
Solo Leveling

The King's Avatar

– Quan Zhi Gao Shou –

- Volume 13 -

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Chapter 1201
An Ace That Isn't Cool at All

Wang Ze hadn't been a senior player during his time at Excellent Era. When Ye Xiu was still there, he had been a rookie, appearing a few times as a sub starting season 8, before following Excellent Era to relegations.

Team Excellent Era's players were rather sought after, but at that time, the relegated Excellent Era hadn't given up yet. Drawing in Thunderclap's Xiao Shiqin steadied their hearts, and as a result, the vast majority of Team Excellent Era's players chose to stay.

Wang Ze was one of them. However, unlike his other teammates who had the choice to accept an invite or stay with the team, he had no choices because no one had showed any interest in him.

To Wang Ze, this was a slap to his face. Even though he didn't feel like he was particularly amazing, he still had confidence in his own skill, yet no one was interested in him?

Wang Ze cared quite a lot about this issue. At that time, he had been in the competitive scene for two years, but he failed to attract enough attention in his few appearances on stage. He very much wanted to be acknowledged.

But in the third season of his professional career, what made him even more depressed was that the powerhouse Excellent Era had actually lost to the Internet cafe team Happy in the Challenger League.

That moment had been a dark one for everyone in Team Excellent Era. After Excellent Era disbanded and the team members parted ways, Wang Ze had been quite terrified because he hadn't received any invites when Excellent Era had been relegated the previous season. And in their last season, Excellent Era had been playing in the Challenger League. The attention towards them had been limited, and he had truly feared that no one would be interested in him.

Wang Ze had hoped for an invite, but none came. He had watched as his teammates left him one after the other, watched as Excellent Era collapsed, and watched as

someone took over.

At that time, the players who had yet to leave all received invites from the new boss, who called for them to hang on for one more year and return to the Pro League anew.

Wang Ze remembered clearly that Qiu Fei, who had just been promoted from the training camp, decisively chose to stay.

Idiot…

Wang Ze had thought to himself. That season, if there was one person who was particularly eye-catching in Excellent Era, it would be the new rookie Qiu Fei. He was a youth with a bright future ahead of him. He didn't need to worry that he would have nowhere to go. However, Qiu Fei had actually believed in the new investor's plans and chose to stay.

But what did the new Excellent Era have?

Su Mucheng had left along with her Dancing Rain. Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf had left. Xiao Shiqin and Life Extinguisher had returned to their mother team.

The remaining Excellent Era was no longer a powerhouse. How could breezing through the Challenger League be so easy?

Wang Ze had already wasted a year. He had no intentions of wasting away in the Challenger League. Unfortunately, he still hadn't received any invites. Staying was at least one path that would let him continue as a pro player.

Wang Ze wasn't willing, but he also didn't want to resort to this last straw. Luckily, Team Miracle came around and showed interest in him. Wang Ze didn't hesitate to pick his new team. In his eyes, being able to remain in the Pro League was better than anything else.

Thus, Wang Ze joined Team Miracle. Afterwards, Shen Jian joined too, cursing and swearing after wandering around in a circle. Shen Jian's situation had been better than his. He had received invites from the start, but he wasn't able to negotiate well enough with any of them, leaving Team Miracle as his only choice left. Along with feelings of helplessness for not getting recognized for his talents, he and Wang Ze were packaged together and sent to Team Miracle. Over there, He Ming was waiting for them with his status as the core player, after being traded away for Xiao Shiqin when Excellent Era

relegated and fighting in the Pro League for a year.

The three were former teammates, who had gathered together again at Team Miracle. No one had been delighted at that. Instead, a feeling of being cheated had sprung up in their hearts.

But they had already fallen into the hole. If they wanted to get out, they'd have to rely upon themselves. Each carrying their own thoughts and hopes, the three began their journey with Team Miracle. Wang Ze hoped that he would be able to get recognition for his skill this season. Even if Team Miracle was relegated in the end, he would at least have invites waiting for him.

His opponent this round was Su Mucheng, an All-Star. If he could beat her, it would be definitive proof of his skill. And towards this former teammate of his, he felt like he knew the key to winning.

After the five second countdown, the match began.

Map: Desolate Town 7.

Desolate Town was a series of maps. If all 17 maps were put together, the map would be a complete town. But in reality, especially in a 1v1, the complete town was too big, so it was split into 17 parts. These 17 parts were of different sizes. Desolate Town 7 was the smallest among them, suitable for a 1v1.

As former teammates, the three from Miracle knew which maps Su Mucheng favored. Wang Ze mainly wanted to bump into Su Mucheng today, so he had prepared a map specifically for her. Desolate Town 7 was a map that Su Mucheng was good at, and as her former teammate, he knew how Su Mucheng liked to play in this map. This was why Wang Ze had chosen it. He wasn't hoping his opponent was unfamiliar with the map, but rather familiar with it. That way he would have a greater understanding of his opponent.

The two characters headed towards each other from their spawn corners. Wang Ze's Sharpshooter was called Kashiben, a character provided by Team Miracle. It was worse than his former Team Excellent Era character, and he had spent a lot of effort to adjust it to his preferences and habits.

Kashiben moved forward quickly, looking far into the distance onto the clock tower in the town.

The clock tower was this map's highest point. By seizing the high ground, one would have nearly complete coverage of the map. Desolate Town 7 was the desolate map with the most narrow and winding alleys, which wasn't too favorable for long-ranged gunners. Su Mucheng had been forced to be good at this map because too many opponents wanted to utilize this map to restrict the Alliance's Number One Launcher. As a result, Su Mucheng had to specifically practice and study this map until it actually became one of her best maps.

The clock tower was a location that Su Mucheng frequently occupied. She had the high ground there, allowing her to easily catch her opponent's position. Then, she could utilize her long-ranged capabilities to attack from afar. It was one of her most used tactics.

But… not today!

Wang Ze thought to himself. Their relationship as teammates was mutual. Since he had chosen this map, Su Mucheng wouldn't be so stupid as to go to it. She would intentionally avoid the spot she liked the most because her teammate knew about it.

Once she gave up on her usual plan, what would she do?

According to her habits and preferences, Wang Ze bravely made a prediction. He was currently heading over to verify it. He believed that his prediction should be correct. As a gunner class too, Wang Ze trusted that his understanding of Su Mucheng's thought process was very thorough.

Kashiben traveled through the small alleyway. Wang Ze's strategy was very clear. But from time to time, he would still take a glance at the clock tower. After all, it was possible that Su Mucheng would be stubborn. However, Wang Ze would be even happier if that were the case. The route he chose was a dead spot for the clock tower. If Su Mucheng went to the clock tower, he would give her a big surprise.

A flawless plan! Wang Ze felt satisfied with himself.

But at this moment, Su Mucheng appeared.

Utilizing Aerial Launcher, with a few ups and downs, she landed on the clock tower. Thinking that she wouldn't go over there, Wang Ze nearly exposed himself. Luckily, Wang Ze noticed her actions in time and hastily rolled to a dead angle in the clock tower's view.

So she actually went there.

Wang Ze calculated the time. For Dancing Rain to make it onto the clock tower right now, she had to have taken a straight line to there, not wasting any time.

Was she not afraid that he would take advantage of that location?

Wang Ze was confident, but he didn't think Su Mucheng was stupid. As a result, when he saw Su Mucheng suddenly make what seemed to be a brainless move, Wang Ze stopped to think about it.

If Su Mucheng understood his intentions for picking this map but still made this choice, what was she plotting?

There were two possibilities.

First, she didn't think much of Wang Ze's strength, so she did as she always did.

Second, she guessed how Wang Ze would respond, so she had set up a trap and was intentionally luring the snake out of its hole.

Su Mucheng wasn't stupid nor was she an arrogant person, so it was most likely the second possibility.

Setting up a trap and luring him out.

Wang Ze smirked. This was the Su Mucheng that he knew.

It was just that this time, he wouldn't fall for it.

Su Mucheng perhaps knew where the dead angles were from this clock tower, but did she know which of these dead angles allowed for direct attacks to the clock tower?

Wang Ze didn't think Su Mucheng knew.

Because only long-ranged classes had the range to reach her from those spots, and very few long-ranged players would choose this map. As for Su Mucheng, she had never encountered a long-ranged opponent on this map. This wasn't Wang Ze guessing. He had looked through all of Su Mucheng's data on this map.

Detailed and thorough analysis, understanding, and preparation. These were Wang Ze's trump cards. Perhaps they weren't very cool, but they were practical.

Dancing Rain was still looking around from up on the clock tower, or perhaps she was guessing where Wang Ze would attack from.

No need!

Wang Ze smiled. He swiped his mouse, and Kashiben readied for a Thunder Snipe.

Sharpshooters had lower range than Launchers. Only Thunder Snipe was the exception. However, Wang Ze didn't want to attack from too far away in this situation, otherwise Su Mucheng would have time to react and dodge it.

The sniping spot he had chosen was the perfect distance.

At this range, if she didn't know ahead of time, by the time she heard the sound of the trigger, it would be too late to dodge. Even more so in a situation where Su Mucheng couldn't even see where it was coming from. Trying to react just based on sound was even more impossible.

Dancing Rain's forehead and long hair could be seen clearly through the ten-fold magnified sniper scope.

Gunshot!

A spurt of fresh blood flowed out from that forehead, instantly covering his scoped view with red.

"Tsk tsk, this type of attack should just instant kill her." Wang Ze sighed. After using the skill, he retracted his sniper rifle.

"Huh? What's that?" Wang Ze saw a bright flame in the sky spiraling towards him.

Chapter 1202
Familiar Rhythm

This is?

Wang Ze panicked for a moment, but he quickly calmed down again. Judging from the flight path of this whirling flame, it couldn't hit his position no matter what.

At this moment, a gunshot sounded.

Bang!

After a gunshot, there was the sound of an impact. The spinning flame in the air vibrated, but it wasn't extinguished. It now flew forward at a higher speed, and after this collision, there was a clear change in the flame's trajectory. Originally, it had been unable to reach Kashiben's position, but now, it was enough.

Boom!

There was a sudden roar in the sky. Wang Ze had long figured out what this was, but he hadn't thought that Su Mucheng would have such an outrageous technique.

After being hit by the Thunder Snipe, she instantly predicted Kashiben's position.

And then right after being sniped, while her body still wasn't stable, she was able to immediately launch a Heat-Seeking Missile, and then because this missile wasn't able to fly a far enough distance, she accurately fired another shot to support and extend the range of this missile. There was another important point here: Dancing Rain normally used a hand cannon, which launched powerful cannon shots that were impossible to aim with such precision. This meant that after firing the missile, she must have switched Dancing Rain to use a gun…

How was Su Mucheng this strong?

As her former teammate, Wang Ze thought that he had studied Su Mucheng enough, but he had no idea that Su Mucheng's technique was even more terrifying than he

imagined.

The howling Heat-Seeking Missile fell toward him. Although Wang Ze was already frantically controlling Kashisen to dodge, the shockwaves from the mushroom cloud created by the missile's impact had a wide range. Kashisen was unable to avoid the explosion and was sent flying against a wall.

Boom boom boom!

The attacks of Launcher Dancing Rain came flying from the clock tower.

Occupy the high ground, capture the opponent's position, fire from an extremely long distance.

All of this was Su Mucheng's familiar rhythm, and it was a rhythm that Wang Ze had specifically studied, but now, he still fell into it.

Dodge!

Wang Ze desperately controlled his character, entering one of the Clock Tower's dead angles.

It's no use!

Even though it was a dead angle, Su Mucheng used all sorts of methods to send her firepower there. The AoE skills of a Launcher allowed her to somewhat disregard the precision of her attacks, as long as they landed close enough, they could deal a lot of damage and restrict the target.

I can't hide in a dead angle, I have to move and shake her off…

But isn't this the rhythm that every one of Su Mucheng's victims on this map would fall into?

Amidst the roaring cannonfire, Wang Ze hesitated.

What to do?

He had no plan.

He hadn't prepared for any events deviating from the script he had imagined. He had been completely caught off-guard by how Su Mucheng had instantly determined his position from his sneak attack.

For this match, Wang Ze's original plan was to use accurate sneak attacks to snipe Dancing Rain shot after shot. But now, after only one shot, his position was exposed. All he heard were cannon shots, all he saw was fire.

Where could he go?

Wang Ze originally thought he knew this map very well, but now it was all fuzzy in his mind, the various routes all tangling together, preventing him from finding the exit path among them.

But if he just let his character stand here, he could only watch his health bar steadily exploding away.

Wang Ze had Kashisen charge out, but should he continue to figure out a way to hide and dodge, or should he turn and fight directly? Wang Ze still wasn't certain, and he didn't have the time to reason things out. On this map, Su Mucheng's attack rhythm was extremely skilled. Whether Wang Ze ran or counterattacked, she had enough experience and technique to respond.

Ace card?

Did Su Mucheng not have one on this map?

And it was the exact same as Wang Ze's, the most simple: familiarity.

Familiar map, familiar attack rhythm.

Wang Ze's response didn't pose any difficulty for her at all. With all her skill at her fingertips, she bombarded him.

And Wang Ze seemed to have fallen into a battle for survival. He wasn't acting like he was trying to achieve victory, he was just trying to survive under the cannonfire.

The match had already lost its suspense from the moment Wang Ze revealed the position of Kashisen.

Individual competition round 2, Happy won.

"Beautiful!" Chen Guo energetically welcomed Su Mucheng as she came offstage.

"Who knows what the opponent thinking, picking one of your best and most familiar maps, how stupid." The fruits of victory were in hand, and Chen Guo wanted to make it known. As Su Mucheng's super fan, Chen Guo knew which maps she was good at, and she recognized Desolate Town 7. She'd even tried to imitate Su Mucheng's playstyle on this map.

"He's not stupid, it's just that I'm not stupid either," Su Mucheng laughed.

"In any case, we won." Chen Guo was proud.

Wang Ze, coming offstage, was in extremely low spirits. He had prepared thoroughly for this match, he had been confident, but it ended up like this? His strategy was still only on the first step when it received a headache-inducing attack, and he had been attacked from there until the end, blasted upon the ground.

He Ming and Shen Jian knew the hard work Wang Ze had put into preparing for this match. Seeing his disappointment now, they too were upset. But this was competition. Everyone worked hard, but in the end, there was always one side that would fail.

"I was still too overconfident," Wang Ze said with a bitter smile. "I thought I understood the opponent's strength, that I had a trump card that could get me victory. But I never thought that, under circumstances I don't understand, the opponent improved even further…"

"This is why Glory is limitless!" The unfortunate trio lamented, in a heavy atmosphere.

"Captain, I'm going up!" Right then, Miracle's third individual player had already stood up, Miracle's Launcher, Guo Shao.

Yes, Guo Shao, a name that sounded arrogant. Before the arrival of these players from old Excellent Era, he had been the core player of this new team.

An arrogant name, a position as core player, but Guo Shao wasn't that kind of person.

When experienced players joined, he happily gave up his position as core and captain. Passionate, with energy and ideals, Guo Shao was a Glory youth that had longed to

play in the professional scene. And now, he had finally raised his sails to set forth on this journey.

"I wonder who my opponent is?" Guo Shao lifted his head to look at the projection screen. He carried this kind of excitement for every match.

The screen quickly displayed the names for the third battle of the individual round.

Happy, Ye Xiu, Lord Grim.

"Excellent!" Guo Shao was even more excited.

He Ming and the others exchanged looks, smiling bitterly.

What an innocent youth, he really has no idea of the terror and cruelty of the pro scene!

"Good luck!" The three still said some encouraging words, but in their hearts they already had no hopes for this match.

"Don't worry, seniors!" Guo Shao gave the three of them a thumbs-up.

"Go, go! You have to win!" Against their true thoughts, the three cheered him on.

Guo Shao went onstage, and on the other end Ye Xiu was already ready.

Log on, enter map.

"This is great, I actually have the chance to fight Senior Ye Xiu!" As soon as the characters finished loading, Guo Shao couldn't wait any longer and began expressing his feelings.

"Then do your best!" Ye Xiu never refused to interact with anyone onstage.

"Don't worry, senior!" Guo Shao shouted.

Offstage, He Ming and the other two facepalmed. Why are you telling the opponent not to worry!

Ye Xiu sent a smiley face emoji, and Lord Grim rushed forward.

The map was Desolate Town 28. In a 1v1, there was some amount of cover, but not many twists and turns, which made it rather suitable for a Launcher. Guo Shao's map choice wasn't out of the ordinary.

Ye Xiu didn't sidestep, he directly charged forth, and quickly saw that the opponent was doing the same.

Boom boom!!!

With the sounds of cannonfire, Guo Shao's Launcher Berk took the lead in attacking. Ye Xiu controlled Lord Grim to dodge, having no way to retaliate.

Guo Shao fired his attacks at the very limit of his attack range. Although Lord Grim could use a Launcher's low-level skills, that didn't mean he had the full long range of a Launcher.

The extremely long attack range of a Launcher was something they got only after switching classes. Their special skill learned when changing class at level 20, "Artillery Mastery," increased the range of all of the attacks and skills of this class, as well as the area they could damage.

"Haha, Senior's class doesn't have the range of a Launcher!" Guo Shao actually had the time to type a message, but Berk's attacks never stopped.

"You want to lock me outside of this range?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Seen through so quickly by senior."

"It's a very obvious plan. But it's not that easy!"

After sending the message, Lord Grim begin to charge forward.

Guo Shao immediately had Berk jump backwards while simultaneously covering a large area with his firepower, stopping Lord Grim from reaching him.

"Hit!" Lord Grim was covered by the large area of firepower, and Guo Shao was excited.

"But I'm closer…" Ye Xiu replied as Lord Grim ducked through the cannonfire. Although he suffered some damage, the distance between the two was pulled closer.

"That's not good." Guo Shao's Berk used Aerial Cannon to increase their distance.

"You can't run!" Under Ye Xiu's controls, Lord Grim used a Slide Kick, dodging the cannon shots coming right at him, and once he got up, he used a Shining Cut. His character sprung forward amidst cold light, and then he followed with a Charge, forcing his way through the Stingers falling from the sky.

Three skills used in an instant, all attacks with high-speed movement. The distance between the two characters was instantly squeezed so that they were almost right next to each other.

"Senior is really tough!" Guo Shao cried, his character changing direction to get away.

Lord Grim suddenly used another skill.

"Ah!" Against his controls, Berk started rushing toward Lord Grim.

"He can even use Taunt!" Guo Shao shouted.

The Taunt status forced the target to charge toward and attack only the taunter. Although it couldn't interrupt an attack, it was a powerful move to disrupt the opponent's rhythm, especially during a team competition when coordination was required.

Right now neither side had a team, so there wasn't that effect, but Guo Shao's Berk in this bit of time had no way to leave with his free will.

Collapsing Mountain!

Lord Grim swung his blades down, Guo Shao saw that he had no way to retreat, so he simply aimed his cannon at Lord Grim.

The cannonball flew out, but Lord Grim's Collapsing Mountain suddenly changed to a Falling Light Blade, and he plunged downward.

After dodging the cannon shot, the Falling Light Blade landed right upon Berk. Guo Shao hurriedly tried to Quick Recover, as the Taunt status finally wore off, but Lord Grim was already right next to him.

Slide Kick!

Guo Shao's reaction was very fast, he actually had Berk use a Sharpshooter's skill Slide Click. Even if he couldn't hit Lord Grim, at least he could slide past and start pulling apart the distance again.

But he hadn't expected Lord Grim to step to the side. Before he started fully sliding, Lord Grim stomped down in place, and at that moment, Berk slide right there.

After Lord Grim stepped on his opponent, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shifted forms and sent a flurry of shots to his face.

Sharpshooter skill: Punisher.

"You're about to lose!" Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 1203
The Winery on Wuchuan Path

Ye Xiu's prediction was of course made with reason.

Out of the 24 classes, Launchers were ranked at the bottom in close combat ability. They were never absent in the voting for "which class is weakest in close combat," and their votes were never low, at about the same rank as Summoners.

Now that he was being stepped on by Lord Grim, an unspecialized with an immense number of low level skills and an extremely fast rhythm, no one thought Ye Xiu's words were unreasonable.

"Not necessarily!" But Guo Shao didn't agree.

Once Punisher was over, Lord Grim had only just moved his foot away when Berk immediately rolled and stood. However, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had already transformed into a spear, striking forth like a viper.

Clang!

Yet, what everyone heard was the clash of metal on metal. This sound was most commonly heard when parrying.

And, for Launchers, there was only one move they could use in parrying, if nothing unexpected happened.

Swing!

Each of the 24 classes had a knockup skill, which could be learned from the beginning. What Launchers used was this hand cannon swinging skill, Swing. Using this skill, Guo Shao managed to parry Lord Grim's Dragon Tooth.

Berk had already jumped up, cannon shots flying, aimed downwards and propelling him backwards.

However, Lord Grim truly had too many low level skills. Even if the movement skills he had used before were all still in cooldown, he had other choices.

Berserker skill: Colliding Stab!

Lord Grim dashed forth with his sword. Berk, even with the help of Aerial Cannon, couldn't match up to the speed of this dashing stab. He was immediately impaled on the blade and a combo followed after.

The unspecialized's fast paced close combat capabilities wiped the floor with Zhang Jiale and crushed Sun Zheping. Now, the one facing this was a rookie, using a Launcher, who was weak in close combat.

There was no suspense to this anymore.

However…

"Nothing is certain yet!" The rookie Guo Shao still didn't give up.

"Your spirit is admirable!" Ye Xiu praised, "If so, then I'll have to be more careful…"

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella changed forms rapidly, skill after skill pushed onto Berk. Guo Shao was trying to find an opening, but there was none to be found. Every possibility of escape had been completely sealed off.

"How terrifying," he was still lamenting, his morale seeming to be completely unaffected, but at a time like this, his Berk had already fallen.

Guo Shao didn't give up, but he didn't find a single opportunity either…

Walking out of the competitor booths, Guo Shao looked at Ye Xiu on the other side.

"Senior is so strong!" Guo Shao called out loudly, giving a thumbs up.

"Is he crazy, praising his opponent like that?!" He Ming and co were close to jumping up, nervously looking at the audience. As expected, the audience had exploded into commotion. As for Ye Xiu, he just waved and went off stage.

In the individual competition, Happy won with a flawless 3 to 0.

However, Guo Shao, who had just returned to the player bench, didn't seem at all affected by this gap.

"Let's all do our best!" Despite just having lost, he was here encouraging his teammates.

"You little!" He Ming's face was dark. As the captain, he had to say something.

"How could you compliment your opponent like that? Aren't you boosting their morale? Ruining ours?" He Ming scolded.

"Because he really is strong, so I didn't really think much of it," Guo Shao said.

"…" Guo Shao's forthright reason made He Ming incapable of scolding him further.

"Just don't do it next time…" he could only reply, deflating.

They lost all three rounds of the individual competition…

He Ming exchanged glances with his two old teammates. If everything had gone according to their original plan, then they would've given the first match to Ye Xiu, Wang Ze would strike down Su Mucheng in the second match, and then the third match would be given to Guo Shao, who was rather skilled. If he did well, they might've even ended things with a lead of 2 to 1, but now, reality seemed very far from their expectations.

"We're counting on you for the group arena," Wang Ze said.

He Ming and Shen Jian were going to be a part of the group arena.

"How come I feel that Happy doesn't seem affected by the magazine?" Shen Jian gazed towards Happy's bench. Did they not look at those magazines after getting them?

"Wei Chen, Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu are all experienced and mature players. Being able to adjust their emotions isn't unexpected from them," He Ming analyzed, feigning calm. "In the group arena, Tang Rou will definitely come up. She'll be affected by it."

"What if she's not participating today?" Shen Jian asked.

"Er, then the other younger players would definitely be affected," He Ming said.

"There's also that Fang Rui," Shen Jian reminded him.

"Fang Rui isn't all that used to the Qi Master yet, so his strength will be reduced," He Ming assured.

"Yeah…" Shen Jian nodded. In reality, they had gone over these things who knows how many times before the match.

"I'll be going first, Jia Xing will take the middle and you'll be our last line of defense," He Ming announced the lineup at the end. Jia Xing was Miracle's Battle Mage player, his character was called Prideful Sorcery.

The short break between the individual competition and group arena passed quickly. Under the signal given by the big screen, He Ming stood, bracing himself and walking towards the stage. On Happy's side, the first player to go up wasn't Tang Rou who used to always lead the charge, but Fang Rui.

