot more insight into how the suit functioned now that he had brushed up a lot on esoteric materials science.

While the suit alone would take care of the five senses, as well as Tempestuous Feel in his case, the training room would take care of the Seismic Radiation.

Primordial Instinct would naturally be suppressed with all of his other senses being suppressed since the technique wasn't a form of physical sensing but highly enhanced danger sense.

Chapter 766: Training

He wasn't sure when he was given a priority status when it came to the goods and services, however, he was sure that this was reflective of the value that the Martial Union had in him.

He had contributed a lot to the Martial Union in the nearly seven years that he had been a Martial Artist, he had also accomplished a lot and made tremendous strides in his Martial Path and contributed to Martial Art in general.

There was no doubt that he was a valued asset, and he had no compunctions about using his status to cut in line. If this was a line to the movie, he would respect public etiquette, but when it came to his Martial Art, he didn't care. He would obtain what he needed.

One small dose of a potent drug inhibited his instincts to suppress Primordial Instinct completely, and soon enough he was inside the training room, in an absolute void.

He could not sense a damn thing about his environment through his old senses.

Yet the Grainer Pollen and the Cryllin Stone across his body stirred, changing in temperature and the internal force that they applied on him.

Their reactions to their environment told him about their environment because he knew exactly how they reacted to everything. The only problem was that he had yet to master 'reading' their reactions.

That was what this was all about.

He had begun the training with a simple moving environment. He was far from ready to apply this in a combat situation. His current training environment was simply comprised of ordinary moving objects of different sizes and masses.

His initial goal was to reach a stage where he could simply avoid them without ever getting touched.

BUMP

"Tsk," Rui tutted, having bumped into a small moving pillar.

He focused hard as he paid attention to the fluctuations of the esoteric substances inside his body.

The Grainer Pollen were constantly shifting their directions of push due to the fact that the objects in their vicinity were also moving.

Had they been stationary, the Grainer Pollen would also be less chaotic, although never stationary, since they had a wide range of senses.

Soon enough, a rough image of his immediate surrounding formed in his head. It was low in clarity since he still had yet to be able to read the details of the information that he was getting from the esoteric substances.

STEP

He moved aside as he avoided another object.

He spent the first few hours simply growing absolutely comfortable with this simple exercise. Getting rid of the simple and elementary mistakes that he was making.

In combat, he wouldn't have time to make complicated calculations, this was different from the VOID algorithm. The VOID algorithm could afford a delay since it was not absolutely fundamentally necessary to his combat every second.

However, if he was in the Shionel Dungeon, then he needed a way to ensure that he could always rely on it at any given moment. He could not afford to sit around twiddling his thumbs while he ran complex calculations in his head just to sense his surroundings.

The monsters were not going to be polite enough to wait for him to finish.

He needed to reach a stage where he could complete the 'reading' of the Cryllin Stone and the Grainer Pollen in his body at any given moment subconsciously and reflexively.

He simply was not at that stage at the moment.

As time passed, he upped the speed of the movements of the obstacles. Of course, at this point, it was still at a stage where a fit human would be able to dodge them under normal circumstances.

('The tricky part is reading all of them at the same time, and then combining the data from the two esoteric substances together,') Rui tutted as he bumped into another obstacle by mistake.

His mind was in full focus at the moment. He was not only absorbing everything he sensed subconsciously but was also documenting every moment of the training session rigorously into his Mind Palace.

He intended to thoroughly revisit his experiences later inside the Mind Palace, allowing him to introspect and look back better. Furthermore, it would allow him to correlate the sensory reading he got from the esoteric substances and the actual phenomenon.

Then, he would hammer it into his head until he could accurately recount it even if he was drunk.

In this manner, he could be able to maximize his rate of growth.

('I should consider increasing the amount of training time,') Rui mused to himself, before shaking his head.

He still needed to dedicate time to mastering the techniques of Project Monster Repellant.

Six hours later, Rui was finally done with his training.

('Not bad for a first day,') He sighed.

Still, he wasn't too pleased. He usually progressed much faster with sensory techniques. However, what he was attempting at the moment was so ridiculously difficult that he couldn't possibly speed through it like he had his previous techniques.