After seeing Fang Rui, He Ming felt a little more pressure. The other was an All-Star level player, after all.

Relax, he's still getting used to the class switch. Focus yourself, don't get anxious, you have plenty of chances.

He Ming recited to himself in his heart as he walked onto the stage and into Miracle's Competition Booth. On the other side, Fang Rui also entered his booth. The projection began to display images of the map that would be used for this match.

Wuchuan Path, a small map with a Wuxia style, was a map that didn't have many obstacles for the three pro players of Miracle. That was usually how group arena maps were chosen.

The two characters soon spawned at the two ends of Wuchuan Path. In the center of the map, there was a winery with a large flagpole outside the door. A golden character meaning "alcohol" was stitched into the accompanying red flag, fluttering in the wind, very eye catching. The winery proved its worth of having such a flag, though. The winery had three large courtyards, pridefully taking up the center of the map. In terms of area, it made 90 percent of the map. Desolate muddy earth surrounds the winery, and when the winds blew, the sand and dust kicked up could turn the sky yellow.

With the winery in the center, the two characters would meet directly. The winery

became a place that could be used to execute ambushes and sneak attacks. Knowing that his opponent was the Master of Dirty Play, Fang Rui, He Ming instantly felt like the winery was filled with danger. However, Miracle's three wouldn't be unfamiliar with a map they chose. And for this map, the focus of it was the structure of the winery. He Ming had his Elementalist, Rullo, approach the winery, but didn't charge inside. Though the two characters were the same distance apart from the winery, their movement speeds were different. If a Qi Master wanted to take this advantage, they could activate Qi Flowing Cloud and increase their speed, getting into the winery before an Elementalist.

Fang Rui would definitely use the terrain to his advantage. He Ming knew this with certainty. Thus, before he stepped into the winery, he stopped for moment and went over the entire structure of the winery clearly and completely. After making an organized judgement, He Ming's Elementalist, Rullo, walked into the winery from the side door.

Immediately inside was a massive courtyard with both square and long tables. The were cluttered with many small taverns. However, no NPCs would be in an arena map. A place that should've been bustling was devoid of life, giving an eerie feel.

He Ming didn't stay in the courtyard long, intending to have Rullo go further inside, when he suddenly heard a popping noise.

What was that?

He Ming's had very precise judgement, and he turned his view to the place the noise came from. All that was there was a wall, so the sound must've come from behind that wall.

Was it an accident? Or a trap?

The gears in He Ming's head turned quickly. Rullo walked over, but didn't immediately go through to the other side, but stuck close to the wall.

This doorway led to a rather narrow corridor. Thinking of this terrain, He Ming had an idea.

Rullo flashed into the doorway, staff waving and then, with a point, an Ice Wall appeared in the corridor. Only then did He Ming have Rullo dart inside.

"How cautious!" Fang Rui's taunt appeared in the channel. As expected, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was inside the corridor. However, he had been trapped at the other end by the Ice Wall.

"If this is how it's going to be, you can't hit me either!" Fang Rui sent a rofl emoji, as if He Ming's Ice Wall was a really stupid decision.

He Ming remained unruffled by the other's trash talk. He was glad he was so careful. If not, then he might've already been ambushed by Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

"If neither of us can hit the other, then I'm leaving!" Fang Rui said as Boundless Sea turned to leave.

How could He Ming let this dirty playing opponent go so easily after catching him? Ice Wall could block movement and attacks, but it couldn't block an Elementalist's control over the elements.

Rullo raised a hand and elemental power began to gather in the air, curling up from the ground, eventually gathering in Rullo's mind. Skill: Absolute Focus. After activation, it would turn the next skill into an instant cast.

After that, he pointed his staff and the level 70 Elementalist ultimate, Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire, was activated through the Ice Wall. Fang Rui, who was in the middle of his escape, realized something was wrong, and hurriedly had Boundless Sea roll backwards, taking a small amount of damage. When he looked again, the lightning and fire had completely blocked off his escape route. Charging through wasn't a good idea. Under the player's control, if a target tried to simply charge through Heavenly Thunder Earthen Lightning, then it wouldn't just be damage they'd take, but they'd also be rooted, so in the end they still couldn't go anywhere.

"How shameless! Take this!" Fang Rui sent as Boundless Sea turned and dashed forwards, his palm striking the Ice Wall.

If Ice Wall wasn't destroyed by an attack, then it would remain for quite a long time, even longer than Heaven Lightning Earthen Fire. However, Fang Rui didn't want Boundless Sea to stay here and admire the scenery, waiting for time to pass. If he were trapped in this small space and let He Ming chant a few more AoE spells, then he wouldn't have a chance at dodging.

Fang Rui didn't mind using this powerful skill to immediately shatter the Ice Wall.

Chapter 1204
Fang Rui, Figured Out

Pa pa pa pa!

Boundless Sea's Flash Burst smashed into the ice. Spider-web like cracks instantly spread, and in the next second, the ice wall shattered into tiny bits of ice.

But by this time, He Ming's Rullo had finished casting another spell.

Thunder Apocalypse!

Lightning crashed down from above, one bolt after the other. He Ming had calculated Fang Rui's options and positioned Thunder Apocalypse such that Boundless Sea was perfectly centered inside.

Dodge?

With the denseness and speed of the lightning bolts, dodging was extremely difficult.

Reinforced Iron Bones?

It would increase his defences and give him Super Armor, but lightning bolts produced a short paralysis effect, completely different from the hit stun from physical attacks. Reinforced Iron Bone's Super Armor would not be enough to move freely inside Thunder Apocalypse.

Qi Guard!

Fang Rui chose to use this Qi Master defensive skill. Boundless Sea's two hands traced an arc from the top of his head to his sides, forming a defensive qi barrier.

However, with Thunder Apocalypse striking the shield, the Qi Guard wouldn't last long. It was unable to ward off the destructive might of Thunder Apocalypse. Moreover, this purely defensive position gave He Ming time to cast another spell.

Blizzard!

It wasn't enough time to cast a powerful spell. He Ming had good judgement and cast a relatively fast spell, layering Blizzard on top of Thunder Apocalypse.

Boundless Sea's Qi Guard shattered in an instant.

Piercing Lightning!

He Ming didn't hesitate and threw out an instant-cast. The distance between Rullo and Boundless Sea was extremely close. For an Elementalist with weak close combat abilities, it could be considered a very dangerous distance, but it was because of this short distance that Fang Rui could do nothing about this Piercing Lightning. Lightning element spells were the fastest spells.

A bolt of lightning pierced through Boundless Sea. The knockback from magic attacks should not be looked down upon. Piercing Lightning pushed Boundless Sea back a step, and Thunder Apocalypse and Blizzard had yet to fade away. The elemental spell formation set down by He Ming was giving Fang Rui an extremely difficult time.

He Ming activated Mobile Cast. In the end, Elementalists needed to maintain a distance away from their opponents. Before the two DoT spells completely dissipated, Rullo retreated while casting his next spell.

And Boundless Sea? Paralyzed by Thunder Apocalypse and slowed by Blizzard, Fang Rui didn't have any good ways to escape from his predicament. However, he couldn't let He Ming continue casting spells. Forcefully eating the damage and seizing the gap between DoT ticks was one way.

Qi Blade!

He Ming hadn't expected Fang Rui to be able to find an opening to let out an attack while under the barrage of two DoT skills. Even though he had yet to fully switch classes, his ability to grasp openings showed why Fang Rui was an All-Star.

Having activated Mobile Cast and in the middle of a cast, Rullo's movement speed was very slow. Qi Blade was a rather difficult skill to dodge too, so He Ming immediately canceled his skill and cast a Teleport.

Rullo suddenly disappeared. However, Fang Rui's reaction speed was quick. As the

master of playing dirty, his first thought was that the opponent was behind him.

Boundless Sea turned around. Sure enough, Rullo was behind his back and had thrown a Fireball at him.

At this point, Thunder Apocalypse had ended, but Blizzard still remained. Although Blizzard's damage could not be compared to Thunder Apocalypse, the slow effect was a headache. Boundless Sea's movements were slowed, and He Ming had boldly teleported to a short distance between them and attacked. No matter how fast Fang Rui reacted, with his character unable to respond, he had no way of dodging.

Bang bang bang!

The Fireball struck Boundless Sea and exploded. Fire element spells dealt the most damage out of all four elements. Fireball was only a low-level skill, but its explosiveness couldn't be ignored.

Rullo wasn't close to being done yet. He Ming was extremely focused, carefully and attentively watching Boundless Sea's situation, planning every step of his offensive.

After Fireball was a Dark Missile.

It was a low-level dark element spell. Dark element spells were neither fast nor strong, but they had strange effects.

Dark Missile followed closely behind Fireball and stabbed into Boundless Sea.

The dark element wasn't Rullo's main element. This Dark Missile was only at level one, so its damage was limited. However, its effect still came into effect. After being struck by Dark Missile, Boundless Sea spun 180 degrees.

It was just a turn of the body, but in a high-level match, it was an exploitable detail.

Having your back turned to the opponent could be considered as a short Blind as you wouldn't be able to know the opponent's next action.

No matter how fast your turned, you would always be a half beat behind. Fang Rui was an experienced veteran though. He wouldn't make such a rookie mistake. It didn't matter what was going on behind him; he immediately had Boundless Sea roll forward.

Unfortunately, this sort of experienced response wasn't outside of He Ming's expectations.

Elemental Power!

During this tight window, He Ming had Rullo cast the lowest-leveled Elementalist skill.

It was the slowest of all 24 knock up skills because it required a cast time. However, of the 24 knock ups, it was one of two long-ranged knock ups. As long as it was cast and the target was within its range, there was no way of defending against it.

In exchange for the downside of needing to cast the spell, this Elementalist knock up was given a powerful upside. Boundless Sea was inside Elemental Power's range. As soon as he finished rolling, he was lifted into the air.

Raging Flames!

A pillar of fire erupted from beneath Boundless Sea, swallowing him whole. Rullo continued to wave his staff. From the light gathering on his staff, the next spell had to be a powerful one. Rays of light burst forth, radiating waves of red fire. The magic condensed onto the tip of the staff and then ignited fiercely. The flames danced and swayed, letting out the cry of a bird.

New Elementalist Level 75 skill: Fire Bird!

Bang!

A blazing fire bird flew towards Boundless Sea, who was falling down after being knocked high into the air by Raging Flames, and engulfed him.

Boundless Sea burned as he flew backwards and crashed into a wall behind him. His health fell at a visible rate. The Fireball left an imprint on the wall, slowly dissipating from the burning Boundless Sea. Fire element spells didn't have much else other than overwhelming damage.

This fight was truly surprising.

Even though Fang Rui had switched classes, he had a shining All-Star title on him. No one would dare to underestimate him. During this period of adjustment, his Qi Master had been doing quite well too. Even though there were comments about his problems

here and there, Fang Rui's win rate during these past eight rounds was quite good.

And now it looked like his honeymoon period was over!

After eight rounds of observation, Happy's rookies had yet to crash into a wall, but Fang Rui had already been completely seen through. Fang Rui wasn't able to display his dirtiness this fight and after being caught by He Ming, he was being beaten senselessly. At this rate, He Ming would achieve a perfect win.

The applause from the crowd was thunderous. After losing three individual competition rounds, there was finally a show worth seeing.

I really am a useless dim sum!

Fang Rui was sullen. In the previous press conference, Ye Xiu had given him a snide remark calling him a useless dim sum. He knew that Ye Xiu was just joking, but starting from the previous round, Fang Rui knew that his rhythm had been completely seen through. In face of Wang Jiexi, he wasn't able to find even a chance of winning. And in this match, He Ming, who was clearly a level lower than Wang Jiexi, was completely crushing him too.

Fang Rui was the master of playing dirty, but just because he was dirty didn't mean he had no pride. Right now, he was feeling wounded. Switching classes could be a reasonable excuse, but he didn't want to lower his expectations for himself because of this excuse. If he lost his heart, he would only lose again and again.

"You really have some skill…”

After being roasted into a half-dead state by the Fire Bird, Boundless Sea had dropped to the bottom of the wall, but Fang Rui still typed these words in chat.

He Ming ignored them. After Fire Bird, Rullo drew an Ice Line, trapping Boundless Sea in the center. Afterwards, he calmly started casting a new spell. There was still some distance between his Elementalist and Fang Rui's Qi Master. Rullo was sitting comfortably outside Boundless Sea's attack range. If Ice Line wasn't triggered, it would last for 12 seconds. 12 seconds was more than enough time for any spell, so just obediently sit there in prison!

He Ming felt pleased with himself. His was very satisfied with his playing this fight. This is the way to victory, right?

Bright light gathered onto his staff again, clearly another large spell.

"Are you addicted to high-level skills?" Fang Rui chattered.

"Take a look at this move!" Fang Rui sent a shouting emoji.

What move? He Ming's mind rapidly turned. He was at a completely safe distance. No Qi Master skill could reach him. Qi Masters had no such skill, nor did any of Fighter classes. He Ming had very carefully considered everything beforehand.

"QIGONG BLAST!!!" Fang Rui shouted the skill he used for morale support. Boundless Sea flipped over his palm and placed it on the wall behind him.

The imprint burned onto the wall by the Fire Bird crumbled. With a boom, an ugly dog hole was split open.

"Come at me!"

Fang Rui shouted in the chat as he had Boundless Sea run through the dog hole.

Chapter 1205
The Labor Pains of Class Transition

He Ming was dumbstruck.

Rullo's fearless chanting of powerful spells instantly became purposeless. That ugly doghole seemed to split the entire world into two.

Boundless Sea had vanished. That doghole didn't seem that big, yet he had very precisely darted right through. Fang Rui's mechanics were extremely precise, but how he got so good at worming through holes was a mystery. He Ming didn't know of any training with this sort of content, and he believed that Wind Howl wouldn't have something like that either.

His wonderful lead, broken, by this doghole? He Ming couldn't accept that. He immediately cancelled the high-level skill he was casting and hastily adjusted his character's position. Though the hole wasn't big, an Elementalist could utilize their elemental power so long as they could see.

But when he got there and looked at that hole…

Complete darkness. He couldn't see anything on the other side.

He Ming's face clouded over. That bastard had blocked the hole? What sort of technique was this! That was way too low, wasn't it!?

The structure of the map quickly flashed through He Ming's mind, and he immediately brought up what the terrain was on the other side in his mind. If he went around through this corridor, then that would be too far. He'd have no idea where Fang Rui would stash his Boundless Sea by the time he got there. The fastest way was still to retrace his steps out of the corridor and climb over the wall!

He Ming immediately came to a decision. Rullo hastily retreated backwards. Just looking at the hole made him irritated. Swiftly, Rullo's staff raised and he chanted a Fireball.

Boom…

The Fireball accurately flew through the doghole, sending waves of fire inside and smashing against whatever was blocking it.

He Ming didn't want to waste time here. He had randomly flung a skill just to vent a little before Rullo hastily dashed away. But suddenly, his character seemed to slip from his control and was flung towards the doghole.

Cloud Grasping Fist!

He Ming immediately realized what it was, but apart from seething about this dirty play, he couldn't do anything about it.

Rullo was flung horizontally towards the doghole, but naturally wouldn't be able to fly right through. In the end, he crashed against the entrance, his health even slipping a little.

Pulse Break: Break Intelligence.

Flash Burst!

Boundless Sea's hand came through the hole and these two skills were consecutively blasted onto Rullo. With this Qi attack, even the walls were shaking. Then, both of Boundless Sea's hands came through, grabbing onto Rullo. With a yank, the parts of the wall around the doghole shifted out, almost to the point of shattering. The enlarged doghole was enough for Rullo to get through, and he was immediately thrown to the ground by a Back Throw from Boundless Sea.

The crowd was dumbstruck. The big screen wasn't even sure which shot to show this from, so it just ended up replaying this moment from several different angles at once.

Rullo, having clambered to his feet, had already been completely closed in on by Boundless Sea. Teleport was still on cooldown, so he couldn't pull away. Qi Master's had the weakest close combat ability out of the four Fighter classes, but it was better than Elementalists. Now, Fang Rui didn't bother with any tricks and had Boundless Sea teach Rullo a lesson with his fists.

No, it wasn't exactly with his fists. Qi Master skills were primarily palm strikes and jabs, very rarely punches. When they connected, it seemed light, without much

strength, but they played with the inside of the body. Those light strikes injected internal energy, and the damage it dealt wasn't second to any physical punch.

With the slaps and hits, He Ming's Rullo didn't look like he was losing in a very ugly way. On the contrary, all the dust that had gotten on him when he was thrown to the ground had been struck clean. At the same time, his health bar was also being cleaned.

He Ming didn't want to be slapped to death by Boundless Sea like this. Fang Rui's Qi Master was still riddled with holes because he wasn't familiar enough with his class, and he was hindered by the habits he had spent years cultivating as a Thief player. Now, when he was attacking, he'd show a lot of openings when comboing. This was no secret. It even appeared in the news!

And what He Ming had to do was to not miss the opportunity when it came!

Rullo swung his staff. Even Elementalists could swing their staffs for normal attacks. He Ming fought back as much as he could. He couldn't just stand there against Fang Rui's palm strikes like a sitting duck!

His efforts weren't for nothing. When the dust on his robes had mostly been slapped clean, Boundless Sea finally stumbled.

Piercing Lightning!

This instant cast spell blasted forth. At such a close distance, Fang Rui wouldn't have time to dodge no matter how quickly he reacted. Boundless Sea, struck by Piercing Lightning, went numb.

In that short time, Rullo once again activated Absolute Focus and then followed up with a cast-free level 75 ice element ultimate: Absolute Zero.

They were simply too close. Although Piercing Lightning's short paralysis had passed, Fang Rui didn't have the time to escape Absolute Zero's range. Instantly, Boundless Sea became an ice statue. One of his legs was still in midair, suspended in his fleeing position.

He Ming let out a breath of relief.

Absolute Zero had the longest freezing time out of all ice element skills of the 24 classes. When maxed out, it would freeze for up to 8 seconds.

He Ming didn't rush, having Rullo pull away. In 8 seconds, he didn't rush to attack, because attacks would reduce the freeze time of Absolute Zero. In a one on one, it was best to use these 8 seconds to prepare to launch an offense.

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea maintained that rather silly pose, forced to watch as He Ming's Rullo escaped to a position and distance suited for an Elementalist's attacks.

Fang Rui was helpless.

Like a rookie that met the Rookie Block, he had met the labor pains of transitioning between classes. He had met it last round and hit it this round too. Even after using his masterful dirty play to save himself from the torrent of attacks and complete a counterattack, he still revealed an opening that the opponent was able to grasp.

He had been too greedy…

Fang Rui criticized himself. With how well he was settling in, it was better for him to just use simple and fast methods to stall his opponents and chip away at them, like with Zhou Guangyi. The problem was that such simple methods would be easily seen through by pro players. Fang Rui didn't have an infinite amount of tricks like that to use. The current him was at his wit's end.

Fuck, if only I were still a Thief…

No, he had already come this far, how could he still have thought like that? Having these thoughts meant that his determination and will weren't enough! Now that he had switched classes, he had to completely become a Qi Master. The tricks he had as a Thief couldn't be employed anymore.

Couldn't be employed?

After confirming this to himself, he suddenly had a doubt.

Could they really not be employed anymore?

A second doubt rose from his heart.

What a joke. Thief and Qi Master, two completely different classes that had no similarities whatsoever.

The classes might not have similarities, but… what about the thought process? Could the Thief's playstyle and strategies not be used by a Qi Master at all?

Imagine if he were a Thief, who had acquired the skills of a Qi Master.

Thinking from this angle, Fang Rui's eyes suddenly lit up.

What if he were still a Thief, but had a bunch of Qi Master skills?

These thoughts boiled in his head, a movement of ideas that not even Absolute Zero could freeze.

"It's about time." He Ming, advantage back in his hands, typed in the chat. It felt pretty good to have this sort of advantage against an All-Star level player. He took note of Absolute Zero's timing and, without wasting any time at all, a rather long chant was finished and a skill flew out!

Fire Storm!

Elementalists had ice, fire, light and dark element spells, but because they only had a limited number of skill points, they couldn't learn all the skills of all the elements. Usually they would choose two elements to focus on and spent their leftover points on some helpful skills from the other two elements.

He Ming's Elementalist focused on light and fire. The fastest light and the fiercest fire. Fire and light could be called the most offense oriented combination for Elementalists. Rullo's equipment naturally would would prioritize buffing light and fire. As for Ice and Darkness, He Ming mostly used them for their effects.

Now that Boundless Sea had been frozen by Absolute Zero, he was about to receive the fiercest attack.

It was unfortunate that the strongest of hs skills, Fire Bird, was still on cooldown. He Ming didn't have many options.

The Fire Storm whirled in and Boundless Sea quickly got out of Absolute Zero's effect, but at the same time, Lightning Hell fell from the skies.

For a fire and light Elementalist like Rullo, how could he lack the level 75 spell, Lightning Hell?

And this ultimate of light element spells had inherited the most distinct characteristic of its element: a quick attack with a short chant.

Lightning Hell had to be chanted, but the chant went by like a weak, low level spell.

The time it took for Fire Storm to devour the effects of Absolute Zero was enough to finish Lightning Hell's chant. A bolt of lightning fell just as Absolute Zero faded. Boundless Sea had no way of dodging.

One bolt, two bolts, three bolts, four bolts…

A full six bolts of lightning struck. The lightning bolts actually didn't strike soon after one another, but, for Lightning Hell, so long as one struck, the target would be locked on, and the rest would be directed towards the target by the system.

Boundless Sea, after taking the first strike, had then taken all five other strikes.

After two ultimates, Boundless Sea had once again taken heavy damage. The damage from the attacks he sent at Rullo, almost like he was patting the dust from him, was easily returned full force.

"Want to run?"

Seeing Boundless Sea darting through after escaping from Lightning Hell, Rullo pointed his staff and a Fireball sped out.

Boundless Sea practically lunged forwards to dodge the Fireball, then coming to a roll, jump, crouch, then roll. Boundless Sea rapidly moved forth using this weird method.

He Ming was stunned.

This was quite an unusual way of movement, but you couldn't call it weird. This was actually rather common.

Thieves liked to move in this way. Since traps were the main skills of Thieves, they had to crouch to set the traps, so the character would use crouching movements and maintain low set movements like rolling. Staying close to the ground allowed Thieves to maintain the form they needed to set traps. It was both convenient and discrete.

But this set of movements for these skills had appeared on a Qi Master?

"Hahahaha, are you going crazy from longing for your Thief?" He Ming sent a rofl emoji, yet that was when he suddenly realized that something was pulsing in the air.

Qi Blade!

Chapter 1206
The Thieving Qi Master

Qi Blade!

One could easily imagine how blurry a cluster of qi without light effects could be when it streaked across the air. One needed to observe the character's movements to predict and dodge this skill, otherwise, it would be difficult to get a grasp of the distance.

However, He Ming failed to notice Boundless Sea's Qi Blade movement, so the cluster of qi arrived before Rullo's face.

It's too late to dodge!

Rullo was struck by this silent Qi Blade and stumbled. Most of the crowd wasn't observant enough to discover the Qi Blade and thought Rullo's shiver was some kind of starting action to cast a spell.

Boundless Sea, still rolling on the ground, leapt up into the air almost around the same time as the attack hit. By the time he pushed both of his palms forward, a portion of the gathered qi had already shot out.

Sky Piercing Strike!

The powerful qi attack billowed the dust on the ground and blasted right into Rullo's head. It wasn't as if He Ming didn't react. He had tried to dodge it, but he was too late. He thought the distance between him and Boundless Sea had been pretty safe, and he felt confident in handling any Qi Master attacks with ease. However, he soon realized his mistake when the Qi Blade was right in front of his face. Even a powerful skill like the Sky Piercing Strike was covering another attack?

What sort of fighting style was this? Was it related to the movement style he used as a Thief?

He Ming was an experienced pro player; even though he didn't have a complete understanding of what Fang Rui was doing, he was able to find the key idea. All of this

rooted from the movement style of a Thief.

This particular movement method not only allowed the Thief to plant their traps quicker, but also to conceal them better. Otherwise, any idiot would be able to figure out that a Thief was planting a trap when they suddenly bobbed down from running to dig up a hole. What use was a trap if its location was known?

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was using this exact same movement method. Even though he had no traps to plant, he achieved the effect that Thieves wanted: his attack was like a trap; it would stay hidden until it suddenly popped up.

This was Fang Rui's strength.

The former Number One Thief, Fang Rui, had impeccable control over this sort of rhythm.

He was now applying this to the Qi Master. Despite having only used two skills, he felt that they were effortless.

Stupid! Why didn't I think of this earlier?

Among all the long ranged attacks, were there any attacks that were as easy to conceal as the Qi Master's qi attacks? They had no sound and the visual effects weren't flashy. This was just like a moving trap. The Qi Master was truly dirty! Such secretive methods were too satisfying!

After being enlightened and changing his perspective, Fang Rui interpreted the honorable and righteous Qi Master class in this dirty way. No Qi Master through the course of Glory had interpreted their class in such a way.

After the Sky Piercing Strike, Boundless Sea followed it up with a leap backwards. However, this leap was towards Rullo's direction.

"What is he doing?" Rullo nearly flipped over from the blast of Sky Piercing Strike. After he finally straightened up again with difficulty, He Ming saw Boundless Sea jump backwards towards him. Is that his back?

Whenever Boundless Sea landed, he squatted, and it seemed like Boundless Sea's hand was hitting the ground?

Shit!

His camera shook. Although He Ming didn't do anything, Rullo was tossed into the air.

Seismic Throw! Fang Rui had hid it with his back, why was he so dirty!

The target within Seismic Throw's range wouldn't simply bounce around like one would in a trampoline. Qi was involved in this quake, so all the targets within range would be overturned.

When Rullo fell, He Ming immediately performed a Quick Recover. After landing on the ground, Boundless Sea rolled. As he turned around and got up, he pushed both of his hands out. The Qi Drill rushed towards Rullo, who was still getting up.

I can only Teleport!

He Ming's mind was clear and knew that only this skill could help him avoid this attack. He immediately cast it, but he was still too slow. The spiralling qi drilled through Rullo, whose body spun with it. With a boom, he was pinned to the wall behind him. Fang Rui finally took revenge for the Fire Bird that had blasted him against the wall.

This guy!

He Ming was getting a little nervous. Fang Rui's fighting style suddenly changed from the style that he had observed for the previous eight rounds. It was rather common to take the advantage to attack while transitioning between rolls and jumps. However, no one was as thorough as Fang Rui when it came to using all of these postures just to hide his attacks.

When he finally noticed the Qi Blade, it was already in front of him.

When he noticed the Sky Piercing Strike, a portion of the qi had already come out.

When Fang Rui launched Seismic Throw, Fang Rui's back was facing him to conceal his attack.

As for Qi Drill, the concealing jumps for the Seismic Throw also became a method to close up the distance for this skill. Furthermore, he could complete the inputs for the skill while rolling, so he could launch it when he got up. Even if the Elementalist had

Teleport, he couldn't use it because he couldn't make his move in time.

How were these attacks of a Qi Master? These were literally traps a Thief would set down one after another for the opponent. The only difference was that the traps weren't waiting for the opponent to trigger it because the current "traps" were more proactive.

Boundless Sea was moving around once again. Those rolls and jumps of a Thief made him seem like a hound as he leapt towards Rullo.

Ice Walls!

He Ming immediately controlled Rullo, who just fell from the wall, to launch this skill among the remaining skills he had left with the ice element. He needed this to block the opponent because he… needed time to think!

He Ming had never seen this Qi Master's fighting style before, so he couldn't interpret and counter it immediately. He needed more time to observe and analyze Fang Rui's attacking methods.

The Ice Walls cut off Boundless Sea, who couldn't attack Rullo directly. Take a detour? Then this would only turn into a childish game where two people surrounded a table and ran in circles.

Last time, the person who was in panic was him, but this time, it was the opponent, right?

Don't panic, I still have the advantage.

He Ming looked at both of the characters' health and recovered his confidence. In terms of health, he still had the advantage.

But what should I do next?

Boundless Sea was nearly done smashing his Ice Walls into pieces, but He Ming didn't have his character do anything.

"You can't run." Fang Rui sent a smirking emoji. The Ice Wall shattered at this instant, but Rullo also happened to have disappeared.

"I predicted this much!" Boundless Sea continued to jump backwards. His back became the defense to concentrate his Qi once again. However, without waiting for him to turn around, a bolt of lightning shot through his back.

Boundless Sea, who was still jumping backwards, froze in midair and fell.

The audiences were stupefied.

Frankly speaking, they didn't really understand what was going on this fight.

That was because normal players who watched from the bird's eye view without enough skills weren't able to experience what sort of effect Fang Rui's changed style had made. For them, He Ming should be able to dodge all of these attacks, but he was still hit.

This was like Vanishing Step, dead angle strategy, or false combos. Only players who were placed in the situation would know the difficulties that they were facing.

He Ming was like this right now.

However, this was soon followed by raising the Ice Walls, Boundless Sea charging ahead, and Rullo moving with Teleport. Boundless Sea then held up his back and sent himself towards Rullo's direction without bothering to look back.

Was he looking for death?

Everyone thought in such manner.

Boundless Sea was indeed struck down by Rullo's spells.

"Sigh, it seems that I've committed a lowly mistake…" Fang Rui turned around. He was so deeply absorbed in figuring out ways he could secretively launch his attacks that he forgot that since he was sneaking around, he needed to ensure that he wasn't attacked by the opponent.

His backward jumps this time was too careless and predictable.

The audience thought Fang Rui was seeking death, but at that instant, He Ming was very nervous. Although he had Rullo immediately launch a Piercing Lightning, he truly feared that Boundless Sea had been hiding another skill, so before Piercing Lightning

was released, that skill would have struck him first.

However, that didn't happen!

The Piercing Lightning shot Boundless Sea down, and He Ming's heart was at peace. He started to make use of this opportunity at once. Spells were set up on a grand scale, and Boundless Sea was stuck in it once again.

"Die!"

As he watched Boundless Sea's decreasing health, He Ming felt some sort of urge he never had before. It was as if he would lose if he failed to finish off his opponent in this wave of attacks. Even if his character's health was still that much ahead, but the thick sense of danger still enveloped around him tightly.

Glory!

The two large letters finally popped up onto the screen. He Ming felt as if he was released from great burden. No matter what happened, he still managed to take this round with a decent outcome. Rullo still had over half of his health.

Fang Rui, who lost, left the stage, but he wasn't dispirited. Although he lost, he saw a miraculous future ahead. If this weren't a formal match, he would definitely continue to shamelessly squat at the computer for another round with the opponent. He wanted to quickly confirm whether this future was possible.

After seeing Fang Rui's face flushed with pride, his teammates saved their thoughts of comforting him.

"It seems that you've discovered something?" Ye Xiu asked. The others weren't surprised at Fang Rui's attitude despite his loss since they had listened to Ye Xiu's interpretation of Fang Rui's sudden adjustment in middle of the match.

"Yup, do you think it has any future?" Fang Rui humbly consulted him. The person before him was the master of all classes. He was proficient in both the Qi Master ad Thief, so he should be able to give out pertinent suggestions.

"Seems pretty good, you just have to avoid those sort of disgusting mistakes," Ye Xiu said.

"That was only an accident." Fang Rui took that matter as an exception. At the time, he was so deeply enthralled by his new discovery that he allowed such a careless mistake to occur. Such mistakes wouldn't occur again, so after receiving Ye Xiu's approval, Fang Rui became even more excited.

"I really want to investigate it now, who's the next one? Quickly finish the match! I'm in a hurry." Fang Rui yelled.

Mo Fan stood up, but didn't show any show any reaction towards Fang Rui's shouts. He only walked quietly towards the stage.

"Walk faster!" Fang Rui yelled at his back.

Mo Fan's figure distinctly froze, but then, in a very awkward manner, he actually started to walk faster…

Chapter 1207
Charging Ninja

He Ming, having defeated Fang Rui, let out a breath of relief. It wasn't just relief for this matchup, but the overall situation of the group arena.

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, the three All-Star level players had all come up already. That meant that the rest of the group arena only consisted of the rookies they had picked up.

He Ming wasn't underestimating these rookies, but he definitely doubted that they would be harder to deal with than those three All-Stars. He had sent off Fang Rui with quite the lead. With only two rookies left for Happy, Miracle was already on their way to victory, right?

Just as he was basking in his triumph, the opponent's character had appeared on screen.

Deception… that Ninja that got a red card?

This was the deepest impression Mo Fan had left on people after eight rounds. Apart from that, he hadn't won a single match, so, naturally, people wouldn't pay that much attention to him.

As for He Ming, he had met Deception quite long ago. In the online game, when they were fighting Ye Xiu, Deception had been one of Ye Xiu's helpers.

Yes, helper, that's what He Ming thought. He didn't know all the specifics of what had happened between Deception and Happy.

He remembered this guy. He Ming's impression of Deception stopped there though.

Apart from that, he knew that getting a red card meant he didn't understand the rules of pro matches. Glory wasn't football or basketball. It was very, very rare that someone would manage to violate the rules, never mind get a red card. He had yet to win a match too, so he wasn't all that strong.

A helper of Ye Xiu's who didn't know the rules very well and was average in strength.

That was He Ming's full understanding of Mo Fan, and in this week of preparations, Mo Fan wasn't their main focus. If he had to be categorized into important and unimportant, then he'd be thrown to the unimportant side.

Now, this unimportant guy was coming onstage.

He Ming readied himself with his spirits high. From a basic overview, he could tell that Mo Fan was a very patient player, who often relied on ambushes.

Yes… That's Happy for you.

He Ming couldn't help but think.

The match soon began. The map was still Wuchuan Path. There was no point in comparing his speed to a Ninja's, it would definitely be Deception who got there first. This time, He Ming decided not to bother rushing. His Rullo walked over slowly. Wasn't his opponent a very patient player? Then let him wait some more! He Ming was very relaxed.

But soon enough, when he still had some distance to go from the winery in the center of Wuchuan Path, He Ming saw Deception.

What on earth?

He Ming was surprised for a moment. Shouldn't this person have stashed himself in a corner of the winery to observe in silence and wait for a chance to ambush? That's what he had always done before, so how come he's changed his strategy today?

So what if he did?

He Ming didn't look too much into it. Mo Fan truly wasn't a name that could make him feel pressured.

Deception charged and Rullo met him.

Electric Ring.

He Ming first had Rullo put this skill on himself. Ninjas were very likely to close in with

a skill like Shadow Clone. The presence of this skill was often worrying. Afterwards, Rullo fired off a Fireball. Starting with low level skills was practically a universal traditional starting strategy.

Deception quickly changed directions, dodging the Fireball, and his hands then began rapidly moving in front of his chest, forming hand seals. He Ming was stunned for a moment and couldn't help but think of the last match. A Ninja's hand seals were a very exposed way of activating skills because every Ninja skill was triggered through a different set of hand seals. One could figure out the skill through looking at the hand seals. However, since the speed of the hand seals was directly related to mechanical skill and hand speed, if a player was fast enough, then the hand seals would be nothing more than a blur. It'd be impossible to tell if they had bent one finger or two and therefore impossible to accurately determine the skill. They could only guess from there.

With a pro player's hand speed, they could all reach that standard. Mo Fan's mechanics were pretty good too. His hands blurred, leaving a few afterimages, then the seals were completed. Instantly, over ten copies of Deception appeared.

Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance.

His first move was a level 70 skill. If this were the All-Star level player Li Hua, He Ming would feel surprised, but this player was just a rookie who not only failed to earn a single victory in the past eight rounds, he also didn't even know the rules clearly. To He Ming, there was only one way to describe this: childish.

A bunch of shadow clones charged at Rullo. He Ming didn't give ground, and elemental power immediately gathered in Rullo's mind with an Absolute Focus, before instantly casting the level 70 high-level skill: Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire.

The bunch of Deceptions were immediately enveloped in an array of lightning and fire. He Ming let go and went wild, directly having Rullo use a high-level skill to neutralize Deception's high-level skill.

The shadow clones were destroyed one by one under Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire, disappearing into smoke.

Five, four, three…

He Ming silently counted. Shadow Dance wasn't like Shadow Steps with real and fake

forms. It could be said that they were all real forms. When the skill ended or when the shadow clones were killed one by one, the last one left would be the Ninja's real body.

One!

He Ming locked onto the last Deception and stopped controlling the Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire. He was preparing to follow up with some new skills, throwing forth a new wave of attacks. Who would have expected that before Rullo even finished casting, the last Deception would be killed just like that too.

How!

He Ming was really shocked this time. If this one was killed too, then that meant there were still clones present. Where were they? Why didn't he see them?

Rullo whirled around, turning his head. After looking at his surroundings, he didn't see anything.

He Ming then realized something, but, too late…

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Deception shot right out of the ground, his ninjato striking Rullo's chin, yet very unrealistically it did not cut his face off, but threw him into the air.

Ninjutsu: Bird Fall!

Deception curled up in midair, darting higher. When he stretched out his legs again, he directly kicked off of Rullo's shoulders. After using the jump, he then executed a Neck Bind. The rope attached to the hilt of the ninjato had already wrapped itself around Rullo's neck. Deception landed lightly, his arms crossed in front of his chest, binding Rullo behind him and dragging him to the ground.

He Ming, who hadn't thought much of Deception, panicked. These three skills, like a falcon swooping on a rising hare, didn't leave any openings whatsoever. In the previous second he was being ambushed and in the next, he had been bound and thrown to the ground. His character hadn't been killed yet, but the abruptness of the Ninja's assassin-like skills made He Ming's heart leap into his throat.

After falling to the ground, he turned his head and saw Deception rapidly forming

hand seals. He didn't have the time to look closely, hurriedly having Rullo roll sideways to a stand. Several streams of water shot out, a Hundred Streams just missing He Ming.

He Ming was just starting to feel relieved when Deception struck with a Flame Cut, ninjato ablaze.

Jump back, back, back!

A skill like Teleportation required too many inputs, so He Ming could only jump backwards. The Flame Cut swept down, almost striking. Rullo jumped thrice before finally stopping.

"How excessive," Ye Xiu exclaimed from the sidelines. To dodge that skill, one jump was enough. He Ming had panicked and made unnecessary actions. The extra two jumps didn't do anything to get him to a safer distance. On the contrary, because of the excessive nature of these actions, he was unable to dodge the next attack.

By the time the extra two jumps were over, Deception's Storm Shuriken had already arrived in front of him. No matter how fast he jumped, he couldn't beat the speed of a skill.

It was too late for He Ming to take back those two jumps. Rullo was sent flying by the Storm Shuriken. Deception charged forwards in pursuit, and threw another Shuriken before using Shadow Clone technique, sending his real body right next to Rullo. Then came a Cicada Shell Double Slash, the force of the two karate chops successively struck Rullo. Rullo hadn't even flown the full distance he was meant to when he got struck down by Deception halfway.

What is going on?

He Ming was rather confused. Against Fang Rui, he had met a style Fang Rui had never used; against Mo Fan, he also met a fury that had never been displayed by this player in the past eight rounds. Wasn't this person meant to be a player who played dirty, hiding in the shadows, waiting for a chance to strike? How come he had become so fierce when it came to him?

Rullo was once again knocked flat on his back. He hurriedly rolled to a stand, but Deception's attack came once again.

Teleport!

He Ming didn't think too much, getting his character to pull away first. However, Teleportation didn't actually take the user very far. Just as Rullo landed, he turned to look and saw Deception's hand seals forming constantly, taking one step out and somehow managing to immediately close their distance.

Ninjutsu: Ground Shrinking Technique!

Ninjutsu: Moon-Slaying Sakura!

With one step forward, before even entering attack range, Deception activated the Level 75 high-level skill Moon-Slaying Sakura. Deception's ninjato transformed into broken cherry blossoms, swirling forth. He Ming didn't know what to do. Run? Not possible. Dodge? He had just used his dodge skill.

Ice Wall!

Seeing that the other still had some distance to go, He Ming hurriedly summoned a wall of ice in front of himself. Deception had already arrived by then, and the thin petals imbedded themselves into the wall. Instantly, a crack could be heard, and a hole was made in the Ice Wall.

Though it was just a hole, the Ice Wall counted as having been broken through by the system. Deception didn't avoid it, directly charging forward and shattering the rest of the Ice Wall. His ninjato had stabbed Rullo already and broken cherry blossoms flew by, slashing open flowers of blood. In that moment, it seemed that Rullo was being torn apart.

What on earth was this?

He Ming really, truly, didn't understand. How come, when it came to him, none of the opponents were like what he researched? Against Fang Rui, he was in the lead, he had the advantage, then since Fang Rui didn't use all those new tricks at first, He Ming won.

This time, Mo Fan was different from the very start. Fiercely attacking, relentlessly attacking, not giving a single chance for retaliation. He Ming was an Elementalist. What Elementalists were most afraid of was someone closing in and not giving them any chance to pull away. This time, he couldn't shake the other off at all. What suspense was there left?

Mo Fan finally gained a win. A complete and straightforward win.

Chapter 1208
The Issue of Communication

"Hey! This kid's really playing this match with spirit!" In Happy's player area, everyone was overjoyed.

Mo Fan was still that silent, still that uncommunicative, so even though they chose him to go onstage, no one knew how he planned to fight. But this match, he won beautifully. Seeing He Ming's cold face as he came offstage on Miracle's side, it was clear how depressing that match had been for him.

"Not bad at all." Happy's players showered him with praise, but sadly this was the group arena, so for now the victorious Mo Fan had no way of receiving everyone's congratulations. As for how the next battle would play out, no one knew.

Looking at Miracle's player area, they saw their second player standing up.

Jia Xing, Battle Mage, character Prideful Mage.

"What a villain-like name, as soon as you hear it you know he's going to lose!" As Fang Rui expressed this, Jia Xing walked onstage.

The map was still Wuchuan Path, and if nothing out of the ordinary happened, the two characters would still meet at the winery at the center of the map. Because, as of right now, neither of them had taken a roundabout route or slowed their, they both rushed right toward the center.

However, as he approached the winery, Jia Xing still hesitated for a moment.

He had seen that in Mo Fan's fight with He Ming last round, he had fought a bit differently from his previous appearances. But would he regain his normal style in this battle?

After a moment of thinking, Jia Xing still controlled Prideful Mage to enter the winery more cautiously.

He constantly turned his camera from left to right, treating every corner of shadows as a place where the enemy could be waiting to ambush him.

Where was the opponent?

The crowd knew better than Jia Xing did.

Mo Fan didn't control Deception to hide in one corner. After he arrived at the winery, he first took a circle around outside, and after failing to discover the opponent's character, only then did he enter the winery. He was still moving around, evidently looking for the opponent.

He took an extremely active attitude. Clearly, for this battle, he was using the same new playstyle he had used in the previous battle, preparing to find the opponent and face them head-on. But because this map had this winery at its center, with twisting paths, the two didn't meet so easily.

"This kid, what's up with him today?" Fang Rui asked, slightly confused.

Ye Xiu shook his head. He wasn't clear either.

Last round, Mo Fan changed his normal playstyle. It was unexpected, but looking at the battle situation as a whole, the change he made was very reasonable, because last round his opponent was an Elementalist. Using this sort of active, aggressive, close-up style to attack fit the typical logic.

But in this round, the opponent was a Battle Mage, a class that was very good at direct confrontation, yet Mo Fan still used the same method he had last round. This led people to feel that his adjustment last round wasn't a decision made after seeing the class of his opponent, was it?

The two characters were playing hide and seek in the winery, and the crowd, with their omniscient view, were the most anxious. Especially one time when they were one wall apart, but one went left and the other went right, passing each other by so closely, provoking all sorts of sighs from the audience.

Finally, the two characters met in the lane formed by the gap between two courtyard walls.

Mo Fan was calm, but Jia Xing jumped. He thought that the opponent had been hiding

somewhere, only for him to just boldly appear before him like this.

What was going on, Jia Xing already had a general guess. Since we've met like this, let's just fight!

The lane wasn't very wide. The two characters met, were stunned for a second, and suddenly charged forward.

Whoosh!

The Ninja had some long-range skills. As Deception rushed forward, he had already thrown out a Shuriken.

Prideful Mage twisted his body to dodge. His movement didn't slow, and his spear was already lifted.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Happy's Tang Rou often used this as a powerful opening move, and Jia Xing felt that it was a suitable move for this current terrain, and so he directly used this powerful skill as he sprinted forward.

Surrounded by a rippling magic aura, Prideful Mage rushed forward with his spear. The sound of his footsteps against the limestone-paved path rang in the air.

In the narrow channel, the magic flow from the Dragon Breaks the Ranks filled the space, and it looked like there was no place for Deception to hide.

But…

Mo Fan turned his camera, and Deception instantly ran toward one of the walls at the side. Jump up, stab ninjato into the wall, use that to jump up again, and Deception was already flying in the air. The Dragon Breaks the Ranks passed below him, and the aura was enough to send his clothes flapping, but it didn't affect his body. Here, he was outside of the attack range of Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

As Deception twisted in the air, his two hands were flying to form seals.

Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance!

Mo Fan didn't hold back, directly using a powerful attack against the opponent. Dozens of Deception's shadow clones chased the silhouette of Prideful Mage behind the Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

But Prideful Mage suddenly jumped up, turning in midair.

Seeing Deception dodge the Dragon Breaks the Ranks so nimbly, Jia Xing immediately stopped the attack. He anticipated that the opponent would immediately try and attack him, so he borrowed his lingering momentum and jumped up, twisted. Magic fluctuated around his spear, and he swung it down.

Shattering Heaven and Earth!

Powerful attack, another powerful attack, Jia Xing also retaliated with a powerful attack.

The shadow clones of the Shadow Dance hadn't had the chance to all attack Prideful Mage when this powerful attack enveloped all of them.

Shadow clones, how much life could they have? They definitely couldn't resist this bold level 75 Battle Mage attack, which produced waves of magic enough to stir a mountain. In an instant, these clones were dissipated into light, leaving not a single one.

Not a single one?

This situation was very similar to when He Ming earlier used Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire to blast away all of the shadow clones. Not a single one remaining meant that Deception had already hidden somewhere that was out of sight.

Underground?

Prideful Mage's spear already thrusted downward, but no, he wasn't there…

Everyone saw, Deception was coming at him from behind, using skills like Shadow Clone Technique to instantly send himself to this position.

The ambush of a Ninja was of course silent and stealthy. As soon as Prideful Mage's spear hit nothing, Jia Xing knew that something was wrong, but it was already too late to react, Deception had gotten behind him.

Annihilation!

The Ninja's knock up skill sent Prideful Mage into the air.

And then, Ninjutsu: Flickering Charge!

The rapidly moving silhouette seemed to flash in the air, chasing Prideful Mage with attack after attack. As Flickering Charge was executed, Prideful Mage's body was still floating in the air. He hadn't had the time to fall back down, but he suddenly waved the hand that wasn't holding his spear.

A purple shadow flew forth.

This Battle Mage had the Witch's low-level skill Night Cloak.

Night Cloak's Grab effect was extremely good, but Mo Fan's reaction was fast. Deception swiftly jumped backward, and this Night Cloak hit air. But immediately afterward, a burst of something that looked like stardust scattered in front of them, and Deception was unable to dodge it cleanly.

Disperse Powder, another Witch skill.

Using these two instant Witch skills, Jia Xing won back the initiative. The speed-lowering effect of Disperse Powder had a significant impact on the Ninja, who relied on agility.

Jia Xing easily controlled to dodge Deception's follow-up attack, and then he began his counterattack.

Just in this narrow alleyway, the Battle Mage and the Ninja began a fierce confrontation.

The two competed in observation, reaction, hand speed.

Neither of them thought to use some opening to retreat and adjust before coming back. It was as though the entire map were limited to just this little area and leaving would be dying. The two traded blows, both refusing to back down.

But the Ninja class, in terms of style, wasn't entirely suited for this sort of hard, direct battle. Compared to the opponent, he was at a disadvantage.

But the battle was still that intense. The disadvantage was only evident in the speed at which the health of the two characters decreased. But no one dared to confidently say right now who would win and who would lose. In this sort of confrontation, one slip-up could be seized by the opponent to reach a new high. An advantage right now could be completely turned around by such a high.

This was Miracle's home game, and so there were more supporters of Miracle and Jia Xing.

Right now Prideful Mage had the slight upper hand, but no one dared to relax. They worried, their hearts raced, every clash made them jump.

"At a time like this, wouldn't it be better for him to adjust his rhythm a bit?" At Happy's player area, the players were discussing the situation at hand.

"From the way he's acting, it looks like he's prepared to fight like this until the end," Ye Xiu said.

"This Battle Mage seems quite tough, Mo Fan really should've used his normal playstyle to wear him down," Fang Rui said.