"Phew," He wiped the sweat off his forehead as he left the training room having removed the suit.

('Woah,') He was surprised by how many Martial Squires were crowding the facility. He needed to sky-walk over them at one point to get past the crowd.

('These guys... They must be the people that I bypassed in line through my priority status in the Martial Union,') Rui smirked inwardly, ignoring the few glares that he got from the Martial Squires who saw him leave after hogging the training room for six hours.

('They must all be here in preparation for entering the Shionel Dungeon,') Rui noted casually.

The Shionel Dungeon exploration had stalled significantly, inviting long-term plans for Martial Squires who couldn't enter immediately, since it was quite likely that the dungeon would not be cleared any time soon whatsoever.

Thus he was not surprised to see a ton of Martial Squires equipping themselves with the necessary sensory techniques, after all, wasn't he doing the same thing?

Chapter 767: Not Average

Four months passed soon enough.

Rui spent the entirety of the four months training on the two remaining projects. His blades and scabbard had been prepared and given to him in time, and he got to train with the real deal.

His basic swordsmanship had reached a solid satisfactory level in the six months that he had spent training it, and he was confident of, at the very least, not failing due to incompetence. The sword was his close-range solution against the beasts and was really the only thing that was going to be protecting him from a horde of Squire-level monsters.

The smoking pipe on the other hand had turned into a good long-range barrier that was able to freeze the monsters of the Shionel Dungeon in their spots when he used it against them. In the past six months, he had polished his anti-Shionel monster tactics and strategies as well as he could in the span of half a year.

He had come up with numerous ways that he could take them down depending on the surrounding circumstances.

On top of that, he still had Kane's stealth. Not only was stealth especially effective in the Shionel Dungeon due to the hampered sensory prowess of the dungeon, but Kane had improved his stealth by mastering a few stealth-oriented techniques that he had altered to suit himself.

Rui had also considered improving his stealth, however, it was ultimately a redundancy with Kane around. They had no intention of splitting up by themselves at any given point in time, and it was better for Rui to contribute in a concrete way around issues that they would otherwise be helpless against.

Being able to sense despite the sensory jamming circumstances of the Shionel Dungeon was a priceless contribution and one that Rui had struggled to make, but eventually succeeded.

Mastering the technique that was born out of Project Eyespy was difficult, far more difficult than any of the previous sensory techniques he had mastered thus far, eventually the technique that he came to call the Riemannian Echo was born. This technique's range was even greater than that of his other techniques as well as a higher degree of clarity, thanks to Rui's meticulous eye for detail and precision as well as range when it came to the placement of the esoteric substances.

While techniques like Seismic Mapping and Tempestuous Feel could still be hampered, so far he had not come across anything that could restrain his Riemannian Echo.

The technique was named after Georg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann, a mathematician of the nineteenth century who created the field of mathematics known as Riemannian Geometry that was absolutely vital to Einstein's Theory of General Relativity, and also for the creation and mastery of Rui's gravity sensory technique.

Rui was merely offering homage to him as a Martial Artist, and as a scientist.

With the help of his Riemannian Echo, he was absolutely confident to saunter through the otherwise treacherous and inscrutable floors that had already laid claim to many a Martial Squire who had dared to step in.

He had once read what the Squire-level version of All-Seeing Eye, the only grade-ten sensory technique was capable of, and when he compared it to his Riemannian Echo, even putting aside his personal bias, there wasn't any over superiority, purely based on the information that he possessed.

Of course, he would refrain from judgment until he ran into the technique to compare it to, but even then...

('If I'm not wrong... My Riemannian Echo is not much inferior, if at all,') Rui noted.

At the very least, he was sure that it was impossible to fool his sense at the Squire, and probably even Senior Realm. However, the All-Seeing Eye could surpass his technique in other ways, potentially. For example, it was said to be able to give the user microscopic detail of one's surroundings, this was definitely a parameter that the technique surpassed him in. Riemannian Echo was far below the level that was needed to accomplish such a feat.

('For now, at least,') Rui mused.

The best part of Riemannian Echo was that it was upgradeable, and the path forward to upgrading was quite straightforward and simple. He highly doubted whether the All-Seeing Eye could be upgraded nearly as easily.

('Regardless, I've obtained what I wanted,') Rui mused as he closed his eyes, feeling his environment through the restless esoteric substances in his body, constructing an image of the entirety of his environment far and wide.

"Kane, you're here already," Rui noted as he greeted apparently thin air.

For a few seconds, nothing happened.

"Tsk tsk," Kane appeared out of thin air. "I spent half a year reaching a much higher level of strength, and yet you catch me so easily. It makes me feel like my efforts are useless you know."

"Well, don't worry, your confidence will return when your stealth dominates in the Shionel Dungeon," Rui scoffed lightly.

It was true that with his other senses, Kane had reached a level where he couldn't sense them anymore. However, with Riemannian Echo, it was as though Kane was not even using his stealth ever.

('Not even the formidable Void Step is able to escape my senses,') Rui mused.

At that point, it was probably impossible for anything in the Squire Realm to catch him off-guard with stealth alone. He highly doubted that anything short of a stealth-oriented Martial Senior could bypass his senses or anything of the kind.

"So, what's up?" Kane asked. "You were the one who called me out here."

"We need to discuss our plans," Rui informed him. "We have completed the necessary preparations when it comes to our personal capabilities. However, that isn't necessarily enough, I'm afraid."

"Hm?" Kane frowned. "What do you mean? Can't we just go to the Shionel Confederation and enter the dungeon and clear it? Isn't that what the average Martial Squire is doing?"

"You're not wrong," Rui shook his head. "But you said it yourself, it is what the average Martial Squire is doing."

"However," He turned to face Kane with a smirk. "We are anything but average, and unfortunately that necessarily entails doing things a little differently."

Chapter 768: Dilemma

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kane raised an eyebrow.

"It means that if we partake in ordinary measures in the dungeon, and accomplish ordinary results, there won't be any problem in going the ordinary route," Rui explained. "But have you forgotten our objective?"

"Clearing the dungeon, right?"

"Right, we want to explore the dungeon and plunder it before everyone else," Rui nodded. "The other objective is to earn enough money to fund all expenses, some of which are going to be a bit extravagant. However, while we have made sure to equip ourselves to outdo our competition in the dungeon, that doesn't necessarily mean the same is true for all matters outside the dungeon."

Kane's eyes narrowed a bit, as he realized what he was walking about. "You mean Shionel Merchant Guild, and the market for the resources of the Shionel Dungeon?"

"Right," Rui nodded. "Let's say we do succeed in achieving our first goal, we make greater progress than our competition and end up plundering all of the esoteric material resources from the dungeon for ourselves, and selling it ourselves, what do you think would happen?"

"...We'd gain a ton of money, and the Martial Artists who would enter floors after we do would gain close to nothing?" Kane scratched his head.

"Right," Rui nodded. "Do you think all the Martial Artists who have migrated from many places from this section of the continent would simply sigh and shrug in resignation? What do you think they would do if they see us basically stealing all of their success?"

There were too many powers and entities with a personal vested interest in the esoteric resources that were being extracted from the Shionel Dungeon. The sudden supply of high-grade esoteric substances was capable of shifting the economy, industries, and sectors of society that revolved around the supply and demand of those esoteric substances and could shift the power dynamics between the various power blocks competing with each other across the entire section of the continent.

Rui had long known that acting in a manner that was detrimental to these interests was nothing short of a foolish blunder that would get him killed on the spot.

"They would probably take some kind of action against us," Kane's eyes narrowed. "But that's only if they come to know that it was us who managed to bypass monsters and plunder all the resources in the dungeon. With my Void Step, isn't that basically an impossibility? How would they ever detect and confirm our identities as the ones who are plundering the dungeon completely and leaving nothing for everybody?"

Rui shook his head inwardly. Kane had always been shrewd, but his lack of understanding of how the world worked often held him back.