"Yeah…" Ye Xiu agreed, but the problem was, no one knew what Mo Fan was thinking. Worse, even after he came offstage they still might not get an answer. Lack of communication was always Mo Fan's biggest problem.

At last, this battle ended with Jia Xing's victory. Prideful Mage still had just under a third of his health left, not a bad situation.

Over at Happy, they were sighing. For this battle, Mo Fan's health had lagged behind at the start, but if he had used his normal style for this battle instead of the direct confrontation, he might have had a greater chance.

Watching Mo Fan walk back step by step, Happy's members maintained their silence, all the way until he returned to the player room.

"Not bad," Ye Xiu put simply.

Mo Fan looked at him, didn't say anything and headed back toward his own seat.

Ye Xiu gave Su Mucheng a meaningful look. At Happy, the only one who could have any

bit of communication with Mo Fan was Su Mucheng.

Su Mucheng smiled. She twisted her head to look back at where Mo Fan heading back to his seat and called, "It's a bit sad that you lost, how come you played in such a rush?"

Mo Fan stopped and looked back, but his gaze landed not upon Su Mucheng, but upon Fang Rui.

"In a hurry," Mo Fan said.

Everyone was stunned.

"You useless dim sum! Are you looking for death! Hurry up and kneel!" Ye Xiu hit Fang Rui on the head.

"My mistake, my mistake!" Fang Rui was weeping and crying. The others didn't know whether to be angry or amused. This communication issue was really a big problem!

Chapter 1209
Who's Under Pressure

In the group arena, two of Happy's people were down, and Miracle's second player still had a little under a third of his health left. This was a relatively common situation in a group arena. This around 30% health lead wasn't enough to let Miracle relax or have confidence in their victory. They all couldn't help but look at Happy's players, observing their movements.

Happy's third player, Tang Rou, had already stood up. She turned back to place on her seat the copy of Esports Time that the Miracle players had harassed them to take.

Starting from the first player Wei Chen, all the way to Mo Fan, Happy had already sent out five players. What effect did the Esports Time have on their spirits? To be honest, if they hadn't seen Tang Rou putting the magazine down just now, Miracle almost forgot about this whole thing. From those five players, they really hadn't seen any effect at all…

Was it that Fang Rui and Mo Fan's unusual performances today were provoked by the Esports Time? That possibility would really be a slap in their face.

But no matter what, the next player from Happy was the one at the center of the whole controversy, Tang Rou. There was no way she was entirely unaffected by this? The attacks from Ruan Cheng's article in Esports Time were extremely aggressive.

"There's no way a rookie can take that kind of pressure," He Ming said.

"But… she seems very calm," Shen Jian said.

"She wouldn't be so nervous that she can't even walk?" As He Ming spoke, he followed Tang Rou with his eyes as she entered the competitor booth.

The group arena continued, same map, the characters loaded and entered.

"Don't wander around inside, let's just meet outside. We're in a hurry." Tang Rou actually first sent a message in the chat.

"What's that all about? What 'in a hurry'? Tang Rou never has the habit of chatting during a match, does she?" He Ming said with some confusion, only to hear a rattling crash from Happy's player area. Everyone immediately looked over, and saw Fang Rui fallen upon the ground, covered in dust with a depressed expression.

"This this… this is just too mean, this…" Fang Rui was saying. Miracle couldn't hear clearly, but Happy's players were all laughing. Tang Rou's "in a hurry" was of course a very pointed comment. No one thought that she would actually tease Fang Rui in such a way! Fang Rui felt overwhelming pressure, these guys were all "in a hurry" to deliberately push the responsibility of loss onto him!

While Happy was all joyful, Miracle became even more stunned.

What was going on?

A 30% health lead wasn't considered much, but it couldn't be completely ignored? Happy was clearly in a bad situation right now, but they really seemed to be quite happy, this… did they have some ace up their sleeve? In a hurry? In a hurry for what?

Miracle's members exchanged looks, no one understood what this was about. Meanwhile, the two Battle Mages onstage had almost arrived at the center of the map.

Tang Rou sent an invitation for a direct fight, but her opponent Jia Xing ignored her. In a situation where a player had the health advantage, they generally wouldn't go to fight the opponent directly, they would prefer to play some tricks, and Jia Xing followed this normal thought process as well.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist, like Deception last round, first took a circle around the winery. Upon failing to discover Prideful Mage, she had no choice but to enter the winery.

A large courtyard with three entrances and exits. Jia Xing was relatively active, not waiting in one place. The two wandered around, and before long they met. Tang Rou's Soft Mist rushed forward without any hesitation, but Jia Xing's Prideful Mage decisively retreated, swiftly finding a shadowy position he had passed earlier from which he could launch an ambush.

One step, two steps, three steps…

Jia Xing silently counted the rhythm of Soft Mist's approach, his eyes focused on the spot where Soft Mist would appear.

Boom!

A thunderous sound. The walls of the winery courtyard weren't particularly sturdy. If even a Qi Master's qi could break it, how could it pose any difficulty for the powerful magic aura of a Battle Mage?

Soft Mist directly blasted a large hole in the wall, and from her pose, it was clear that she wanted to cut off the path and intercept Prideful Mage. A lucky hit, for as soon as she came through, she saw Prideful Mage holding his spear, staring intently at the other opening and sneakily hiding.

Happy had so many experts at playing dirty, skilled at waiting, ambushing, and laying traps. Tang Rou, growing up in this sort of team environment, of course, understood these tactics. Seeing Prideful Mage's position, she immediately guessed his intentions.

But would Tang Rou care that much? We meet, so let's fight!

Soft Mist, Dragon Breaks the Ranks, charged toward Prideful Mage.

At this point, Jia Xing had seen Soft Mist breaking through the wall, turning, and rushing toward him without hesitation. He immediately controlled Prideful Mage to dodge. If this little shadowy corner were hit by that Dragon Breaks the Ranks, it would likely collapse.

Tang Rou's rhythm was of course very fast, Soft Mist's spear twisted and chased Prideful Mage, continuing to batter him. Jia Xing wanted to avoid the spear, but he couldn't find the space and could only harden his skin and meet her attacks.

The two Battle Mages were immediately tangled together. Confrontations between players of the same class were both monotonous and fierce, but this time, Jia Xing didn't have the chance to feel any boredom, he only felt the ferocity. Because this was too familiar, he needed to make more calculations. He didn't even have to time to think about too many problems, as Soft Mist attacked too rapidly, too ferociously, he had no chance to plan anything. He could only input controls nonstop, almost unconsciously, all the way until his Prideful Mage fell.

He lost?

Jia Xing finally regained his wits. The battle just now seemed like an empty fog, as though his brain completely stopped turning, and only his hands kept working.

And now, he had already fallen. The word "GLORY" would not be sent to his screen.

Jia Xing walked out of the player both. How long had this battle taken? He felt lost. He only had one feeling: fast, very fast, extremely fast.

How did it turn out like this? Shouldn't she be…

Only now did Jia Xing think about how stress-ridden Tang Rou should be. Her performance should have been subpar. But he hadn't felt that at all; Tang Rou's attack rhythm was still as determined as ever.

Jia Xing didn't feel it, and the Miracle members offstage didn't see it either.

The unfortunate trio exchanged looks. If even Tang Rou hadn't been affected by this whole affair, then there was no point in mentioning any of the other players in Happy. The situation they had been relying on to win this match didn't exist at all?

"No matter what, let's get these two points first!" He Ming said.

Shen Jian nodded. He was Miracle's third player for the group arena, the anchor of the team.

"Be careful." He Ming added, unable to relax.

"Yeah…" Shen Jian nodded. He couldn't relax either, and so he didn't have the confidence to say any bold words to settle their hearts. Seeing Jia Xing's dazed expression as he came offstage, Shen Jian's heart started beating more rapidly.

"How was it?" Shen Jian told himself that the opponent was a rookie, that there was nothing to panic about, and at the same time, he tried to get some report from Jia Xing.

Jia Xing, who had been beaten so pathetically that his mind was empty, of course had nothing to talk about. His face showed only an expression of loss, and Shen Jian could only carry his various emotions of suspicion and alarm as he went onstage.

The battle began.

The blank-minded Jia Xing had still made some contribution, knocking away 10% of Soft Mist's health. With that sort of direct fighting earlier, it was inevitable that both sides take some damage.

And so Miracle's advantage in the group arena, starting from the 50% that He Ming had, was now whittled down to only 10%.

10%…

Staring at this advantage, Shen Jian didn't have much confident. His Striker walked forward, but his heart was jumping. He wasn't a rookie. He had experience in professional battles, but to put all of the pressure of the group arena on him, Shen Jian discovered that he wasn't as strong as he thought he was.

The opponent is a rookie. The opponent has already lost 10% health. The opponent is suffering the heavy pressure of public opinion. None of these reasons were enough to boost Shen Jian's confidence.

A core player was a position, but it was also a responsibility. Every pro player anticipated having this kind of position, but not everyone could take on this kind of responsibility. Sometimes, it was because they didn't have enough ability, such as in old Excellent Era, Shen Jian never had enough ability to become the core player. And now, in Miracle, as an experienced player born in Excellent Era, Shen Jian became a core player for this team alongside He Ming and Wang Ze. but now, with the weight of the group arena upon his shoulders, Shen Jian found that he couldn't calm down. His main thoughts were not about how to achieve victory, but… what if he lost?

His mental state was a mess, but it wasn't so bad that it affected his basic movement ability. Shen Jian's Striker Lethe quickly arrived at the winery at the center of the map. He didn't directly find Tang Rou to battle. After tumbling into the winery courtyard, he found a place to crouch and wait.

"What is he doing?" Offstage, He Ming was scowling.

Playing dirty? That wasn't Shen Jian's strong point! Before the match, he had never expressed wanting to use such a playstyle.

He Ming was stunned, Wang Ze didn't understand either. These two teammates had no way of knowing the jittery feelings Shen Jian was experiencing onstage, they could only exchange glances.

In the match, Shen Jian sent a message in the chat. "Where are you? Come out and let's decide this!"

Confuse the enemy, hide your true intentions, this was what Shen Jian was thinking. But for those in this field, this sort of dirty playing was really a bit out of place?

"124, 131" Clean and direct, Tang Rou sent out the coordinates of Soft Mist's position, not dirty at all.

Then, what would Shen Jian do?

The viewers looked over, only to see Shen Jian's Striker Lethe sneak out of his corner, looking like he was really about to run over to the position Tang Rou indicated.

If that was the case… then what was the point in crouching at the beginning?

Those who had some understanding were all confused by Shen Jian's actions.

"What's this guy playing at?" Fang Rui asked, mouth agape. After all, this was one of Ye Xiu's former teammates!

"He's probably… playing dirty?" Ye Xiu said.

"Are you trying to insult me?" Fang Rui was unhappy. Dirty playing wasn't this low-level! He refused to recognize this as dirty play.

Chapter 1210
Title is Spoiler

124, 131.

Shen Jian's Striker Lethe headed towards the coordinates mentioned by Tang Rou, but he wasn't moving fast or slow. His wading in the mud and water showed the uncertainty in his heart. When he was almost at the destination, he didn't directly show his face. He searched his surroundings as if he were looking for a good spot to set up an ambush.

His opponent had justly and honorably declared her position, but he was stealthily creeping forward preparing for an ambush. Most people usually despised this sort of dirtiness. Luckily, this was Team Miracle's home ground, so the boos from the crowd were more subdued.

Shen Jian looked around for awhile before finally finding a position that he liked and then sprinted towards it.

No one?

His gaze moved towards the coordinates 124, 131, but there were no signs of Soft Mist.

"You liar!" Shen Jian was furious. He felt like he had fallen for a trick. This had to be a trap, yes, a trap. As he lashed out in chat, he immediately had Lethe quickly leave.

"What, you've arrived?" Tang Rou replied back in chat.

Shen Jian ignored her. Don't even think about using words to distract me, Shen Jian thought, forgetting that he was the one who had started this conversation.

"You're too slow. If I didn't walk around for a bit, the referee would punish me," Tang Rou said.

Shen Jian didn't believe her, but the crowd knew she was telling the truth. After Tang Rou announced her location, Soft Mist stood there waiting the entire time. However,

Shen Jian's Lethe kept dilly-dallying. When he had almost reached her location, he started looking for an ambush spot. Tang Rou had waited for quite a while before she had Soft Mist start moving around.

"I'm on my way back. Just wait there." Tang Rou said.

Shen Jian was suddenly in a panic. Lethe spun around, his gaze sweeping over his surroundings, searching for Tang Rou's location. The crowd stared blankly at him. Wasn't this supposed to be a fight between two players? From the looks of it, why did it feel like he was playing hide and seek!

Shen Jian didn't just stand there like an honest person. After spinning around twice, he felt like there were too many places for his opponent to come out from. There weren't any ambush spots nearby, which meant that she had run away…

The home crowd was Team Miracle's, so they endured it once more.

Quite a few people were looking forward to how the show would continue forward though because the escape route chosen by Shen Jian just happened to be Soft Mist's return route. The crowd had a bird's eye view of the situation, so they could see it very clearly.

The two sides finally met face to face. This surprise encounter once again made Shen Jian panic, but Tang Rou didn't even greet him before attacking.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

A dragon instantly appeared in front of him.

Shen Jian's Lethe moved backwards to dodge and evaded it. His character glanced around. It seemed like he was searching for an escape route.

The match has already reached this point, and you're still thinking about running away?

How is he planning on playing this match?

This time, the crowd had no answer and boos gradually started coming out. It wasn't that the those who played dirty couldn't accept running away, but those who played dirty weren't this gutless in a direct confrontation either. Running away needed to

have a clear tactical intent, but Shen Jian? The crowd couldn't see even a glimpse of a plan. From the start, he had appeared overcautious the entire time. He was now faced with his opponent's spear, yet he was still like this.

Can you win with this sort of attitude?

Bang!

A Falling Flower Palm pushed forward. Shen Jian wasn't able to react in time, and Lethe shot backwards. However, Lethe was surrounded by walls on three sides. Lethe slammed into a wall and then rebounded back. Soft Mist's Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart welcomed him and pinned him back to the wall.

"What is he doing?"

The crowd wasn't just booing. Angry curses were starting to be thrown out.

Even He Ming and Wang Ze, Shen Jian's former teammates, his two pals after coming to Team Miracle, were also having trouble watching.

"What's wrong with him?" He Ming asked Wang Ze. Who could Wang Ze ask? It looked like Shen Jian was the player being pointed at by everyone, fearful and nervous from the pressure. As for Tang Rou's Soft Mist? Her temperament, playstyle, and drive were no different than before. Shen Jian's gaze shifted towards Happy's player area. An Esports Time was quietly sitting where Tang Rou had been sitting at before.

What's going on? Did I give her the wrong one?

He Ming didn't dare to believe it. The other players on Happy might not be affected, but he had trouble believing that a rookie like Tang Rou would feel nothing from the pressure of the public.

"Little Tang is playing quite relaxed," Ye Xiu commented on Happy's side.

Would Tang Rou be affected by this pressure? It wasn't just Team Miracle who cared, Happy cared even more. And from this match, it couldn't be said that Tang Rou was completely unaffected because there truly had been some changes.

For example, in the dialogue in this match, the previous Tang Rou wouldn't have bothered with topics unrelated to the match. But now, she could mischievously tease

Fang Rui and chat a few words with Shen Jian. This was a change in attitude. She wasn't impatient to prove the public opinion wrong, but rather player in a more relaxed way. With her personality, she might not be able excite her full potential, but controlling and adjusting her emotions purposefully was a more mature transformation.

Shen Jian's cowardice put him in a stifled position. His ten percent health instantly disappeared and then he started falling behind, losing to panic. Under this vicious cycle, he suffered a crushing defeat to Tang Rou.

"What were you doing?" He Ming ruthlessly berated Shen Jian. It wasn't like they couldn't afford losing, but in the end, Shen Jian had only been able to take away 20 percent of Tang Rou's health. This sort of trash performance was practically the same as giving away the point. He Ming couldn't understand what had happened to Shen Jian. Why did his playing suddenly take a dive? Their Team Miracle had prepared amply for this match, and seeing that their opponents were at the sharp end of the public's stick, their mentality going into the match had been quite solid. The rookies that joined the Alliance along with Team Miracle might have lost, but they performed very well. On the other hand, it was Shen Jian, their anchor for the group arena, that had lost in such an embarrassing manner.

Shen Jian didn't know how to explain himself. He had been given such a heavy responsibility, but it turned out that he had no confidence with this heavy responsibility. It was truly very shameful. In Team Miracle, he had acted quite arrogant as a capable senior. He didn't want his lofty image to crumble this easily.

"We can't lose this team competition! We can't be shaven clean by them, can we?" He Ming saw that Shen Jian hadn't responded. He didn't say anything more and started encouraging the team for the following team competition.

However… they had been quite confident about this match, but in the group arena and individual competition, Happy annihilated their forces. The psychological advantage held previously by Team Miracle had disappeared long ago. In particular, each of them hiding a copy of the Esports Time and then giving the copy to their opponents wasn't exactly a good-looking move, yet their method was completely ineffective and might end up being laughed at later. In this round, everyone in Team Miracle felt like they were clowns.

"Happy's team strength is much worse than their individual strength. Their teamwork isn't good. This is our chance." He Ming said.

However, everyone already knew this. He Ming repeating it didn't do anything.

He Ming didn't know what to do with their downed spirits. In reality, his confidence had been killed too. It was just that he was the team captain, so he kept reminding himself not to show weakness.

"What's there to be afraid of! At worst, we lose! We're just a new team with new players. Go in with a learning attitude!" At this moment, the punk Guo Shao jumped out and yelled. He was still bursting with life, filled with hope towards this following team competition. He actually dared to say something like "At worse, we lose!" Perhaps no team captain would ever say these words, but that was the truth, and it actually eased the players up quite a bit. Even Shen Jian seemed to have relaxed. He didn't belong to the "new players" category!

"We can do this!" Guo Shao might as well just jump into the crowd and start cheering for his teammates. He attracted quite the attention from the crowd.

The team competition began shortly afterwards. Guo Shao's words had been quite effective. With the attitude of "At worst, we lose," Team Miracle's players let loose. But the problem was that once they let loose, they couldn't keep it together. In the end, they were a new team too. They had problems with teamwork because of their lack of experience. He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze were experienced players, but they weren't experienced as core players. Their ability to keep things together clearly couldn't compare to Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Fang Rui, who had all once been top core players in their teams.

Their home map advantage wasn't able to help them. In the end, Team Happy won the team competition, sweeping Team Miracle 10 to 0.

The other matches taking place that same day ended in succession. In the ninth round, an extremely unusual scene appeared. There were unexpectedly 5 perfect wins this round, and all of them were away game victories.

Team Happy versus Team Miracle: 10 to 0.

Team Blue Rain versus Team Conquering Clouds: 10 to 0.

Team Tyranny versus Team Lightly: 10 to 0.

Team Samsara versus Team Bright Green: 10 to 0.

Team Tiny Herb versus Team Seaside: 10 to 0.

Apart from Team Happy and Team Miracle, the other four matches were all strong versus weak team matchups. However, the weak teams had the home game advantage. Not being able to win even a single point was very surprising. The public opinion believed that as the league developed, the disparity between the top teams and weak teams was growing larger and larger. The powerhouses prospered in the current scene, receiving more resources than weak teams and then using these greater resources to further strengthen their team. Under this cycle, the strong teams became stronger, while the weak teams became weaker. The new teams without any strong financial backers seemed to have difficulty breaking through these strong teams. Team Heavenly Swords had initially been looked at highly because of their strong backing, but who would have thought that their boss would be personally taking up the banner. Their expectations for Team Heavenly Swords would have to wait until after this boss lost his interest in playing.

Chapter 1211
Strong Performances

Apart from the five perfect 10-0 wins, the other matches in Round 9 were very orderly, three 2-8 losses and two 7-3 wins.

The three 2-8 losses were the home teams Heavenly Swords, Parade, and Radiant losing to the visiting teams Misty Rain, Void, and Hundred Blossoms respectively. As for the two 7-3 wins, 301 and Royal Style took down Wind Howl and Thunderclap relying on their home field advantage.

In the end, the weaker teams weren't able to pull off any upsets in Round 9. However, 301 and Royal Style, the two mid-tier teams that were on the edge of making it into the playoffs last season, utilized their home field advantage to beat Wind Howl and Thunderclap, rather surprising victories.

After Round 8, Thunderclap had been in second place, but their lead over the lower ranked teams hadn't been that high. With this loss, they immediately slid down to fourth place, while Blue Rain and Tiny Herb with 69 points and 66 points took second and third. Samsara's consistency and dominance once again placed them in their own separate tier. Their point total was 77, 8 points ahead of the second place team. After Thunderclap was Misty Rain in fifth with 59 points, Tyranny in sixth with 57 points, Wind Howl in seventh with 57 points, and then Hundred Blossoms in eighth. After Happy took a huge win over Hundred Blossoms, beating them 9 to 1, Hundred Blossoms adjusted rapidly. After two rounds, they were back on their feet, quickly making their way back to the playoff zone.

After Hundred Blossoms was Void, 301, and Royal Style placed outside of the playoff zone. With Happy winning this round 10 to 0, they moved up one spot from fourteenth to thirteenth, but the distance between Happy and the eighth place Hundred Blossoms was 14 points. The teams in the relegations zone were Seaside and Bright Green. After Round 7, these two teams were locked into last and second to last. The gap between these two teams and the teams ahead of them were pulling farther and farther apart. It looked like there wouldn't be any suspense as for who would be relegated this season.

The post-match reports for Round 9 didn't focus on a single team or person but rather how weirdly orderly the point distribution was. The media really wanted to about the dominance of powerhouses because of the several 10 to 0s, but the problem was that of these five 10 to 0s, one of them just had to be Happy, a truly irksome presence. Happy was without a doubt unrelated to this topic, but they just had to show up at this moment. The issue of dealing with Happy gave the media huge headaches. In the end, it was still Esports Home with the talent. Samsara, Tiny Herb, Blue Rain, and Tyranny were used to describe the untouchable dominance of the powerhouses. On the other hand, Happy was singled out as the representative team of wildly inconsistent and incomprehensible team.

They could crush Hundred Blossoms 9 to 1, but also lose 3 to 7 to Radiant and Parade. Yet after those losses, they could achieve perfect 10 to 0 wins over Heavenly Swords and Miracle. Figure out a team's strength from their win records? In Happy's case, it seemed extremely unreliable.

In these nine rounds, Samsara had obtained the most 10 to 0s with three perfect wins. Next, with two perfect wins, was Tiny Herb and then Happy. But Happy was also among the teams who were annihilated 0 to 10. It was as though Happy just had to stick their nose in everything.

The Esports Home concluded with a serious reminder to all teams in the Alliance: Be wary of Happy.

This sort of spotlight onto them was quickly met with backlash by people such as the Esports Time's Ruan Cheng. The Esports Time was biweekly, so he had no way of immediately writing an article through the Esports Time and could only use his personal blog to express his opinions.

Tang Rou breaking her promise wasn't going to be forgiven so easily by him, but repeating the same thing again and again would tire out the readers. In fact, it might help her through reverse psychology. Ruan Cheng was a master though and had a subtle grasp of the pace. He wouldn't constantly stick in reminders, but he would never forget to raise the topic seemingly by accident at the appropriate time to avoid readers from forgetting about it. Because of Tang Rou, Ruan Cheng had turned into a through and through Happy hater. However, he was still a public figure and had to care about his reputation, so even if he had to paint Happy black, he had to back it up with logic, feigning reason and hiding his individual bias.

As a result, under Ruan Cheng's artful writing, Happy became a shit stick that harmed others without benefiting themselves, supported clearly and logically.

Why did his writing seem so reasonable? Because what Ruan Cheng wrote was really just a reiteration of the Esports Home's negative opinions of Happy in an uglier way. However, due to the influence of his writing style and the push from other journalists who were also unhappy with Tang Rou, Happy was generally viewed in a more negative light.

Two 10 to 0s?

One Heavenly Swords and one Miracle. Both these teams had certain ties with Happy. Snatching all ten points from them could also be considered quite vicious and merciless of Happy.

Some of the sillier comments even took those words "vicious and merciless" to describe Happy, seeming to have forgotten that any team wanted to win as many points as possible in a competition.

But dsepite these negative comments, Happy's pace became steadier and steadier.

In their tenth round home game versus Royal Style, a 9 to 1 victory.

In their eleventh round away game versus Seaside, Boundless Sea returned to the first time to his old home. The Seaside fans familiar with Boundless Sea saw their team's former symbol walk onto a path never to return under Happy's Fang Rui. Amidst the unrelenting boos from the crowd, Happy wasn't polite and sent away Seaside 10 to 0.

Two huge victories in two rounds. Happy had won 19 points, rising up two places on the rankings currently at eleventh place. Their distance to the playoff zone had shrunk to 10 points. Right now, Team Void was eighth. At the end of Round 9, the fifth place Team Misty Rain performed poorly in Round 10 and Round 11, falling out of the playoff zone at tenth place with 65 points. Even Team 301 was ahead of them.

Hundred Blossoms continued to perform consistently, winning 7 to 3 against the away team Blue Rain. Yu Feng's departure from Blue Rain had been quite controversial. Many fans thought he was being greedy. He had been one of the three core players of Team Blue Rain. Wanting an even higher position than that was endless greed.

This time, Yu Feng directly confronted Team Blue Rain, proving that he had the

qualifications for an even higher position. Although his Berserker lost to Huang Shaotian's Blade Master in the final round of the group arena, Hundred Blossoms had opened poorly. By the time Yu Feng had to face Huang Shaotian, he was only at 30% health. But in the following team competition, Yu Feng became the most eye-catching player. His display of power pierced through the tactical net sown by Team Blue Rain. In the end, Hundred Blossoms won the team competition. Having won 7 points, they now had 71 points, rushing ahead to sixth place on the rankings, leading Tyranny by 1 point.

Blue Rain wasn't the only powerhouse that lost in the eleventh round. Tyranny lost their away game to Thunderclap 3 to 7, putting them at seventh place with 70 points. Thunderclap was third continuing on their radiant path this season. Apart from them, Tiny Herb lost to Void 2 to 8. Through this victory, Void broke into the playoff zone, while Tiny Herb was surpassed by Thunderclap, placing Tiny Herb at fourth.

In fifth place, Team Wind Howl won their away game 8 to 2 against Team Misty Rain, sending Team Misty Rain out of the playoff zone.

As for those outside of the playoff zone, Bright Green and Seaside were stuck in the relegation zone. Lightly, Miracle, Conquering Clouds, and the other low-tier teams had clearly become targets to snatch points from.

The weak teams were of no use to be looked at. Thus, the ups and downs of the rankings depended on the confrontations between the strong teams. Samsara led in first place with 94 points, 13 more points than Blue Rain. Their position this season was practically untouchable. Thunderclap had originally been this season's biggest surprise. After ten rounds, Thunderclap was still stuck in the second echelon teams outside of Samsara, running neck and neck with Tiny Herb and Blue Rain.

Team Wind Howl's momentum this season had been astonishing, but from their performance these eleven rounds, they were like loud thunder but small raindrops Even though they weren't like Happy who would sweep a team and then get swept, their inconsistency was a reality. After Hundred Blossoms' first four rounds, they became more and more stable, beating Blue Rain this round. Yu Feng had proven himself. Hundred Blossoms also showed that they had the ability to beat a top team.

Afterwards was Tyranny. No one had any hope for them dominating like last season. Tyranny was determined to keep rotating in their subs to the extent that it was rare for all four heavenly kings to be on stage at the same time. Their win record was also

fleeting. When they were facing weak teams, they weren't weak, but facing strong teams, they weren't too strong either. Many were disappointed in them, feeling helpless about the issues of age.

Void relied on their good performances these two rounds to return back to the playoff zone. Their victory over Tiny Herb had boosted their morale considerably. The air around them was very different from before in their post-match conference.

The teams ten points away from qualifying for playoffs were 301, Misty Rain, and Happy. Team 301 was always like this, pacing back and forth in and out of the playoff zone. When the end of the season came, if their luck was good, they would make it to playoffs. If their luck was bad, they wouldn't. As for Misty Rain and Happy, they would be fighting each other in Round 12. This match would determine who would be closer to the playoffs.

From the current trend, Misty Rain had performed poorly two rounds in a row, losing to 301 and Wind Howl. As for Happy? After losing to Tiny Herb in Round 8 and Tang Rou refuse to keep her promise, Happy started taking points like crazy. Over the ninth, tenth, and eleventh round, Happy had unexpectedly took 29 points in total, even beating Samsara in terms of points, who had obtained 27 points in these three rounds.

Happy had matched with Miracle and Seaside, who weren't strong teams, but Royal Style was a mid-tier team with an All-Star watching over. Royal Style even upset the roaring Thunderclap 7 to 3. But facing Happy, Royal Style was swept 9 to 1.

Happy is coming!

The Esports Home highlighted Happy's recent momentum. As for people like Ruan Cheng, who hated Happy, there was not much they could say. Happy's win after win was slap after slap to their faces. They were waiting, waiting for Happy to capsize. That way they would wantonly throw stones at them while they were down.

This upcoming match was looking to be a good opportunity. In Round 12, Happy would be facing Misty Rain, a team with the strength to make it to playoffs. If Happy couldn't pass this obstacle, let alone losing points to their direct competitor, Ruan Cheng's group could directly say that Happy were just paper tigers that could only topple pushovers.

Chapter 1212
The Number One Ninja

November 22nd, Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 Round 12. Happy played their home game against Misty Rain, and once again the television chose to live broadcast Happy's match.

In this round, there were many matches between powerful teams, such as Wind Howl versus Void, Tiny Herb versus Hundred Blossoms, Blue Rain versus Thunderclap and so on. But in the end, they chose to broadcast this match between two teams that currently weren't in the playoff zone. They took into consideration the current situations of these two teams.

After eleven rounds, Happy's claim of aiming for the championship was still treated as a joke, but with their current ranking, people had to notice the potential this team had to make it to the playoffs. With a performance stronger than Samsara's in three consecutive rounds, they finally met a strong team, and everyone was curious as to whether or not Happy could continue their strong performance. Misty Rain had performed poorly in the past two rounds, instantly sliding from fifth place out of the playoff zone, and they urgently needed to regroup. So, the collision of these two teams was a bit more exciting, and was therefore chosen to be broadcast.

The attendance rate at Happy's home games continued to rise. Because of Excellent Era's many years of operation in City H, there was already a strong Glory fanbase. The old Excellent Era shut down and New Excellent Era was in the Challenger League. Many fans continued to follow Excellent Era matches, but many who liked watching professional matches slowly began to watch Happy's home matches. Happy's strong performance in the past three rounds incited even more attention and excitement, and now that they were facing the relatively strong Misty Rain, there was quite a crowd that came to watch the match in-person.

The players were introduced as they came onstage. Misty Rain, on Happy's home turf, actually received a decent amount of applause.

After Misty Rain let go of their Sharpshooter Lu Yining, the twin flowers Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin became part of Misty Rain's main force. Half of Misty Rain's positions were

now occupied by females, and they finally became a veritable woman's army. This unique scenery naturally inspired unique attention.

"Haha, the Shu twins are very popular right now! They can receive such a welcome even at an away game." Television commentator Pan Lin noted the current atmosphere of the stadium.

"Their skill is very high," Guest Li Yibo said.

After the away team, the home team players came onstage. In terms of female players, Happy only had one fewer! Su Mucheng and Tang Rou were both part of Happy's main force. Su Mucheng's popularity in City H really didn't need to be mentioned. Her appearance always caused the audience to reach a peak in energy. But Tang Rou… after the 1v3, her supporters drastically diminished. Never mind neutral audience members, even many of Happy's supporters didn't like to see her anymore. The applause after her introduction was always scattered and lacking, and the atmosphere was so cold that it was awkward.

"Ah, the welcome received by the home players is even less than what the away players received, this is really…" Pan Lin lamented.

"Tang Rou is very talented, but the way she dealt with this incident was really…" Li Yibo also gave a half-sentence lament.

After the introductions of the two teams, what came next were of course the polite greetings and interactions between the teams onstage.

"Welcome back." Even though she was Misty Rain's captain, Chu Yunxiu didn't follow the custom to shake hands with Happy's captain, Ye Xiu. Instead, she went to her close friend Su Mucheng and gave her a hug.

Ye Xiu was left hanging with his hand still extended, smiling awkwardly, but from the side someone suddenly appeared to shake his hand. "God Ye, it's been a while."

"It's been a while," Ye Xiu answered, smiling. This small and scrawny man before his eyes was Misty Rain's Li Hua, the current number one Ninja in Glory. He entered Misty Rain in Season 7, appearing on the main roster that year, and that season he and Sun Xiang were the most attention-grabbing rookies. But the styles of these two were exactly opposite, one was bright and eye-catching, charging at the frontlines of battle; the other preferred to lurk in unnoticed shadows, launching sudden attacks when the

opponent was defenseless.

That season, Sun Xiang had snatched the title of Best Rookie, and the next year he joined the powerhouse Excellent Era, taking up One Autumn Leaf, a top account in Glory. And then his team was relegated, and failed to fight through the Challenger League, and only now in Samsara this season did he have a strong chance of winning. Sun Xiang's pro career could be said to be extremely unfortunate and frustrating.

And Li Hua, who debuted the same year, had spent all his time working hard in Misty Rain. After his abilities were recognized, the team began working hard to build a character for him. The Ninja Dark Forest was voted into the All-Stars along with Li Hua in Season 8, and again in Season 9. And in this season, Misty Rain's strategic style changed, and experts could all tell that it now revolved around Li Hua. This skinny little man played an extremely major role in Misty Rain. But after shaking hands with Ye Xiu, he backed away and quietly stood to the side. If no one introduced him, it would be hard to imagine that this person was also an all-powerful top player in Glory.

Chu Yunxiu finally broke apart from her hug with Su Mucheng. She turned to look at Ye Xiu and casually slapped the right palm he was extending. "What, you want a hug too?"

"I don't dare," Ye Xiu grinned.

"If you want a hug, then hug!" And Chu Yunxiu really came over to give Ye Xiu a hug, just like that.

"Welcome back!" she said, patting Ye Xiu's back.

"Haha, in a while you won't be so welcoming," Ye Xiu laughed.

"Give it a try," Chu Yunxiu laughed coldly and pushed him away.

To the side, Fang Rui also opened his two arms. "Come! The embrace of love," he called.

"Get out. The player is as dirty as his playing." Chu Yunxiu ignored Fang Rui.

The players continued to move, shaking hands with each other down the line. When the Shu twins came to shake Ye Xiu's hand, their feelings were a bit complex. Last year during the Christmas event, they really wanted to tear out the heart of this person in front of them. For this round against Happy, the two were already secretly planning to

give this God a proper retaliation.

"How about it, do you regret joining Misty Rain? You should've come to our Happy!" Ye Xiu said as he shook their hands.

"We're ahead of you in ranking," Shu Keyi said.

"Not for long," Ye Xiu smirked.

"Just wait and see!" The sisters glared at Ye Xiu, not at all afraid.

The greetings were quickly completed. The first players in the individual round stayed onstage while everyone else returned to their player areas.

Happy, Ye Xiu, Lord Grim.

Misty Rain, Li Hua, Dark Forest.

"What a coincidence, Senior." The easily-overlooked Li Hua was set up with Ye Xiu again.

"It is!"

"I hope to learn from you in this match," Li Hua said politely.

"Likewise."

After this exchange of meaningless words, Li Hua paused. He clearly still wanted to say something, but he couldn't find the right words. After silently thinking for a while, the judge already declaring that they could enter their player booths, Li Hua finally said a third pointless sentence. "Good luck, Senior."

"Good luck."

The two headed toward their respective competitor booths.

"Ye Xiu, Happy once again sends out Ye Xiu for the individual competition… So far he has almost always appeared in the individual competition. He already has ten consecutive wins, this is the twelfth round," Pan Lin said.

"In other words, this season, he hasn't lost a single 1v1," Li Yibo said. Right now was Round 12, and Ye Xiu was heading toward his eleventh straight win in his eleventh individual appearance, the answer was clear.

"With such a powerful 1v1 ability, why doesn't he anchor the group arena?" Pan Lin didn't understand, since that was how most teams set it up.

"Probably to lessen his burden, Ye Xiu isn't young anymore. Tyranny's already rotating their players," Li Yibo said. In a question of age, Tyranny always had to be mentioned.

"Then if Ye Xiu continues with this pattern and rhythm, this season's King of Dueling award will be uncontested," Pan Lin said.

"Uh… For now, his unspecialized class gives him too great of an advantage. We'll see everyone's professional ability!" Li Yibo said.

"Even if everyone is able to adjust, that doesn't necessarily mean they can beat Ye Xiu if they meet! With his current win streak, even if he loses the next few rounds, there's a good chance that no one can surpass his 1v1 record," Pan Lin said.

"We need someone to hurry and break his consecutive win record first!" Li Yibo laughed.

"Alright, let's watch Li Hua."

The two characters loaded onto the map. This was Happy's home game, so of course Ye Xiu was the one choosing the map. He had already chosen all of the maps with nothing on them, so this time he had to pick one with some terrain features.

This time, Ye Xiu chose the Hillside map. It was still flat with no barriers or obstacles, but the flat surface was slightly tilted, which of course would cause some changes.

The two characters spawned at the two ends of the map, at the same height. Since this was a map with no barriers, the two of course wouldn't try any strategic maneuvers. They both charged straight ahead, at the same time staring at the opponent's position. There was much strategy involved in choosing a position to stand on the Hillside map. Because there was a slope, this would affect many skills and movements like jumping and rolling. To seize the high or the low ground, this was a question that had to be considered.

The two players were both paying attention to this, so they both stayed at the same elevation, neither one gaining an advantage. Ye Xiu didn't launch an attack as soon as he was in range. Lord Grim continued to rush forward all the way until he was in the Ninja's attack range, but even then, Li Hua didn't control Dark Forest to attack, either.

Shining Cut!

Lord Grim suddenly swept forward with his blade, instantly springing forward and greatly reducing the distance between the two.

Li Hua was no longer quiet. Dark Forest waved his hand and a Shuriken was sent flying toward Lord Grim. Next, his two hands were already rapidly forming seals, preparing the next step of attack.

Ninjutsu - Shadow Dance!

This powerful Level 70 attack saw increasing direct use among Ninjas. It could be used as a main attack, or to hide movements and confuse the opponent. In any case, with a Shadow Dance, a Ninja suddenly had many options available. It didn't necessarily have to be used as a pure attack skill.

Immediately, over a dozen Dark Forests charged at Lord Grim together. As the number one Ninja in Glory, his mastery over this powerful Ninja skill didn't need to be mentioned. The live broadcast cut to Li Hua's camera view, which was constantly switching. It was clear the Li Hua was jumping nonstop between clones to achieve the best possible control over them. The fourteen shadow clones formed an impressive array to surround Lord Grim.

Chapter 1213
A Continuously Updating Record

Pu!

A cloud of purple smoke exploded, and Lord Grim disappeared into it. Facing Dark Forest's Shadow Dance, Ye Xiu had Lord Grim surprisingly throw down the Ninja skill, Smoke Bomb, to counter it.

However, the purple smoke was only a cover; it didn't allow him to turn invisible. Dark Forest's shadow clones charged into the smoke. Li Hua switched his viewpoint around even faster. The purple smoke only lowered his visibility, it didn't make him blind. With so many shadow clones and so many eyes, Li Hua kept on switching between clones until he found Lord Grim soon afterwards.

Li Hua was calm. All of his shadow clones gathered into one spot and marched forward together.

Numerous ninja blades stabbed towards Lord Grim.

Hit!

Surrounded on all sides, Lord Grim had no way of dodging, and the numerous blades pierced into Lord Grim. However, Lord Grim poofed into smoke and became one with the surrounding purple fog.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Li Hua reacted. If not for the Smoke Bomb affecting his vision, with his skill as the Number One Ninja, he could easily distinguish between a fake and a real body. However, he had fallen for it. All of his clones had gathered into one spot, but their attacks only hit a clone.

Where's his real body?

A purple shadow flashed out from the purple smoke. Because of the closeness in color,

the shadow could only be seen by relying on the disturbances in the flow of the smoke.

Witch Skill: Night Cloak.

The group of Dark Forest clones were bound together by the Night Cloak.

Earthquake Sword!

The earth tumbled in the smoke, and a Spellblade Earthquake Sword swept over the bundled together Dark Forest shadow clones, rocking them wildly. A grenade rolled over.

Boom!

The grenade exploded and the shadow clones poofed one after the other. These clones didn't have much health. After taking heavy damage, they faded away. Lord Grim could finally be seen. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella extended outwards, curving at the top - an Exorcist's scythe.

Rising Emblem!

A blue ring of light floated above the ground, and the remaining shadow clones rose into the air. Lord Grim rushed forward, sweeping at them with his scythe. The frail shadow clones instantly disappeared. The only one remaining was Dark Forest's real body.

Collapsing Mountain!

The attacks didn't stop as Lord Grim swung his blade.

Li Hua didn't dare fight head on. Dark Forest quickly formed a hand seal and then disappeared.

There was no substitute straw nor a shadow clone left behind, yet to suddenly disappear could only mean…

With a Collapsing Mountain to quickly drop to the ground, Ye Xiu didn't pause, immediately having Lord Grim leap backwards.

Dark Forest drilled out of the ground, Underground Tunneling Technique.

Lord Grim had leapt backwards, but it didn't seem to be enough. However, the sword in his hands suddenly pointed in front of him.

Falling Light Blade!

Lord Grim didn't dodge. When he jumped back, he readied this skill, timing it so that it would clash with Dark Forest's ninja blade.

Ding!

Dark Forest tumbled back, while Lord Grim was left hanging in the air.

Storm Shuriken!

Dark Forest didn't wait to stand up and threw a Storm Shuriken at Lord Grim.

A sword light flashed. A Sword Draw accurately connected with the Storm Shuriken.

However, the word Storm indicated this shuriken's might. It wasn't something a Sword Draw outpriotized. Storm Shuriken broke through the Sword Draw and stubborn continued onwards.

Moonlight, Full Moonlight Slash.

Two beautiful arcs and two clear rings. Lord Grim quickly used the Ghostblade's two combo slash, and with these three consecutive skills, he was able to knock down the Storm Shuriken.

Lord Grim was still in the air. Dark Forest stood up and attacked.

Ninjutsu - Flickering Pursuit.

The difficult-to-see shadow arrived in front of Lord Grim in the blink of an eye. One attack, hit. His shadow flickered, and he appeared behind Lord Grim. Another attack…

Third hit!

Dark Forest's Silver weapon, Sixteen Dark Nights, stabbed silently without light. But this time, the blade didn't strike the body. Lord Grim had grabbed it.

It wasn't possible to do such fine movements through normal inputs, which meant it was a skill.

Back Throw!

Dark Forest's head crashed into the ground. Li Hua was dumbstruck. He was in disbelief. To be able to grab someone in the middle of Body Pathway Derangement, what type of judgement and mechanical skill did he have?

After falling to the ground, Dark Forest was stepped on by Lord Grim, who fired at his head repeatedly, Punisher!

Dark Forest immediately rolled in an attempt to get up and Lord Grim also jumped back, but Lord Grim was prepared for his roll.

Long ranged attacks used at close range were too fast to dodge.

Dark Forest, who was in mid-roll, was unable to dodge Lord Grim's bullet and was hit.

The damage wasn't high, but… it stunned. This was a Spitfire's Stun Bullet. Lord Grim calmly chased after him and started attacking.

"Tsk…" the commentator Pan Lin sighed, shaking his head.

"The unspecialized's skill options really make it difficult to defend against!" Li Yibo said. "He has too many similar skills at his disposal. For example, knockup skills, knockback skills, charge skills, skills that every class possesses. However, these classes usually just have one or two of these skills, but he has access to all of them. Just take knockup skills. Every class can get 4 low-leveled ones, but he gets 24. The available options that he has is too much. For the average player, just these 24 knockup skills is enough to juggle them in the air endlessly until death."

"But I've never seen him play like that." Pan Lin said.

"Of course, he's playing against pro players, after all. They shouldn't be getting juggled to death. I didn't raise this example to talk about this though. I'm pointing out that with so many options, he has practically no cooldowns because most of the time, he can find a similar skill to substitute what he wants. Low-level skills have short cooldowns too. This one's on cooldown, but that one is off cooldown," Li Yibo said.

"Mm, we understand Coach Li's reasoning. In reality, it isn't his class that's crucial, but the weapon in his hands. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella eliminates the cooldown required for switching weapons, allowing him to freely use whatever class skills he wants," Pan Li said.

"Yes… without the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, it's not possible to play in this way." Li Yibo said.

The discussion going on between these two wasn't anything new. Ye Xiu already had eleven consecutive wins. These problems could be seen in each of his wins. Fortunately, Happy's matches weren't always the broadcasted highlight matches. If not, this discussion would be repeated so many times that the viewers would have insects crawling out of their ears.

The Stun Bullet into comboed Li Hua found an opening and used Substitution Technique to escape. But right when he turned around, he saw that Lord Grim was already in front of him.

"See," Li Yibo yelled, "Charge, Shining Cut, and then Colliding Stab, what class can use so many movement skills in a row! The distance gained by Dark Forest using Substitution Technique should have completely safe against any class, but Lord Grim was able to use three high-speed movement skills to instantly close the gap."

Pu!

While Li Yibo was chattering, Dark Forest was pierced through by Lord Grim's Colliding Stab and then with a fling, Dark Forest crashed into the mountain wall.

"Sigh, there's no suspense!"

"This map indeed isn't very suitable for Ninjas."

"Ye Xiu is also very cunning. All the maps that he chooses force the other side to have a direct fight with him, however, none of his opponents can defend against the unspecialized's offensive."

"But he hasn't met another God yet."

"That's true, the Gods are always the anchors in the group arena…"

Pan Lin were already declaring this as Ye Xiu's victory ahead of time. Reality proved their predictions true. In the end, Li Hua was unable to stop Ye Xiu from continuing with his record.

"12 consecutive wins…" Pan Lin said.

"Yeah…"

Happy won the first round of the individual competition. Ye Xiu's 12 consecutive wins was added to Glory's history books. Not only was he setting this record, he was continuously updating it. Just like what Pan Lin sighed, "How many consecutive wins is he going to stop at?"

After Ye Xiu, Happy's Ninja, Mo Fan, went on stage. The map that he chose was incomparably complex. Deception appeared and disappeared like the gods and devils, eventually grinding down the opponent to death. His victory wasn't easy though. In two of his ambushes, the other side was the one who controlled the flow, especially the second time. He was almost burst to death. At this moment, Mo Fan's reason for choosing a Ninja showed. Smoke Bomb, Substitution Technique, Shadow Clone Technique, Ninjas had quite a few escape skills.

After Mo Fan was Su Mucheng. Her artillery fire helped Happy win another match, completing the individual competition with a clean 3 to 0. The strong team Misty Rain seemed unable to stop Happy's recent momentum, which annoyed those like Ruan Cheng who wanted to ridicule Happy.

"You guys are playing well!" Boss Chen Guo led the applause, celebrating their three wins in the individual competition.

"Good, next up, watch us!" Fang Rui stood up and shouted. He often went on stage in the group arena appearing as the lead of the group arena.

Under Fang Rui's lead, Happy won another 2 points in the group arena.

The crowd cheered. Happy was on its way to a 10-0! The map chosen for the team competition was more important, which also meant that the home team had a greater advantage. As Happy improved, their teamwork was becoming better and better. With the individual competition and group arena won, the fans were very confident for the team competition.

The players going up for the team competition were all actively preparing for it, whether that be calming their emotions or stretching their shoulders and fingers.

"Nervous?" Ye Xiu suddenly asked the person next to him.

"What are you joking?" Wei Chen turned his head as if he had heard the greatest joke of the century.

"That's good," Ye Xiu chuckled.

"Got any cigarettes? Hand me one," Wei Chen said.

"Smoking is prohibited…" Ye Xiu said.

"Sigh, back then was the best… now we can't even smoke." Wei Chen looked up at the spacious stadium. When he had been competing, there hadn't been such beautiful stadiums nor had there been so many rules.

"Let's go!" Ye Xiu patted his back.

"With this old man, this match will be a piece of cake!" Wei Chen said, standing.

Chapter 1214
Observer Wei Chen

The players sent up for the team competition walked onto the stage.

Happy - Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou, Wei Chen, Fang Rui.

Misty Rain - Chu Yunxiu, Li Hua, Shu Kexin, Shu Keyi, Feng Xiangming, Bai Qi.