"There are other ways to trace the identity of people who have plundered a large plunder of esoteric extracts from the dungeon," Rui replied. "Just because we plunder it, doesn't mean that's the end of the story if we choose to sell it in the local Shionel market that has recently spiked in size for the demand of the esoteric supplies of the Shionel Dungeon, then it can be traced back to us. After all, if we do choose to sell it, then at some point, we need to hand it over to a third party in a transaction, be that a customer from the consumer market, a retailer, or a large-scale supplier. That cannot be hidden, and even if we use aliases that were different from what we used to register when entering the dungeon, that would still not be enough to fool the countless intelligence networks that have probably infested the Shionel Dungeon at this point."

There are simply too many logistical avenues for data leaks to occur if they handled things normally. Martial Art techniques only worked in avenues of physical conflict, they were not useful in the world of business and commerce beyond a certain point.

Kane's expression grew a little troubled at that. "True..."

"On top of that, we have to submit twenty percent of our plunder to the Shionel Merchant Guild, unless you have plans of engaging in embezzlement," Rui sighed. "The tax alone makes it a dead-giveaway."

"It's a shame that the Martial Union isn't employing external Martial Artists in a mission," Kane sighed. "That way we wouldn't have to be too concerned with backlash as we would have other comrades that would be with us. Any force picking a fight with us would mean picking a fight with the Kandrian Martial Union."

"Perhaps, but the Martial Union would be too suffocating," Rui sighed.

"Didn't you manage just fine on our last mission? You spent ten months as the ambassador of the Martial Union," Kane raised an eyebrow.

"True, but it's not quite that simple," Rui shook his head. "The purposes of the two missions were different as far as my objective went. My desire to explore the Shionel Dungeon is different from the reason that I accepted the G'ak'arkan mission. I do not want to be constrained at all at this time while exploring the Shionel Dungeon as an adventurer, that would largely defeat the purpose of going that far to the Shionel Dungeon. Orders, constraints, and reports. No thanks."

Rui had accepted the ambassador mission to be exposed to a foreign Martial philosophy, and because he was truly one of the few people capable of succeeding in the mission. To a large extent, he was content observing the G'ak'arkan Tribe and interacting with them.

The Shionel Dungeon, however, was an opportunity for an adventure, and for battle against monsters and power Martial Squires from across a chunk of the entire Panama Continent. He did not want to go to the Shionel Dungeon for an internal mission of the Martial Union.

"Well, then what's our solution?" Kane raised an eyebrow. "Do we find a way to conceal our identities as the ones who cleared the dungeon, or do we look to find a way to gain the protection necessary to continue clearing the dungeon?"

Chapter 769: Solution?

"Both of those options individually are unviable," Rui shook his head. "Especially the first one. If all the esoteric supplies go missing from the dungeon, and suddenly a mysterious source appears on the market selling gigantic quantities of those very same esoteric resources appears, every force with a vested interest in the esoteric supplies of the Shionel Dungeon would investigate the matter aggressively. I'm sorry to say that not even your stealth is enough to save us from that predicament. Furthermore, even if you magically had the ability to evade investigation with your stealth, there are two entities who would we will most likely not be able to fool even then."

"And who would that be?" Kane raised an eyebrow.

"The Shionel Merchant Guild and the Martial Union," Rui explained.

The atmosphere grew more solemn.

"Do not forget that even the Martial Union is a competitor for the resources of the Shionel Dungeon, and the Kandrian Royal Family is one as well," Rui calmly explained.

"But why those two specifically?" Kane asked.

"They have too many ways to gain information on us," Rui explained. "The Shionel Adventurer Guild requires all Martial Artists to register in their guild as adventurers with valid proof of identity, even if we do not undertake commissions from the guild, to enter the Shionel Dungeon. That, along with the fact that they have information on all suppliers, consumers, and Martial Artists in the nation, means that it won't be too difficult for them to narrow it down to us even if we have Void Step covering for us every second of every day. Their intelligence and access to information will be the richest of all."

"And why would the Martial Union find out?" Kane asked.

"Because they have too much information on us," Rui sighed. "Even if we do our best to conceal our abilities, they will eventually notice patterns, starting with your Void Step."

"I see, that actually makes a lot of sense," Kane nodded, absorbed in thought. "The Kandrian Royal Family doesn't have either of those advantages though."

"True, but we are still citizens of the Kandrian Empire," Rui explained.

"Wouldn't that be considered treason, then?" Kane frowned.