Misty Rain's lineup for the team competition was rather unusual. Their team composition consisted of an Elementalist, Ninja, two Sharpshooters, and a Cleric.

Over the course of Glory history, all sorts of systematic analysis and experimentation had been done. In the early days, there had even been five Blade Master team comps, but these types of team comps quickly faded away. According to the current Glory meta, a team composition should have at least a melee class, a long-ranged class, and a healer with two other classes to build on this base.

But in Misty Rain's team comp, their melee classes weren't pure melee. Whether it was Taijutsu Sharpshooters or a both long and close ranged Ninja, none of these classes were true melee classes, yet this unconventional team composition was Misty Rain's main force. Their tactics revolved around this team comp.

According to past data, Misty Rain's team comp didn't seem to be reliable. Facing strong teams, their team had yet to win a single match. They had even lost their home game against Team 301, a team considered weaker than them.

even those who won, never expressed their disapproval of Misty Rain's innovative tactics. The one with the most persuasiveness was Team Tyranny's Master Tactician, Zhang Xinjie. In their 6-4 match against Misty Rain, Tyranny had lost their points in the individual competition and group arena, but in the post-match press conference, Zhang Xinjie focused more on Misty Rain's performance in the team competition.

"Very flexible with lots of variations."

This was Zhang Xinjie's evaluation of Misty Rain's team comp and playstyle. It was

very simple, only six words, but was just how Zhang Xinjie spoke. Everyone knew that Zhang Xinjie would never talk about anything without reason. He might not say that something was nine, but if he said it, then it was definitely nine, and not eight or ten.

As a result, Misty Rain's team comp and playstyle led to quite a bit of discussion.

Tactics were never secrets because you had to use them on stage for everyone to see. Thus, many tactics were common among everyone. The difference between strong teams and weak teams was an issue of a team's execution.

The analysis and discussion towards Misty Rain's tactics leaned towards the positive side, which meant their rather poor win record was because of their execution. After all, this was the first season Misty Rain started running this playstyle. They needed time to practice and familiarize themselves with it.

Every opponent each round was a sharpening stone for Misty Rain. However, no team was willing to become their stepping stone. Happy wasn't willing either.

Happy had carefully discussed and analyzed Misty Rain's playstyle in their prepwork. In the end, they arranged this team lineup to counter it. Wei Chen would be appearing for his first time in the team competition in Round 12. His Warlock was undoubtedly a crucial part to Happy's strategy.

Wei Chen, who was sitting in the player booth, wasn't calm. The stadium and the seats, none of these were the same as when he had played competitively back then. Even though he was an experienced old general, in reality, he was new to the modern Glory competition. The seat under his butt felt uncomfortable and the sealed player booth felt stuffy.

A cigarette would be great… Wei Chen thought to himself, but when he looked around the interior of the player booth, he could clearly see a sign prohibiting smoking. Fuck, this senior won't smoke, but just dangling a cigarette in my mouth is fine, right? Wei Chen felt indignant. He felt out a cigarette from his pocket and put it in his mouth.

The five second countdown passed, and the two teams loaded into the map.

The map was Mud River Peninsula and was split into four sections, linked together by a narrow piece of land. The separation between these four sections could be crossed; they were just a collection of small or large swamps. The center of the map also had a circular swamp. Characters could go into the swamps and not receive damage, but

their movement speed would be slowed by 70%. This map was clearly a restrictive map. Apart from the swamps, there were lots of trees that could be used for protection. Happy had clearly chosen this map to restrict Misty Rain's long-ranged classes.

Happy loaded into the northwest corner of the peninsula, while Misty Rain loaded into the southeast corner.

Wei Chen sucked in a deep breath and had Windward Formation set out according to the strategy the team had prepared.

Team Happy's five players split up into three groups as they moved forward. Tang Rou, Su Mucheng, and An Wenyi went straight ahead, while Ye Xiu and Wei Chen circled around from the left and right.

The middle group moved more slowly to match the pace of the two circling from the left and right. The three groups were constantly updating each other with their positions as they advanced.

The team competition maps were much larger than the 1v1 maps, but that didn't mean the two sides would take a long time to find each other. The middle group were gradually starting to see the circular swamps in the central region appearing within their sight, but they were intentionally slowing their pace, so since they had yet to see Misty Rain, they knew that Misty Rain took a roundabout path.

The middle group informed Ye Xiu and Wei Chen, the two on their left and right.

"I know, they're on my side…" Wei Chen had been just about to notify them!

Windward Formation was hiding in a shrub on the side. Misty Rain's five characters hadn't scattered and were concentrated in one place, preparing to traverse through the swamps to directly cut across to the southwest region. If they moved along the swamp line, they would get to the rear of Happy.

Too bad they've been found by this senior.

Wei Chen peeped at them, while delightedly plotting what he should do next. If Happy had been together, then ambushing them while Misty Rain was traversing through the swamps would be the most optimal choice, but since he was alone…

Wei Chen hesitated.

Even though his Windward Formation had an abnormally long range, that was only relative to his class. Misty Rain had two Sharpshooters, whose natural attack ranges were above Mages. Even with Windward Formation's increased cast range from his weapon Death's Hand, he had no advantage over these two Sharpshooters.

"Misty Rain is forcefully traversing through the swamps. Do you guys think I should attack or not…" Unsure of what to do, Wei Chen asked for the opinion of his teammates.

"They have two Sharpshooters. You won't be able to suppress them!" Ye Xiu replied.

"Stealthily place a Death's Door to their side?" Wei Chen said.

"Windy Rain's spells will instantly blow it up," Ye Xiu said.

Stealthily placing a Death's Door was a concept that only existed among the normal players. Death's Door made a huge disturbance when cast and required the caster to control it. Pro players could easily deduce the enemy Warlock's position.

"Then what do I do?"

"We'll prepare an ambush at the Half Moon Rock in the 9 o'clock position, while you go back on your original path and cut to their rear," Ye Xiu replied.

"They're probably… about a minute away from the Half Moon Rock, assuming that they directly move in that direction," Wei Chen calculated from Misty Rain's movement speed.

"Good, that's enough time. Are you fine?" Ye Xiu said.

"No problems here," Wei Chen replied.

"Don't appear in front of them too early," Ye Xiu said.

"Hahaha, hilarious," Wei Chen replied. He didn't hurry to move his Windward Formation into position. He continued to crouch inside the bush, watching as Misty Rain's five players moved through the swamp towards the southwest corner.

"They've passed through." After Wei Chen sent the message, Windward Formation finally left the brush.

Half Moon Rock.

Situated at the link between the northwest and southwest region, Tang Rou's Soft Mist leaned on the outer edge of the rock with her spear propped up. In just one step, she could launch an attack on any passing characters. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain leaped to a spot three-quarters of the way up the Half Moon Rock. In one jump, she would be able to reach the top of the rock, letting her suppress the enemies with her firepower from the high ground. An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands didn't need to find an attacking position. He just moved into a position between the two characters to support them.

"In position."

"In position."

"In position."

The three players each confirmed that they had reached their chosen positions.

Would they succeed in ambushing Misty Rain?

The suspense was unfolding before them. The live crowd and the viewers watching the broadcast waited for the moment to happen.

After Team Misty Rain crossed through the swamp, their movement speed returned to normal, and they quickly advanced forward. Soon, the Half Moon Rock was within their sights. Wei Chen's Windward Formation reached this area one step ahead of them. He once again found an ambush spot in a shrub by the road and observed Team Misty Rain's movements.

"They've arrived."

"They've slowed down. They're probably wary of the Half Moon Rock."

"They've changed direction. They're not heading towards Half Moon Rock."

"Fuck, they're coming my way."

"Then you're the bait! Go lure them into our ambush!" Ye Xiu made a firm decision.

"How evil." Wei Chen cursed, but he also approved of this decision. Windward

Formation suddenly scurried out of the bush.

Bang!

Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack!

Having changed from male to female characters through a backdoor, the Shu sisters immediately fired at Windward Formation.

Windward Formation rolled and crawled frantically, moving in a beautiful S path.

Bang!

An incomparably powerful sounding gunshot sounded.

Lower Your Head directly mounted Thunder Snipe and fired a heavy shot amidst None Dare Attack's rain of bullets.

Windward Formation wasn't able to avoid the snipe. Blood spurted from his wound. Both person and blood tumbled forward.

"How fierce…" Wei Chen didn't forget to give a remark when he was hit.

"Keep up the good work," Ye Xiu encouraged him.

"Where the fuck are you?" Wei Chen asked. Ye Xiu wasn't among the ones who confirmed they were in position.

"I'm ready to help you at any moment," Ye Xiu said.

Wei Chen turned around to look. Misty Rain had started speeding up, looking as if they wouldn't rest until he died. The two Sharpshooters shot a hail of bullets, putting Wei Chen's reactions to the test. Windward Formation was instantly hit by several bullets.

Fuck, if this was ten years ago…

Wei Chen's reaction speed and mechanical skill weren't able to keep up. He suddenly realized that he might not be able to complete his mission as bait.

"Help!" Wei Chen immediately called for help.

Dancing Rain leaped onto the top of Half Moon Rock, propped up her heavy cannon, and started firing!

Chapter 1215
Suppression From Map and Skill

Explosive artillery fire headed straight towards the center of Misty Rain's formation. The AoE covered by her attacks could not be ignored. The five Misty Rain players immediately had their characters dodge, instantly pulling their formation apart. They weren't planning on giving Su Mucheng an opportunity to burst them all at once.

As the Misty Rain players avoided the artillery fire, they didn't loosen their attacks towards Windward Formation. They seemed to have no intention of firing back at Dancing Rain.

As a result, Su Mucheng also switched targets. Her dazzling artillery barrage fired towards Windward Formation.

Everyone was struck dumb.

Windward Formation wouldn't take damage from his ally's attacks, and the light from the artillery fire made his figure flicker, appearing and disappearing intermittently. This was Zhang Jiale's famous Hundred Blossoms style.

Team Misty Rain was suddenly unable to effectively locate and attack Windward Formation. The Shu sisters immediately switched targets, and their bullets fired towards Dancing Rain at the top of the Half Moon Rock.

Su Mucheng didn't retreat. Dancing Rain only dodged the necessary incoming attacks, while taking the attacks that wouldn't affect her much. At the same time, a white light glowed around her. Little Cold Hands, who was hiding behind the Half Moon Rock, had started doing his work.

Without any danger of being attacked and only needing to focus his healing on Dancing Rain, An Wenyi's weaknesses were completely covered up. Under these conditions, An Wenyi's healing displayed an extremely high level of skill. Dancing Rain's health was maintained at a steady state.

Dancing Rain continued to provide cover for Windward Formation.

Chu Yunxiu realized that something wasn't right.

With the Shu sisters switching targets, Windward Formation was no longer under any pressure. Thus, Su Mucheng could easily switch targets too, yet why was she still protecting Windward Formation?

Absolute Focus!

Chu Yunxiu immediately had her Windy Rain activate a skill. Just when she was about to cast a high-level spell, Windy Rain was suddenly entrapped by an array of light. All of her skill icons turned gray, meaning they could not be used.

Spell Shackle!

Chu Yunxiu was startled. This was an Elementalist skill. If it had come from the enemy team, then it could only have been from their unspecialized, Lord Grim, and his Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's mage form.

Where was Lord Grim?

Spell Shackle was a silence. It did not stop her character from moving. Chu Yunxiu whirled around, but she couldn't see any signs of Lord Grim.

There's only one possibility…

Chu Yunxiu's gaze locked onto the dazzling light created by Dancing Rain.

The flickering of the light created a facade, falsely making it seem like the covered target was moving. In reality, Windward Formation might not be moving and might actually be casting some sort of powerful spell. Lord Grim had entered the light cover as well and sealed her attacks with a Spell Shackle. His intentions were obviously to protect Windward Formation…

Chu Yunxiu instantly read and understood Happy's strategic intentions.

"Focus your fire onto Windward Formation!" Unable to attack, she immediately sent down a command in their team channel.

The Shu sisters didn't really understand why they should, but they followed their captain's orders. The two Sharpshooters switched fire back to Windward Formation,

but where was he positioned at? The two weren't able to accurately grasp his location.

Chu Yunxiu felt a bad premonition in her heart. Although the Sharpshooters attacked fast, their coverage was small since they didn't have any AoE skills.

"Scatter!" At this moment, she could only take precautionary measures. Windward Formation was most likely casting a spell such as Death's Door.

Chu Yunxiu's prediction was absolutely correct. At this moment, an evil aura condensed into Death's Door right in the center of Misty Rain's formation.

The light screen from Dancing Rain's Hundred Blossoms style suddenly dimmed. Misty Rain's players could now see that inside this light screen, Lord Grim had his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella open, shielding Windward Formation.

How did he suddenly get there? It had to be from some instant movement skill like Shadow Clone Technique. But the issue wasn't the process, but rather the result.

Death's Door had been summoned, and it was now starting its work. Black tendrils extended out of the door, grabbing towards Misty Rain's five players.

Yes, five!

Chu Yunxiu's "Scatter!" had been too late. Everyone in Misty Rain was still inside Death's Door's range.

Some were still closer than others though.

Shu Keyi's Lower Your Head stepped back a few times and reached the safe zone. She was the farthest away, being able to escape from the Death's Door with just a few steps. The closest was Li Hua's Dark Forest. However, Ninjas had the most escape skills out of any class! Substitution Technique into Shadow Clone Technique into the Assassin's high speed dash, Shining Cut, Dark Forest was the second to escape.

The remaining three were in a more difficult situation. Being farther away from the safe area than Shu Keyi, their characters weren't able to escape so quickly. All of them were running away and dodging for their lives!

Interrupt Death's Door!

This was the first thing that popped into Shu Keyi's mind. However, Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestation Umbrella being wide open like that was rather discouraging. Shu Keyi tried moving around to adjust Lower Your Head's attack angle, but unfortunately, this wasn't something that could be done in an instant. If she moved left, she would be blocked by the Half Moon Rock. If she moved right, she would be inside Death's Door's range, and she obviously couldn't force her way into there. And if she circled around, by the time she got into position, Death's Door would already be over.

Helpless, Shu Keyi discovered that while she had escaped, there was nothing she could do.

This…

This had to be planned!

Being able to escape so easily yet unable to attack Windward Formation, Shu Keyi felt like this wasn't luck. This was the enemy team fully utilizing the map and their skills to meticulously squeeze the amount of space available to maneuver.

Li Hua, the second to escape from Death's Door, was in an even more awkward position. He wanted to hurry and break Windward Formation's spell, but he was suddenly in the same predicament as Shu Keyi.

They could only watch as their teammates struggled to escape from Death's Door, while they seemed to be stuck in a crack, unable to move even a single step.

Even if I can't interrupt him, I can't just do nothing!

Li Hua's Dark Forest shot to the left and leapt onto Half Moon Rock.

The Number One Ninja's ninjato skills were undoubtedly extremely high. Watching Dark Forest's agility, quickness, and fluidity was a sight to enjoy. The crowd couldn't help but wish that there was no top to reach.

Happy wished for that too, but unfortunately, that wasn't reality. Dark Forest quickly scaled Half Moon Rock, heading towards Dancing Rain.

Facing melee attacks, Dancing Rain could not forcefully take the hits like before. After all, she was a Launcher, a long-ranged class. If the harassment was enough to mess up

her aim, then it was equivalent to her being suppressed.

Su Mucheng immediately used Aerial Fire, and Dancing Rain jumped off of Half Moon Rock. Li Hua didn't stop to rest. Dark Forest jumped in midair, attacking Dancing Rain with Flickering Pursuit. But just before he did this, he threw a Shuriken. His target, Windward Formation!

Jumping over the Half Moon Rock, Li Hua found an angle at which he could avoid the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's shield and directly attack Windward Formation.

"Beautiful! Too beautiful!" the commentator, Pan Lin, yelled in admiration.

"Yes, outstanding," Li Yibo followed up. Of course, he had to expound on it. "Happy's tactical formation is quite remarkable. The two who escaped from Death's Door were stuck between Half Moon Rock and Death's Door, unable to interrupt Windward Formation's cast. Unfortunately, they ignored a point. For Li Hua's Dark Forest, Half Moon Rock can't be considered a cover. Even though it required a bit more time, Li Hua was able to successfully break through!"

"A brilliant play," Pan Lin continued to give praise.

As the two praised, the Body Pathway Derangement struck Dancing Rain multiple times, and that Shuriken was more than enough. While it's true that Lord Grim could turn his umbrella around and block it, an opening at the front would appear, and the three escaping from Death's Door definitely wouldn't miss such an opportunity.

Death's Door, interrupted!

Fortunately, this was Happy's home stadium. If not, the cheers and applause from the crowd would have shaken the stadium. The commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo, continued to praise Li Hua. As for Li Hua, he discovered that below, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was running back, waiting for him. Soft Mist, who was hiding behind Half Moon Rock, suddenly charged out, not towards his Dark Forest, but away from the Half Moon Rock.

Li Hua turned around. To Dark Forest's back was Half Moon Rock. He was completely cut off. He had no idea what the situation behind him was.

Li Hua was startled. Seeing Lord Grim, who had been ready for him, he realized that he had made a mistake.

He had been lured away from his team, and with how the enemy team was prepared for him, they didn't seem to be planning on letting him go back so easily.

This was the enemy team's true goal.

Li Hua understood now. He knew that the effect of him leaving the group was extremely large. Misty Rain's tactics revolved around him. Their team composition consisted of mainly long-ranged classes. Without him filling in the gap, their tactics were useless.

Shit…

Li Hua looked at Lord Grim, who didn't wait for Dark Forest to land before starting his attacks.

I have to hurry up and get away. Li Hua thought to himself. Then, he heard a crackle as Dark Forest was suddenly lit on fire.

Sacred Fire?

Li Hua watched in astonishment as his skill icons turned gray.

He hadn't seen any indication of the fire. This meant that the other side had precisely calculated Dark Forest's fall speed. The instant Sacred Fire burned, Dark Forest would land directly into it.

What type of calculative ability and mastery of timing is this?

Li Hua turned his gaze toward the rear of Half Moon Rock at the Cleric, who had always been viewed as weak.

Chapter 1216
Dark Forest Rock Climbing

This Sacred Fire sealed all of Dark Forest's skills, while simultaneously gluing the mouths of Pan Lin and Li Yibo shut.

Just a second ago, they had been wantonly praising Li Hua's brilliant play, and now the two suddenly stopped talking.

If the two failed to realize Happy's tactical arrangements by now, the two weren't qualified to be professionals. Their awareness towards the situation was more sensitive than the vast majority of people, but they got it wrong and were now in a difficult position.

The two looked at each other in the eye, too embarrassed to say anything.

Li Hua might have been the key to victory, but… he was the key to Happy's victory, not Misty Rain's. He had fallen into Happy's trap.

The effects of this trap quickly emerged.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist entered the fray and charged towards Team Misty Rain. Wei Chen's Windward Formation didn't flee either, attacking from the sides. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain bombarded them as well. These two were both using Screen Cannon tactics, coordinating with both sides, attacking here while also helping Ye Xiu over there.

Without Li Hua, the rest of Team Misty Rain was thrown into disorder. Although the three long-ranged classes had fierce offensive prowess, facing Soft Mist's unwavering push, their formation was forced to scatter. Their teamwork was having trouble flowing.

"The weaknesses in Misty Rain's tactics have been exposed…" Li Yibo began commentating. He directly jumped to the current situation as if his previous mistake in praising Li Hua weren't his words.

"Yeah…" Pan Lin followed along with Li Yibo's pace.

"Li Hua needs to hurry and get back to the others," Li Yibo said.

"But he's being pressed hard by Ye Xiu," Pan Lin said.

"Yes, he just lost to Ye Xiu in the individual competition. He doesn't have the mental advantage in a 1v1. What's more, Ye Xiu is also receiving assistance from Su Mucheng and Wei Chen," Li Yibo said.

"However, Ninjas have the advantage, if they're only looking to escape," Pan Lin said.

"That's true. However, since Happy had this planned out beforehand, then they should have countermeasures prepared. I think Ye Xiu is quite confident that he can force Li Hua to stay here," Li Yibo gradually started waving his banner towards Happy, stealthily reconstructing his image of having acute foresight.

As the two spoke, the Sacred Fire on Dark Forest wore off, but it hadn't been very long since he escaped from Death's Door. The Assassin skill, Shining Cut, could be used again, but his other escape skills such as Substitution Technique and Shadow Clone Technique were still on cooldown, and Li Hua didn't know whether he had the time to wait for them to refresh.

Lord Grim's offensive was ferocious. Su Mucheng and Wei Chen would also help from time to time. In fact, most of their attention was focused on this side. They were only coordinating with Tang Rou to help harass and restrain the other side.

I can't wait!

Li Hua quickly came to a conclusion.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Li Hua used this skill regardless of the timing. In response, Lord Grim jumped away and blasted the ground.

Dark Forest tunneled to below Half Moon Rock. He had used this skill as an underground movement technique. Although the distance he moved wasn't far, it was enough for him to reach Half Moon Rock.

Li Hua leaped up and stabbed his ninjato into the rock. Dark Forest began quickly scaling Half Moon rock.

Bang bang bang! Boom boom boom!

The gunfire behind him echoed. Lord Grim chased after him with long-ranged attacks, and Dancing Rain had shifted her attention over too.

Li Hua could not just simply move upwards. His movements would be too predictable. As a result, Dark Forest leapt left and right on Half Moon Rock, adding in many irregular horizontal movements as he climbed to make it harder for the enemy side to catch him.

Li Hua prayed that he played well. At this moment, Lord Grim dashed to below Half Moon Rock and jumped up.

"Wah…"

"Ooh…"

"Woah…"

The crowd made all sorts of astonished noises.

Lord Grim leaped up and took out a knife… the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella also had a ninjato form. Their skilled climbing made the crowd curious: Li Hua or Ye Xiu, who was faster?

In this situation, Ye Xiu was obviously faster because he had no obstructions. He could simply move upwards in a straight line. On the other hand, Li Hua needed to dodge attacks and add in horizontal movements. And because Dancing Rain's attacks were AoE, his horizontal movements had to be fairly large, further increasing the amount of distance Dark Forest needed to move.

In practically the blink of an eye, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim reached Dark Forest's height.

Li Hua's heart froze. Today, his heart kept freezing. His heart was going to be frozen stiff at this rate.

He could only clench his teeth and persevere through. He started moving horizontally

even more, but because he had to dodge Lord Grim, his movements were much easier to predict for Su Mucheng. As a result, Li Hua had no choice but to start making circular movements. He clearly wanted to get over Half Moon Rock as fast as possible, but in order to do so, he needed to climb downwards from time to time.

Li Hua wanted to cry, but a short moment later, he suddenly realized that at this rate, he could just circle over the Half Moon Rock from the side…

Being forced to do this was quite tragic, but it was a feasible solution!

Li Hua continued to work hard at it. Suddenly, he heard a motor sound from behind him. He turned around to look and saw Lord Grim flying over with Rotor Wings.

"Fuck!"

The usually gentle and quiet Li Hua cursed loudly. He was truly under a lot of pressure.

Lord Grim flew in front of him and stabbed a ninjato into the Half Moon Rock.

Attack him!!!

A loud voice called out to him in his heart. It wanted him to attack this nearby, irksome presence, but his reason stopped him.

Go reunite with your teammates, an even stronger voice called out to him.

It was like there was a devil and an angel in his mind scuffling**! But the winner was quickly decided.

Dark Forest climbed up, but Lord Grim also leapt up, directly towards Dark Forest.

Dark Forest spun around his ninjato, dodging Lord Grim. He stepped on his ninjato and was just about to jump up, when Lord Grim's umbrella turned into a spear. Lord Grim dropped down as his evil spear stabbed upwards…

In the end, Dark Forest was unable to escape from the spear. All sorts of applause, laughs, and butt related words poured out from the crowd.

Circle Swing!

Lord Grim threw Dark Forest in a circle, smashing him into Half Moon Rock. Then, because of his position, Lord Grim stepped on Dark Forest, forcing him down as he moved up.

"Does that do damage?" The crowd was curious to why Lord Grim stepped on him.

"He's still attacking!" Someone discovered that as Lord Grim stepped on Dark Forest, he was also jabbing jabbing jabbing with his spear. His target was, of course, Dark Forest's head.

Dark Forest dropped to the ground with a face covered in blood.

Beaten up… Dark Forest failed to make it over the wall and was now being beat up violently. However, this tussle helped win him some time. Li Hua was now confident that he could wait for his escape skills to come off cooldown.