"No," Rui shook his head. "Treason is the act of betraying one's country by breaking one's sworn allegiance to the state or one's oaths and vows. What we would be doing is merely engaging in the very common business of resource acquisition and sales, and we'd be simply doing it with an extreme degree of success, at the indirect cost of everyone else. This is not an irregular occurrence, and has never been treated as treason."

"Are you sure?" Kane raised an eyebrow. He was rather intent on staying far away from that line.

"Certain," Rui replied. "An example of this would be the DiVilier Martial Corp. He has severely restrained the Martial Union's and the Royal Family's share of the Martial utilities' and amenities' domestic and international market, yet he has yet to be charged with treason. The Kandrian Royal Family simply cannot justify adjusting the definition of 'treason' to include indirect harm by successful fair competition against the state's commercial ventures. If they even dare to pass such a tyrannical and oppressive amendment to the Royal Constitution, the Kandrian Empire's economy would collapse due to the mass migration of businesses that are afraid of being charged with treason. The same applies to us, especially in the circumstances that we are in right now. Our identity as Martial Squires and member of interest of the Martial Union also makes this even more unlikely than it already very much is."

"I see," Kane nodded. "When you put it that, that does make a lot of sense. Doesn't seem like it's that big of an issue though then."

"We can't be accused of treason, but do you really want to be put in a situation where the Martial Union and the Shionel Merchant Guild know that we are acting against their interests by monopolizing the resources extracted from the dungeon?" Rui raised an eyebrow.

"This wouldn't necessarily be against the interests of the Shionel Merchant Guild, right? The amount of esoteric organic and mineral resources that they would get from the fee would not change regardless of who ends up plundering the resources," Kane pointed out.

"That is true, however, if I'm not wrong, the Shionel Merchant Guild's most important priority is not the fees of esoteric resource supplies that they are obligated to from all of the Martial Artists who plunder

them from the Dungeon. As the ruling body of a corporatocracy, comprised of the most powerful merchants in the state, they probably care more about the boom in business, both domestic and international, than they care about the fees that they extract from all Martial Artists. The former has far greater long-term benefits to them compared to the esoteric resource supplies themselves. This huge growth in the market is their greatest boon from the dungeon. However, what do you think would happen to their precious supplier market if a singular entity monopolized all of the esoteric supplies of the dungeon?"

Kane's eyes widened as he realized what Rui was getting at. "If we somehow monopolized even a large chunk of the esoteric resource supplies of the dungeon, then the supplier market would dwindle due to suppliers that are unable to get their hands on what we monopolized. That's not something they want to see."

"Correct. Especially when the one doing all the monopolizing is not a constituent of their guild or even a citizen of their nation. That would be highly undesirable to them," Rui nodded.

"This is such a headache to even think about," Kane sighed with exasperation. "So we absolutely cannot avoid the eyes of the Martial Union or the Shionel Guild, and we also cannot earn their support because, as you said, we're clashing against their interests, or at least the latter's interests. So what's the solution? Because it sounds like there isn't anything we can do."

"Don't worry," Rui smirked. "I wouldn't have told you all of this had you all of this if I hadn't thought of a solution."

Chapter 770: Map

"The conditions for us are avoiding the eyes of the ones whose interests we are clashing with, and two, to placate the interests of those whose eyes we cannot avoid," Rui explained. "As long as we can fulfill these two conditions, we can go all out without holding back in the Shionel Dungeon."

"And let me guess," Kane smiled wryly. "You have a way of doing both, correct?"

"Just right," Rui smirked.

"First, regarding the Martial Union. We cannot avoid their eyes forever, but we can delay them," Rui explained.

"And how would you go about that?" Kane asked.

"We can create a red herring," Rui explained. "It's not that difficult to plant false information and throw them off-guard for a while. Once you understand how information flows, manipulating it becomes far more feasible. Traveling to separate destinations, paying off information brokers, and commissioning copycats to take our place from the local Martial Art group will hinder them to a certain extent."

"That makes sense," Kane nodded. "Though what do we do when they get us eventually? Isn't that back to square one?"

"True, but we will have obtained at least some time without them breathing down our backs," Rui tutted.