The east side darkens, the west side brightens, close a door, another door opens, Li Hua heard comforting thoughts from his heart.

Rock climbing really is a good way to stay alive! Li Hua thought to himself. He even wanted to climb some more, but Ye Xiu wasn't going to give him the same opportunity twice. This time, he attacked even tighter.

Li Hua kept trying. Chu Yunxiu and the others obviously weren't going to wait for Li Hua and do nothing. They were also trying to rush over, but Soft Mist was standing in their way. It really was difficult for these long-ranged classes to break through. After several unsuccessful attempts, Chu Yunxiu decided to have everyone split up and take a roundabout route.

The four from Misty Rain started spreading out and circled around Soft Mist. Tang Rou could only bite onto one person.

However, Tang Rou didn't target anyone. Her Soft Mist suddenly retreated.

"Not good…" Chu Yunxiu suddenly had a realization - she had made a mistake. By circling around, if they went too far away and Happy couldn't chase them, then…

Too late. Soft Mist's retreat was a signal. When Misty Rain shrunk back, Happy didn't pressure them. They also withdrew and then focused their efforts onto Dark Forest.

With Soft Mist returning, waving a spear in her hands, and Dancing Rain and Windward Formation pulling back to behind the Half Moon Rock, Li Hua's heart wasn't merely frozen. It was dead.

So those were the enemy's original intentions… I was too naive!

After wearing him down, they suddenly focused their attention onto him.

Ninjas weren't high-health high-defense classes to begin with. Once Dark Forest was caught up in their wave of attacks, he was quickly washed away. Chu Yunxiu and the others were hurrying over, and at this moment, they had just gotten past the Half Moon Rock.

Everything had been calculated perfectly.

Lord Grim and Soft Mist, the two melee characters, cut straight into Misty Rain's ranks and picked off their healer.

No matter how fierce the three ranged characters attacked, they had no way of forcing the two melee enemies apart. This was their weakness. Compared to melee classes, they lacked knockback and knockdown type skills.

Ye Xiu and Tang Rou ignored the attacks from the three ranged characters.

This… they're planning on trading!

Those with the knowledge could see it.

Happy had the numbers advantage, so they planned on sacrificing one of their characters for Misty Rain's healer. When one side had the numbers advantage, it was difficult for the other side to do anything about this type of trade.

Misty Rain was helpless…

By the time their sixth player arrived, this trade had already been completed. Lord Grim and Misty Rain's healer died.

Why Lord Grim?

If a trade was being forced to happen, then Misty Rain would obviously choose to trade

for the bigger threat. In the entire Alliance, all nineteen teams would most likely choose Lord Grim in this situation.

But Happy's determination could be seen from this. If they were even willing to trade their strongest player, then they must be extremely confident towards what followed next.

In the end, Team Happy won the team competition.

10-0. Another 10-0. This was Happy's fourth 10-0 this season.

This was an achievement for a top powerhouse. However, top powerhouses being 10-0ed by other teams was very illogical.

Happy…

Chapter 1217
Voice Chat Rules

10 to 0, this result silenced all those who were hoping to see Happy capsize. Ruan Cheng of Esports Time had come to watch this match in person, but upon seeing this result, he skipped the post-match press conference entirely.

Happy's performance this match was indisputable. Their strategy in the team competition had been tailored to fight Misty Rain, and they were able to build their strategy around the unique features of the map in a beautiful manner. No matter how aggressive a reporter was, they couldn't find anything to criticize Happy with in this match. In the end, reporters had to follow logic. As of now, no one hated Happy enough to attack them out of nowhere.

The press conference ended with a host of congratulations. With these ten points, Happy rose two places on the leaderboard. After twelve rounds, they were now in ninth place, only one step away from the playoff zone, and it was a step that couldn't be smaller, only one point.

Happy was closing in on the eighth place Void, who currently had 71 points. In the eleventh round, they had used their home advantage to defeat Tiny Herb 8 to 2, but in this round's away game they lost to Wind Howl 1 to 9…

A number of people were already looking forward to next round's match.

Round 13, Happy would play their away game against Conquering Clouds, which wasn't any unbeatable team. And Void, meanwhile, would be playing their home game against the team which Happy had just swept, Misty Rain.

If Void wanted to maintain their lead over Happy in the rankings, they needed to have a showing just as strong as Happy's was this round. And the just-finished Happy versus Misty Rain match had been a clear tactical guide in fighting Misty Rain. BOX-1, trapping Li Hua outside of Misty Rain's tactical maneuvers would cripple the team. But strategy was something that everyone knew. The important part was execution. Comparing Happy and Void's next respective opponents on paper, most people anticipated that Happy would surpass Void next round.

But Misty Rain wasn't the only team that Happy had managed to surpass.

After twelve rounds, the seventh place team was the team that had previously been swept by Happy, Hundred Blossoms. They now led Happy by only 3 points. If these two teams had the same points score, Happy would rank above them by virtue of their prior victory. In round 13, Hundred Blossoms would be facing a strong team too, Wind Howl. If they didn't make good use of their home field advantage, it was likely that Happy would surpass both them and Wind Howl. Right now, Happy was accumulating points in a frightening manner.

In round 12, Samsara defeated Radiant 10 to 0, preventing Happy from having the honor of being the only team to have four 10-0 wins. Samsara's performance was as strong as ever.

In addition, Tiny Herb, Tyranny, and Wind Howl all earned high-point victories. But Blue Rain, who had played their home game against Thunderclap this round, had earned a powerful 5 points in the individual competition and group arena, only to lose the team competition. In the battle between two Master Tacticians, this time Xiao Shiqin took the lead.

In the post-match press conference, Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou took responsibility, but the reporters didn't give him too much blame. Because Yu Wenzhou hadn't made any mistake, he… it was only because his hand speed wasn't enough, he couldn't issue directions and battle at the same time. After all, against a team with a Master Tactician like Xiao Shiqin, the battle strategies were constantly evolving in complex ways. It wasn't enough to solely rely on team cohesiveness and strategic habits. There needed to be someone directing the team members so that they knew the tactical intentions. Yu Wenzhou's hand speed in the pro circle was indeed subpar, and in this match that required a high hand speed to give directions, he was truly powerless.

And in the post-match press conference, Yu Wenzhou could only helplessly offer these words: "The opponent was very smart, accurately pinpointing my weakness."

Typically, for the post-match press conference, the losing team would go first, followed by the winning team. But in this round, both teams tied with 5 points, so the away team went first, then the home team.

When Yu Wenzhou made this statement, Thunderclap was already preparing to leave, but later there was still a reporter who managed to chase down Thunderclap's Captain

Xiao Shiqin. Xiao Shiqin personally confirmed that in this round, Thunderclap's strategy was to increase the variability of their fighting, with the intent of forcing Blue Rain into making adjustments. Thunderclap would attack the flaws that appeared when Blue Rain couldn't adjust fast enough, or the flaws revealed by individual people…

Use complex and variable tactics and put greater pressure on Yu Wenzhou's slow hand speed.

Xiao Shiqin's targeted strategy sparked some controversy. Some people felt that this was just another way of attacking the opponent's weaknesses, and there was nothing wrong with that. But others felt that using tactics to create this effect was low-level and uninteresting. Strategy should display intellect and cleverness, and this sort of method changed that.

Thus, this reignited the calls to allow voice chat in matches. But as soon as those arguments surfaced, there were quickly others who said that if that happened, then trash talk would be spewed nonstop…

Immediately, everyone's first thought was of a certain other person on Team Blue Rain. His trash talk wasn't especially hurtful, but unrestricted voice chat would be ideal for him.

Once this person was mentioned, this person who had forced the Alliance to specially modify the rules of battle, those calls to open voice chat were weakened. But quickly, other people proposed, what if voice chat was opened just for members of the same team?

A team voice chat could only be used to give directions. There would be no way to launch trash talk attacks.

But there was no way to present this kind of voice chat in a broadcast. The sound of each team chat couldn't be simultaneously broadcast, and cutting back and forth between the two would be unpleasant to listen to. The Alliance had always used text chat up until now so that they could show the teams' communications to the audience, and this was also a reason why they never used voice chat in competition.

However, typing instead of focusing solely on putting in combat inputs weakened the intensity of the competition.

At this point, these arguments started surfacing as well. After all, the debate over voice chat had been ongoing for a very long time now. This Blue Rain versus Thunderclap match just showed another problem caused by the lack of voice chat.

Yu Wenzhou was able to survive in the Glory Alliance through his unique methods. The Alliance, for its part, hoped to see competitors of all types. But now, the existence of players like Yu Wenzhou was being strangled.

With Thunderclap's battle results, did that mean that in the future, all teams would use these complex, changing battle strategies to face Blue Rain? After all, this wasn't something that only a Master Tactician could do. Even tactical duels were becoming competitions of hand speed. Was there any intelligence in pro matches anymore?

There were more and more angles of questioning, and the issue rose from just Yu Wenzhou to extend to all of the various teams' shot callers. Without voice chat, they were forced to input extra keyboard controls. This wasn't like trash talking, where if you didn't want to say anything you could just not say anything. Issuing orders was a matter of victory or defeat, something that absolutely had to be done. Because of the rule preventing voice chat, they bore a greater burden upon their hands. It was unfair to these players.

The players that directed strategies needed intelligence. But because of the competition rules, hand speed became a factor, even though it shouldn't have anything to do with tactics. It was completely unreasonable!

The voices of doubt became stronger and stronger, and so the Alliance finally made an official response, saying that they would begin discussion and investigation into the issue of voice chat.

Hearing the Alliance's solemn recognition, many people calmed down. With the calm, the sounds of complaints and mockery quickly came as well. It wasn't long before many people pointed out that, if the Alliance changed the rules again because of this, then Blue Rain would have two people who forced the Alliance to change the rules. Blue Rain didn't acknowledge this interesting fact, but regarding the opening of strategic voice chat, Team Blue Rain was in clear support.

The Alliance needed to do research, so there was no way for a result to appear in a short period of time.

Soon, it was November 29th, Round 13.

Happy played their away game at Conquering Clouds, and didn't disappoint their supporters.

9 to 1, Happy won, Ye Xiu's individual win streak was now up to 12. The 1 point they lost this round was from Su Mucheng's mistake in the individual competition.

And after this round, Happy finally stepped into the playoff zone. Void, who had previously been one place above them, had also done quite well this round, defeating Misty Rain in their home game 8 to 2. It was clear that they had learned from Happy's strategy against Misty Rain in the team competition, causing Misty Rain to eat a big loss in their two consecutive away games.

Happy earned 9 points, Void earned 8, so the one point difference between the two teams was erased. As it happened, both Happy (Xingxin) and Void (Xukong) started with the letter X in their pinyin names, so the next step was to compare order of appearance in the dictionary, in which Happy took the lead.

But at this point people had already realized, in the upcoming Round 14, Happy and Void would be directly facing off against each other.

Hundred Blossoms, who were within range of catching up to Happy, had also done fairly well this round, winning 7 to 3 in their home game against Wind Howl. For now, they still led Happy by one point. And Wind Howl continued their path of ups and downs, some people even summarizing their performance as "home game dragons, away game bears."

But for now, this conclusion was a bit reckless. People mostly paid attention to Wind Howl's away game loss to 301, but 301 wasn't any weak team, and it shouldn't be shocking that they could win their own home game. Right now, 301 was in tenth place with 76 points, only 3 points behind Happy and Void. Next round was Happy and Void's battle, so it was very possible that it would be 301 who would surpass them both and make it to the playoff zone.

Wind Howl wasn't so terrible, but their current slippage was undeniable truth. They had now fallen to sixth place, surpassed by Tyranny.

Tyranny, Samsara, and Happy were the three teams that had won 9 to 1 this round. Blue Rain and Tiny Herb had lost their away games 4 to 6.

Blue Rain had lost to Royal Style, and their loss in the team competition once again caused people to pay attention to the issue of voice chat. This battle, Royal Style had definitely learned from Thunderclap and used lively and variable strategies. But over the course of the battle, Blue Rain's loss this time wasn't because of Yu Wenzhou's hand speed. Blue Rain's players didn't need their captain's reminders to respond every time they encountered the slightest change. Master Tacticians were known as such because even if they followed the same general rules for strategies, their tactics would be more complete and effective.

Blue Rain lost to Royal Style, but Tiny Herb lost to Thunderclap.

After losing many points in the individual battles, Thunderclap once again made a comeback in the team competition. Their record in the team battles was as tyrannical as Ye Xiu's in the individual battles. Right now, they had 12 wins and 1 loss; the only difference from Ye Xiu was that their wins weren't consecutive.

Chapter 1218
All-Star Voting

Thunderclap's strength in the team competition guaranteed their strong showing on the rankings. Right now, they were tied with Blue Rain with 90 points. Because the two had tied in their match against each other, their ranking was determined by alphabet, with Blue Rain (Lanyu) in second place and Thunderclap (Leiting) in third.

Samsara led the pack with 113 points, a score so high that people had already lost the desire to try and catch up.

After 13 rounds of competition, they entered the month of December. The yearly voting for All-Stars began with the new season and ended in December.

The earliest votes cast were based on the players' performances last season; the strong players in last season's playoffs would gain favor. Then, after entering the rhythm of the new season, one or two stunning plays could invite a lot of votes. Tang Rou was a perfect example of this.

A rookie who had just entered the Alliance, after an exciting 1v2 in the second round, was swiftly pushed into the ranks of the All-Stars. Of course, her beautiful appearance contributed to this as well.

However, after the 1v3 incident and her clear revocation of her word, Tang Rou's popularity instantly died down. Even many of the team's fans couldn't look at her anymore, how much support would she have left from everyone else? Instantly, Tang Rou's name went from daily rising in the All-Star voting to complete erasure.

And right now, the highest-ranked player was still Zhou Zekai. Last season, the team had won in the playoffs, this season they maintained a powerful lead, and Zhou Zekai's performance was indispensable. He led the rankings with no competition.

And compared to last year, the biggest change on the leaderboard was the return of a few names, the most significant of which were the ones who had gone to Excellent Era last season. These three all had their dedicated fans and were immediately pushed onto the leaderboard. Aside from the unwavering support of their loyal fans, there was

the effect of their performances this season.

Xiao Shiqin was the most eye-catching of these three. Everyone knew Xiao Shiqin's major contributions to Thunderclap's shocking accomplishments this season. Although Xiao Shiqin wasn't like Zhou Zekai or Sun Xiang, who were core players based on their technical skill, Thunderclap's outstanding performance allowed Xiao Shiqin's tactical skill to shine and draw attention, attracting scores of fans. Right now, on the All-Star voting leaderboard, Xiao Shiqin was in third place, much better than his rankings in previous seasons.

Su Mucheng and Sun Xiang were both ranked around tenth. With their fanbase support and their performance, they hadn't seen any big ups or downs.

But if you wanted to name someone who was only rising more and more rapidly, you'd have to say another returning name - no, strictly speaking, the name wasn't returning. What was returning was the person.

Ye Xiu. Never mind his accumulated popularity from previous years, just looking at his ongoing twelve consecutive individual win record, this kind of player would gain enough attention to be pushed onto the rankings. As he achieved wins round after round, the ballots cast for Ye Xiu only increased. Happy's recent strong performance gave him a boost as well. Right now, Ye Xiu was at number 6 and was still in the process of beautifully rushing upward.

One could see how influential he was just from the recent in-game interest in unspecialized. It got to the point where the Glory developers added a strong reminder in-game, notifying the players who didn't choose a class at level 20 just how difficult their existence thereafter would be. Without naming names, they reminded everyone not to try and imitate a certain person because this certain person was an exceptional player with exceptional talent and an exceptional self-made weapon.

Despite this, the enthusiasm of the players couldn't be stopped. Quite a few players started playing with the equipment editor to try and make a Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, which suddenly caused the prices of level 5 equipment materials to rise.

With some people returning to the leaderboard, others would of course be pushed down.

There was one such person in Happy. Fang Rui changed classes, which his former Thief

supporters couldn't accept. The players of his new class, Qi Master, even though they saw that Fang Rui held the All-Star Qi Master Boundless Sea, his Qi Master performance… to be honest, up through now there was still nothing very convincing about it. As for his recent crawling and rolling Qi Master style, a number of Qi Master players felt that it was disgusting, and it didn't inspire any imitations.

Also kicked off the leaderboard was Hundred Blossoms' Zou Yuan. He had been pushed onto the All-Star leaderboard through nostalgia for two years in a row. But now that he was finally gradually bringing out a new character, he was shoved downward by the fierceness of the competition. Unfortunately, he was helpless about this.

Another player squeezed off the rankings was Royal Style's Tian Sen.

Peaceful Hermit, this former pinnacle God-level character. Ever since the All-Stars began, this character had made it to the leaderboard no matter the controller. But finally, because of the team's slipping performance through the years, he vanished for the first time from the top 20.

Regarding this, Peaceful Hermit's current user Tian Sen was extremely helpless. Year after year of hard work, but the team still saw no improvement and hovered at the middle. Now that there were more and more challengers, they were finally kicked off the altar.

Tian Sen and Peaceful Hermit's fall conjured many sighs.

There was another old general pushed off the leaderboard, Tyranny's Lin Jingyan. This old, long-time All-Star finally had his position stolen away.

Tyranny's near-miss of the championship last season had originally garnered much sympathy, and at the start of this season, the ballots for Tyranny's players surged upward. But, after that wave passed, their performance in this new season was factored in. Tyranny was rotating their roster for these matches, and the old veterans, no longer having regular appearances, began to slow in the rankings. The position of Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing was still relatively stable, while Lin Jingyan had dropped off the rankings. There was Zhang Jiale too, currently at a precarious 23rd place, at high risk of being replaced over the course of December. Just off of the votes, the rankings for many players were very close. A single explosive performance could bring enough ballots to surpass him.

But overall, the changes to the rankings couldn't be called large.

Xiao Shiqin, Su Mucheng, Sun Xiang, and Ye Xiu's returns weren't any surprise. Compared to last year's Lu Hanwen and Gao Yingjie entering the rankings as rookies, this season, there was no such entirely new blood breaking into the rankings. Tang Rou originally had this potential with her explosive performance in the second round and her steadiness thereafter. She was a very strong rookie. But unfortunately, after that 1v3 incident destroyed her reputation, she naturally didn't have much chance in this kind of popolarity voting.

Right now, the one who was in more of a dilemma was the Alliance. The All-Star voting was just for excitement; a good performance onstage could increase votes, but in the end, that wasn't the only determining factor. However, the Alliance's yearly awards were entirely based on the players' real performance onstage, based on numbers and statistics.

And from the statistics, among this season's rookies, Tang Rou faced no competition. But when they thought about giving the "Best Newcomer" award to this player with a ruined reputation, the Alliance felt the pressure would be extremely large. Right now, there was still over half a season to go before these awards were given, but there were already people worrying about this issue, which was a sign of just how outstanding Tang Rou was right now among the rookies.

December was the last month for voting the All-Stars, and looking at the current ballot counts, no final judgment could be made based off the rankings as they entered December. Because more and more players would save all of their tickets until December, waiting until the voting was just about to close so that they could see the entirety of the players' performances before casting their votes.

Would December see any player powerfully slaughtering their way onto the leaderboard? This was something to watch when the league reached December. Before, there was also something else to watch in December, the winter transfer window. At that time, the Alliance didn't have as many teams, so when they began in September, the season would be halfway over the time it was December. That was the original reason for why they set the winter transfers in December. But now, the season often wasn't even half over by January. After discussing this for several seasons, in Season 10, the Alliance finally decided to move the winter transfer window to January.

In comparison, the Glory new server opening now had almost no effect on the pro

teams. The only ones who were busy were the guild workers of the various large clubs, who before December would have to prepare their strength to enter the new server to compete for resources and advertise for the club.

Happy now already had its own official guild department. After half a year of development, the personnel organization was already finalized. And to a new guild like Happy, the opening of this new server was beyond important. In the old servers or in the Heavenly Domain, Happy was constantly playing catch-up, but in a new server, everyone was starting at zero, so they had a greater chance at achieving an advantage.

After Wu Chen organized the work for the new server, he solemnly gave Chen Guo the list of people who would be expanding in the new server. Boss Chen was generous, knowing how crucial the work in the new server was, gave the new server employees additional bonuses with a flourish of her pen.

As of now, the guild department was relatively well-developed, and Happy's R&D department had expanded slightly. Finding technical researchers was difficult, but didn't all of the big teams have to deal with this? The R&D would sometimes experience changes of personnel, and sometimes people would leave their jobs.

When Chen Guo failed to find enough suitable R&D candidates, she started paying particularly close attention to this area, and her efforts weren't wasted. In November, there was a small adjustment at Thunderclap, and an R&D researcher left his job for personal reasons. Chen Guo instantly pounced on him, but this person's personal reason was that he wanted to return to his home city to work, and his home city unfortunately was not City H. Chen Guo had no way of satisfying that requirement, and so she could only watch with her eyes wide open as this rather skilled R&D researcher returned to his home City K and entered Hundred Blossoms.

The second time, it was Royal Style whose personnel was changing, with two R&D researchers leaving one after the other. Chen Guo made some inquiries, and after confirming that it wasn't for a reason like "returning home" that they had no way of satisfying, she approached them in-person in City B.

This time, Chen Guo's actions were truly swift and fierce. Heavenly Swords was in the same city as Royal Style, but by the time they began to approach them, one of them had already reached an agreement and signed with Chen Guo. With one of them already taken, Lou Guanning of course couldn't try and pull some evil trickery, but the

remaining one didn't want to live modestly with Happy and cleanly slammed down a checkbook. After Chen Guo knew, she didn't have any words. Being able to get one researcher was good enough, and she could only hope that the person they got wouldn't have any regrets after learning that he'd missed the opportunity to enjoy the riches of Heavenly Swords.

Although from the looks of it, this new R&D researcher who had now been at Happy for ten days, Wang Sen, seemed quite at ease.

Chapter 1219
Lord Grim's Counter

December 6th. Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 Round 14. Team Happy greeting the visiting challengers Team Void.

This was a confrontation between two direct competitors. In Round 12, it was because of this reason that the Happy versus Misty Rain match had been chosen to be broadcast. However, this time, the broadcast chose Wind Howl versus Thunderclap. Reportedly, when the internal esports broadcast team had their meeting, the commentator Pan Lin expressed his opposition towards broadcasting Happy's match. Pan Lin's partner, Li Yibo, also had the same opinion.

This reasoning was very pompous, but even though Pan Lin hadn't explicitly stated the true reason, everyone knew what it was. Wasn't it because they were afraid of being slapped in the faces again after misreading the situation in another Happy match?

But then again, Team Thunderclap's tactics were top-tier too! Just take that round where the complex and changing tactics forced Yu Wenzhou to make such a statement. Could these two partners see through that? In the post-match interviews, those experienced Glory reporters hadn't noticed it. They hadn't noticed it until Yu Wenzhou's grudging comment. Only then did they ask Xiao Shiqin for verification.

The level of the commentators need to improve…

Constantly getting slapped in the face was embarrassing for the broadcast team too, but there was no one better to choose. After all, to be a commentator and guest duo, just having knowledge wasn't enough, the two needed to be compatible. Commentating required speaking eloquently at an appropriate pace. Zhou Zekai and Huang Shaotian were extremely skilled players with far more knowledge of the game than Pan Lin and Li Yibo, but could those two become a commentator duo? Could they? Could they?

Compatibility was the most important.

Right now, Pan Lin and Li Yibo formed their best commentator duo.

As a result, the Happy versus Void match was not chosen to be broadcast.

Team Void's core still revolved around their Ghostblade duo. Their new rookie last season, the Exorcist Ge Caijie, cemented his position even further, becoming the two Ghostblades' most reliable partner. As for Team Void, the team put in great efforts to upgrade Ge Caijie's Exorcist character, Blue Exorcist.

When Team Void heard that Team Royal Style was shifting around their characters and that people from their R&D department had left, Team Void had been very excited. Team Royal Style may have only been a mid-tier team, but their R&D department was at the forefront of all things related to Exorcists. Their Peaceful Hermit did not have the votes to make it into this season's All-Stars at the moment, but his lack of votes was mainly because of the team's poor win record. In terms of raw stats, Peaceful Hermit still stood as the King of Exorcists.

Team Void wasn't heroic enough to directly purchase Peaceful Hermit, but hiring two experienced members from their R&D team would be excellent too.