"What do we do then?" Kane wondered with a raised eyebrow.

"We'll have to buy their support," Rui smiled.

"With the esoteric supplies?" Kane asked.

"No, with information," Rui replied, calmly. "Specifically, an extremely detailed map of the entire layout of the Shionel Dungeon."

"Hm?" Kane frowned. "Why would such a thing-"

He paused abruptly as a thought entered his mind.

"Seems you figured it out," Rui smiled. "Remember how shit the maps for the Shionel Dungeon are?"

Rui plucked out and spread a folded piece of paper that turned into a map.

"Look, they're all extremely abstract since all the floors are represented with identical circles," Rui tapped on them.

It was an obviously inaccurate representation of each floor since he already knew that they were not circular, and certainly not of the same size.

"Look at the paths and tunnels leading to each floor," Rui tapped across the map. "They're represented by straight lines, again exaggerated inaccuracy, and only one set of routes between floors are depicted despite the fact that there were countless tunnels mazing in and out. Furthermore, the distances between each of the floors is identical on map. None of this is meant to be treated seriously, on purpose."

Kane nodded. "Despite being official maps that we purchased from the Martial Union, the actual information that this map offers is very little, which probably means they don't actually have any accurate and precise information on the locations of anything in the topography and geography within the dungeon."

"Exactly, and the reason for that is the severe hindrance that all senses face. I've heard that even the vastly superhuman eyesight of Martial Squires is reduced to less than that of human-level. Light is scarce too. How on Earth are they going to accurately map the entirety of the Shionel Dungeon dome that's sixty kilometers wide? The sheer volume of the dungeon is enough to comfortably fit the population of a large country. They cannot use sophisticated technology because Martial Artists are utterly incompetent at any technical matter, and technology would face the same problem as the Martial Squires. Nor can they rely on actual cartographers who create maps for a living since no ordinary human can enter the Shionel Dungeon," Rui smirked. "That means they're desperate for accurate and precise information on the Shionel Dungeon."

"That makes sense..." Kane nodded. "But will that be enough? After all, even with the information that they have, the exploration process is still ongoing, it doesn't seem particularly necessary."

"You're not wrong," Rui replied. "However, it could be accelerated if they possessed accurate and precise information of the entire dungeon. But that isn't the true benefit of possessing such information."

"What else could one gain from it beyond the exploration?" Kane asked with knitted eyebrows.

"The Shionel Dungeon's value exceeds just the booming business that it brings to Shionel Merchant Guild and the Shionel Confederation, and the esoteric organic and mineral resource supplies. Its long-term value lies in its potential for real estate," Rui smirked.

Kane's eyes widened. "You mean once the entirety of the process of exploration and plundering is over?"

"That's right," Rui nodded. "It isn't too very common for a single nation to colonize a dungeon once cleared since they rarely spawn in the territory of a single nation and usually form in pieces and chunks of the Beast Domain that penetrate into the Human Domain. However, what happened to the Serevian Dungeon once the war ended?"

"It was colonized by all the participating nations of the Serevian Pact," Kane replied as realization dawned.

"That's right," Rui nodded. "Dungeons are still useful as real estate, especially the Shionel Dungeon which has created a three-dimensional complex filled with many large city-sized spaced interconnected with tunnels. Spanning sixty kilometers"

"That's... a country inside a country. That's priceless!" Kane gasped. "It's huge amounts of free territory that increase the 'size' of the nation the moment they ensure safety and habitability."

"Right on. And the value of an accurate and precise map of the Shionel Dungeon is instantly extremely precious," Rui smiled.

"That gives a huge bargaining chip," Kane laughed out loud. "Since you are probably the only one who can sense extensively inside the Shionel Dungeon thanks to your Riemannian Echo!"

"Correct," Rui nodded. "That's the bargaining chip that can be used to negotiate with the Shionel Merchant Guild. Once I dangle that over their heads, I can get them to be a lot more pliable around me being a market monopolizer to a certain extent with a minor concession at most."

"You'll have to make concessions at all with something this important?" Kane frowned.

"Well, our positions and capital are too different for me to act too tough. It would be risky to push it too far. I have no interest in playing silly games with them."