But when Void made their move, they were stunned when they learned that one of the two R&D team members had already gone to Happy and the other to Heavenly Swords. Void had been just one beat too slow, missing this opportunity for two long-awaited helpers. With their cheeks were streaked with tears, they could only rely on their current R&D team to continue developing their Exorcist.

Their Blue Exorcist was a bit weak, but their player Ge Caijie didn't complain. In the current state of the Alliance, where rookies nowadays were fickle and demanding, this was a rare sight. Ge Caijie had a maturity and composure that exceeded his young age.

In the first round of the individual competition, Void sent out this second-year rookie. His win record this season in the individual competition was exceptional. Out of 12 matches, he had 10 wins and 2 losses.

If it weren't for Ye Xiu's 12 consecutive wins, Ge Caijie would have been the player with the highest win rate. In this match, the number one and number two in 1v1s would be clashing. The match was filled with topics to talk about as soon as it began. In comparison, the opening for the Thunderclap versus Wind Howl game was very ordinary and dull. Team Thunderclap didn't have anyone too noteworthy for their

individual competitions.

"Senior, I hope to learn from you." The respectful Ge Caijie didn't forget his manners.

"Mm, let's see who'll be the one to change up our win rates," Ye Xiu replied. It could be seen from his words that he had paid quite a bit of attention to this rookie. He at least knew that in 1v1s, Ge Caijie was second only to himself.

The countdown finished, and the two characters loaded into the map.

Happy's home game. Ye Xiu's choice of maps was in the same style as always. The two characters didn't dally around and directly headed towards the center of the map.

Lord Grim used long-ranged attacks to initiate. Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist evaded them, while swinging his arms, throwing the scythe in his hands.

It was just an ordinary Spirit Guidance without any additional talismans, clearly meant as a probing attack. Ge Caijie didn't let down those who praised his steadiness. He didn't immediately rush in to take the initiative. Although it was unanimously held that the Exorcist was the counter of the unspecialized, what happened when Royal Style faced Happy? Tian Sen impatiently had Peaceful Hermit set out to fulfill his mission as Lord Grim's counter, and the match ended with Royal Style losing to Happy 1 to 9. The two didn't face each other in the individual competition, and in the team competition, Peaceful Hermit seemed to be the ill-fated one and was the first to be killed.

Exorcists were only counters in theory. To prove this theory, real results were necessary. Ge Caijie believed that Ye Xiu was more familiar than anyone else about why Exorcists were considered Lord Grim's bane. There was no way Ye Xiu would not be on guard. Before Ge Caijie began, as the one widely considered as a counter to his opponent, he had to be ready to face an opponent who was at his 120%.

Lord Grim easily dodged the Spirit Guidance scythe, but Ge Caijie immediately used Spirit Guidance again, having the scythe return to him and attack Lord Grim from behind. Lord Grim didn't even look back before being sliced into smoke.

Shadow Clone Technique!

The real body flickered to a position several units forward. Along with an arc of cold light, Lord Grim instantly arrived in front of him with a Shining Cut.

Blue Exorcist had just thrown out the weapon in his hands with Spirit Guidance, so he couldn't even parry it with an attack of his own. However, Exorcists were a class that didn't need their weapon to utilize their skills. He pinched with his hands, and a talisman appeared, letting out thin strands of cold qi. Blue Exorcist jumped back while pressing the talisman towards Lord Grim.

Ice Talisman was an ice element skill with freeze effects. This skill could not be ignored. Lord Grim, who had been pressing forward fiercely, had no choice but to retreat.

The Ice Talisman failed to hit its target and shattered into fine pieces. Blue Exorcist pinched his hands again, and a new talisman appeared.

Fire Talisman!

Fire after ice. Blue Exorcist didn't leave any gaps between his two talisman attacks. His rhythm and skill linking was immaculate.

Retreat again?

Impossible. Ye Xiu hadn't forgotten about the scythe flying back. Dodging to left seemed to be the most logical course of action, but… if he did that, Blue Exorcist would simply conjure another talisman and throw it there, forcing him into a position with nowhere to run.

As a result, Ye Xiu chose to continue pressing forward!

Colliding Stab!

Lord Grim used a Berserker skill to quickly cover some distance. The Fire Talisman wasn't like the Ice Talisman. Forcefully taking the hit was bearable. Ge Caijie clearly wasn't prepared for Ye Xiu's choice of action. Lord Grim stabbed Blue Exorcist and continued forward, pushing them away from the returning scythe. Then, he rolled to the right.

Boom!

Lord Grim was struck by the Fire Talisman and his body was set ablaze, taking damage over time.

The scythe returned to Blue Exorcist's hands. All Ye Xiu got was damage from Colliding Stab, which wasn't as heavy as the damage from Fire Talisman. It was better than nothing though.

Sky Strike!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella changed forms and slashed upwards.

Ge Caijie's heart jumped, but not much. He placed the scythe in front of him and blocked the Sky Strike. Then, he pushed out and threw a Lightning Talisman.

Lord Grim jumped back to dodge it. Blue Exorcist swiped with his scythe, and a blue light rose from the ground. A Rising Emblem threw Lord Grim into the air.

Boom!

Lord Grim quickly adjusted himself while in the air and fired an Anti-Tank Missile at Blue Exorcist. Blue Exorcist was just about to follow up, but was forced to back away. Lord Grim relied on the recoil from it to shoot back and threw a grenade at the same time.

After several quick exchanges, neither side had lost much health or won any big advantages. Compared to normal, being able to fight evenly with Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was very rare. But now, many people had higher expectations of Ge Caijie.

Exorcists were considered to be counters to Lord Grim because of their new Level 75 skill. However, Ge Caijie had yet to use it.

Was he waiting for a more opportune moment?

Everyone understood the logic, but they weren't as patient as Ge Caijie. They wanted Blue Exorcist to hurry up and use it.

How could finding an opportunity be so easy though? A careless usage wouldn't get the desired effects. It would just be wasting the skill, and Ge Caijie would no longer have the threat of it anymore. And Ge Caijie could clearly sense that Ye Xiu was being very wary of this skill. Some of his decisions carried this sort of vigilance. The might of a counter could already be seen! It wasn't just as simple as using a powerful skill to make the opponent kneel.

"You really have patience!" Even Ye Xiu couldn't help but sigh.

"I'm looking for an opportunity." It seemed like Ge Caijie also couldn't resist chatting.

"There won't be any," Ye Xiu said.

"No one can be certain of that," Ge Caijie said.

When he said these words, Blue Exorcist's scythe swept up and then down, while his other hand readied another talisman. Not to Ge Caijie's surprise, Ye Xiu didn't dare use something as simple as parrying to defend. Lord Grim jumped back.

Spirit Guidance!

The scythe that was swinging down suddenly flew out from his hands. Lord Grim hadn't jumped far back enough.

But Ye Xiu was able to pull some distance away. At this moment, he seemed quite relaxed. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened up, ready to shield against the attack. The instant the two weapons were about to clash, Ye Xiu noticed Blue Exorcist's left hand quickly touching the scythe.

Not good!

Ye Xiu knew the situation wasn't good, but it was too late to make a different move. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and the scythe collided. Talisman energy swiftly moved up the scythe handle, linking the two weapons together. The energy moved through the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. When the light suddenly blossomed, a faint "封" (Seal) character could be seen.

Exorcist Level 75 skill: Seal Talisman.

Effect: Seal the targeted equipment for one minute.

Chapter 1220
Lucky Steamed Bun

The crowd clapped!

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Truthfully, when they saw it, because the movement was too fast, the ones who saw it didn't really know what happened. Luckily, the two players in the match spoke to each other and revealed the important points in the match. As a result, when the reveal came out, quite a few crowd members suddenly remembered and yelled out excitedly, "I saw it! I saw it!"

They realized that the movement they saw was Lord Grim switching umbrella forms.

"I saw it once!"

"I saw it twice!"

"I saw it three times!"

"Four times!"

People started competing with each other, and it quickly got to the point where it just became empty shouting. Weapons couldn't be switched too often because there was a cooldown. The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's most important feature was that switching forms allowed it to bypass this issue. In this 1v1, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had been switched out at least twice. He had used the Level 70 umbrella at the start of the match, used the Level 5 umbrella when he feigned an opening, and then switched back to the Level 70 one afterwards.

In any case, Ge Caijie lost the match. This was Happy's home stadium too, so the applause was thunderous. What's more, this was another strong opening, foretelling that Happy's momentum would continue tonight. After achieving a perfect win over

Team Miracle in Round 9, who was the happiest about Happy's crazy winning streak? Happy's fans of course! The number of seats filled in Happy's home games increased round after round. More and more people were starting to seriously recognize Team Happy's strength.

10-0!

The crowd cheered for a 10-0. For a new team facing a frequent playoffs contender like Void to have shouts for a 10-0, Happy's position in the league nowadays could clearly be seen. Happy could beat Hundred Blossoms 9-1, Misty Rain 10-0, so why couldn't they beat Void 10-0 too? The fans reasoned it in this way.

However, whether Happy won the second round of the individual competition wasn't something Ye Xiu could influence. Steamed Bun. Team Happy's second player to be sent out was already standing up, jogging excitedly over towards the stage.

"10-0!" Steamed Bun hollered along with the crowd. The crowd instantly became even more fired up.

Team Void. Their second player was Li Xun, an Assassin, his character was called Ghost Lantern.

Li Xun was also a rather popular player. He was currently the only Assassin player who liked to use Life-Risking Strike for a one hit KO. Starting from Season 5, ever since he joined Team Void, he was obsessed with the thrill of an instant kill.

But he was the only Assassin player like this, which wasn't without reason. In the current state of Glory, the chances of finding an opening for a Life-Risking Strike were becoming smaller and smaller. Even if Li Xun refused to give up on it, he could not stubbornly revolve his entire playstyle around it. Life-Risking Strike was a method only used when he saw an opportunity for it, or perhaps in certain situations, he would be more willing than other Assassins to gamble everything.

As a result, he wasn't suitable for playing in the group arena, so Li Xun quickly consolidated a spot for himself in the individual competition.

The second round of the individual competition began. The map was Nine Pine Forest, which had nine pine trees distributed across the map. There was nothing else besides those pine trees. Because it was a 1v1 map, the size of the map was very small, so these nine pine trees filled up a lot of the space, allowing for numerous tactics through their

positions.

But from the looks of these two, it seemed like neither of them had any intentions of finding a strategic spot on a large pine tree. The two ran straight towards the center of the map, where two pine trees neighbored each other, and started fighting.

A brick to start with.

"Old trick!" Li Xun shouted. This Assassin, who loved one hit kills, was also someone who liked to talk. He tried to use words to distract his opponent's attention to make it easier for him to realize his pursuit of a one hit kill. This was the general consensus towards Li Xun's trash talk.

As for Steamed Bun, from the data on him, initiating with a Brick was practically guaranteed. As someone who liked to trash talk, how could Li Xun not say anything about it?

"Haha, then do you dare stand there and let me hit you with a brick?" Steamed Bun replied. Steamed Bun's trash talk was always the same, swift responses without any thought behind them. In more normal conversations, he might suddenly say something off the rails. Steamed Bun's trash talk talent was something Li Xun needed. The sort of crazy talk that left the opponent utterly confused was much more effective at diverting the opponent's attention than ordinary trash talk.

While the two talked, Li Xun's Ghost Lantern dodged the brick and dashed over with a Shining Cut. He was taking the initiative.

Steamed Bun's reaction wasn't slow. He immediately had Steamed Bun Invasion jump back and open his palms.

Ghost Lantern nimbly leapt to the side to dodge the Sand Toss.

Shadow Clone Technique!

This was a Ninja skill that could be used as an instant movement skill. All Night Walker classes would want to learn it. Li Xun suddenly used it at this moment, and Ghost Lantern instantly appeared behind Steamed Bun Invasion. The crowd cried out in fear.

Life-Risking Strike?

It looked like it could be used, but if Li Xun was so trigger happy with his Life-Risking Strike, Team Void probably wouldn't support his playstyle. Li Xun's Life-Risking Strikes didn't always succeed, but the success rate was relatively high. Team Void could benefit from it, which was why they firmly supported him.

The match had just begun, and he had gotten behind his opponent with a Shadow Clone Technique. Was he going to use Life-Risking Strike?

As someone who loved this type of extremely dangerous playstyle, Li Xun was clearly someone who liked to take risks. However, the problem was that using Life-Risking Strike in this situation wasn't a question of risk. Instantly killing a full-health Brawler with a Life-Risking Strike was impossible. Even if Li Xun had his Assassin Ghost Lantern stack health because of his playstyle, Brawlers were a plate armor class. Their health growth was 3.5, which wasn't bad among the 24 classes. On the other hand, the Brawlers were weak in their Spirit stat, which only had a 1.5 growth for them.

The key point was that he couldn't instant kill him. If Steamed Bun Invasion had been a Summoner or an Elementalist, Ghost Lantern might really have just used Life-Risking Strike.

Cutthroat!

It was a fast low-level skill, but a back attack gave it a considerable increase in damage.

Cold light swiped towards Steamed Bun's neck. This attack was just the beginning. What followed would certainly be a combo. If done well, he might even be able to end it with a Life-Risking Strike and end it one go.

Those familiar with Li Xun and those who supported him were all hoping for this scene to happen.

However, the Cutthroat missed!

Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly crouched, dodging the attack.

What incredible awareness!

Everyone sighed one after the other. He saw through Shadow Clone Technique and even predicted a back attack!

What's more, he crouched, which meant that he could immediately counter attack!

Sure enough!

Steamed Bun Invasion rushed forward.

Tyrannical Chain Punch! He directly let loose a powerful skill!

Everyone watched in astonishment as the crouching Steamed Bun Invasion rushed forward and pinned Ghost Lantern's shadow clone to the ground. But before Steamed Bun could even punch, Ghost Lantern's shadow clone poofed into smoke.

"Huh?" Steamed Bun was puzzled.

The entire crowd was dumbstruck.

"What are you doing?" Li Xun was dumbfounded as well. He didn't even have Ghost Lantern pursue him after the Cutthroat despite having the opportunity to do so. This Tyrannical Chain Punch was making his head spin.

There was no need to doubt Steamed Bun's speed, and Li Xun, who was his opponent, could sense that this Tyrannical Chain Punch had started sooner than his Cutthroat. If Steamed Bun Invasion had turned around and used it, then dodging the Cutthroat would have actually been extraneous. He reckoned that he would have a difficult time dodging this Tyrannical Chain Punch. However, Steamed Bun actually didn't realize that he had used a Shadow Clone Technique and wasted a high-level skill on a shadow clone. Of course, that was probably why his Tyrannical Chain Punch had been faster than his Cutthroat. Steamed Bun didn't know there was a threat behind him, so he immediately pounced on his opponent up ahead.

Li Xun didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Truthfully, he hadn't even thought that his opponent wouldn't notice the Shadow Clone Technique. After all, his character wasn't a Ninja, and the only below Level 20 Ninja skill that required hand seals was Shadow Clone Technique. Even though Li Xun would do his best to hide it, pro players had sharp eyes. Such an irregular motion on an Assassin was very easy to notice.

But today, he had actually met someone who failed to notice it.

"So it was a Shadow Clone Technique. You punk. I got tricked." Steamed Bun Invasion climbed back up from the ground and turned around, glaring at Ghost Lantern behind

him.

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"Luck? That's a part of skill," Steamed Bun said. He was clearly just going along with it. He had no clue what had just happened.

"Lose! You're a bringer of bad luck!" Steamed Bun's godly logic turned "you got lucky" into Li Xun being a bringer of bad luck. Steamed Bun Invasion charged forward.

"Let's see just how lucky you are!" Li Xun shouted. Ghost Lantern activated Swift Movement and then started sprinting. He moved so fast that there seemed to be a trail of dust behind him. In the blink of an eye, he reached Steamed Bun Invasion's side.

Leaping Blade!

Ghost Lantern's dagger flicked upwards. Leaping Blade was the Assassin's knockup skill.

Steamed Bun Invasion turned around and swung his arms, Slapping the dagger aside.

This guy! His hand speed and reaction speed weren't slow, but he himself seemed a bit stupid. He's definitely a good prey for a one hit kill.

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Perfect prey!

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Chapter 1222
One Hit Certain Kill

Heart-Piercing Stab!

After the Leaping Blade was slapped aside, Ghost Lantern immediately followed with a Heart-Piercing Strike that stabbed towards Steamed Bun Invasion's chest.

Steamed Bun Invasion stepped diagonally to avoid it and swung his arm horizontally, latching onto Ghost Lantern's neck. Tiger Flips the Mountain.

A huge amount of power surged forth, and Ghost Lantern was flipped into the air. However, a wound also appeared on Steamed Bun Invasion's waist.

Mother and Child Stab!

When Ghost Lantern had been thrown into the air by Tiger Flips the Mountain, Li Xun quickly sneaked in this attack.

It was a trade, but Li Xun was very unhappy with the outcome.

He was someone who liked one hit kills, and Life Risking Strike was an attack that traded health for health, so for him, his health was equivalent to damage. Health was an extraordinarily precious resource, so even though it was an even trade, in his eyes, he had lost out. Li Xun had his own idea of an acceptable trade, but this trade wasn't one.

Steamed Bun didn't care about Li Xun's feelings though. Mother and Child Stab didn't really do anything other than deal damage, so with Ghost Lantern in the air, Steamed Bun Invasion had the initiative. Steamed Bun wouldn't let go of this opportunity and continued his attacks. He leaped up with a Powerful Knee Strike, smashing his knee towards Ghost Lantern.

Ghost Lantern simply jumped to the side while in the air and avoided the attack.

Air Jump. Only Assassins, who had access to this passive skill, had the ability to jump

in the air. Other classes could only jump once off the ground. With this double jump, Ghost Lantern dodged the Powerful Knee Strike and returned with a kick downwards towards Steamed Bun Invasion.

Diving Arrow!

The Assassin skill, Diving Arrow, shared a few similarities with the Striker skill, Eagle Stamp. Diving Arrow didn't have as high of a priority, but it was far faster than Eagle Stamp. After the first kick connected, his two feet kicked him another four times in an instant, forcefully sending Steamed Bun Invasion flying to the side.

For Assassins, as soon as a single hit connected, the following combo would be linked together extremely fast. After the Diving Arrow, Ghost Lantern suddenly left behind an afterimage, flickering to Steamed Bun Invasion's side and piercing him with his dagger.

Flickering Stab!

This Level 65 Assassin skill was a displacement skill, but it was rarely used as a movement skill because the displacement was extremely small. It was only one step, a distance of one unit. But this single step was no different than an instant movement. When an Assassin used Flickering Stab, he might originally have been in front of you, but the attack would come from the side. If the Assassin were to the side of you, then the stab might turn into a back attack. Hever, more often than not, the Assassin looked to still be one step away, when his dagger was already in your chest.

Steamed Bun Invasion was hit once again. By this time, Ghost Lantern had landed back on the ground. He kicked upwards and struck Steamed Bun Invasion's ankle.

Ankle Break!

It didn't deal much damage, but it lowered the target's movement speed by 30% for 5 seconds. During these 5 seconds, trying to escape from an Assassin's pursuit was nigh impossible.

Splitting Water Stab, Heart Piercing Stab…

All kinds of assassination skills struck Steamed Bun Invasion one after the other. Blood splattered onto the pine tree. In an instant, countless red spots appeared on the surface of the tree.

This really is easy.

Li Xun smirked. Team Void had obviously done their research on Steamed Bun's tendencies. He knew that from time to time, he would make an extremely unusual and surprising move, but under his fast and tight offense, it didn't matter what type of crazy imaginative tricks he had. If there aren't any openings, what can he do?

Blade Storm!

Li Xun used another high-level damage skill. Blood splattered even more crazily.

That's enough.

Li Xun thought to himself. With the Blade Storm, Steamed Bun Invasion was forced back by the momentum.

Steamed Bun Invasion was under hit stun as he slid back, while Ghost Lantern also couldn't move due to the ending lag from Blade Storm. This sort of safe period was often built into high-level skills.

However, players would always try to find a way to get around this safe period to seize the initiative.

As a pro, Li Xun obviously had these thoughts as well. When he used his high-level skill, he had taken the terrain into consideration. The final stab sent Steamed Bun Invasion sliding backwards, but he would only slide back at most four units before slamming into the pine tree behind him, extending the stun by a tiny amount. More importantly, the distance between the two would stay close, only four units.

This is more than enough!

The experienced Li Xun laughed confidently. His Ghost Lantern used As the Shadow Follows.

As the Shadow Follows was a high-level Assassin movement skill. The user didn't have much control over it though. After picking a location, the character would move at an extremely fast speed towards that location.

As the Shadow Follows to close these four units of distance and then Life-Risking Strike!

When he used As the Shadow Follows, he had thoroughly burned down his health. The damage dealt by this Life Risking Strike would be more than enough to instantly kill Steamed Bun Invasion.

An afterimage was left behind as Ghost Lantern moved three steps. One more step and Steamed Bun Invasion would be dead.

Three steps might have been more ideal. This thought suddenly popped into Li Hua's mind. Because at this moment, he saw Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly move. The hit stun had ended. The extra stun from slamming into the tree hadn't been enough for Ghost Lantern to complete all four steps.

Four steps might not be perfect, but it's enough.

With just a distance of one step, what skill could be faster than As the Shadow Follows? Instant movement skill? Shadow Clone Technique? Substitution Technique? At this distance, there wouldn't be enough time to activate those skills, let alone the fact that Steamed Bun Invasion didn't have access to those skills.

Li Xun loved to take risks, but he never lost his calm. Daring but careful was the reason why he was an outstanding pro player.

One hit certain kill!

Yes, one hit certain kill, but the one to be killed was…

Li Xun looked flabbergasted at the afterimage left behind below the tree. He stared in astonishment at the Steamed Bun Invasion in front of him. The sharp claws on his fists were pierced through his Ghost Lantern's chest.

Li Xun turned around to take a look.

Within this one step, Ghost Lantern had moved one-third of a step, while Steamed Bun Invasion had moved two-thirds of a step.

Thus, Steamed Bun Invasion's attack had been faster. That Life-Risking Strike had been prepared for after that two-thirds of a step.

"Holy shit, I finally got a chance to use it," Li Xun saw Steamed Bun's message in the chat.

Followed by: "Huh? How are you dead? My god, this skill's that powerful??"

This skill's that powerful?

As Li Xun's point of view fell along with Ghost Lantern, he saw that afterimage from below the tree disappear.

Flickering Stab?

Tooth for Tooth?

How long has it been since I used Flickering Stab? He activated Tooth for Tooth at that time? After stealing the skill, he used it just a step before his death and then killed me instead?

If it was Flickering Stab, then for a distance of one step, it was faster than As the Shadow Follows. If this had all been a part of Steamed Bun's plan then Li Xun would have been shocked at how terrifying he was, but seeing Steamed Bun's words, Li Xun could only feel that it was ridiculous. This match was ridiculous. I actually lost like this?

What type of stupid luck was this!!

Li Xun sat there in a daze for a long time. The referee had to come over and remind him.

Li Xun walked out of the player booth. As for the crowd, there were traces of hesitation in their cheers. The problem was Steamed Bun's final words. If he hadn't said those words, everyone would have thought that he had planned everything, waiting there patiently for Li Xun to make his final move. But with those last words, the marvel of this spectacular play instantly disappeared. Everyone had the same thoughts as Li Xun: he won just like that?

In any case, a win was a win. As Happy's supporters, there was no reason not to be happy about a win, right? Even if the win had been so comical and absurd that even the winner didn't really understand the situation. Speaking of which, this winner who didn't understand why he won seemed to be quite happy with this victory. After coming out of the player booth, he ran around the stage once.

"Victory!!" Steamed Bun yelled.

The crowd cheered and clapped.

"10 to 1!" Steamed Bun shouted.

10 to 1! Everyone echoed his words. But they soon had a realization. What the fuck was 10 to 1?

Fortunately, Steamed Bun immediately noticed his mistake.

"10 to 0!" he corrected himself.

10 to 0! This time, there was no problem and everyone cheered.

After running around in a circle, he bumped into Li Xun, who was coming down from the stage. He went over and extended his hands out without any signs of embarrasment.

"You played well!" Steamed Bun said.

"You… you played well too," Li Xun said. In all honesty, he had wanted to say "you fucker," but the goddamn referee just happened to be nearby.

"Keep trying," Steamed Bun patted him and then ran back to this team. As he passed Team Void, he waved at them. The Team Void players looked at one another, unsure what to do. Luckily, Steamed Bun quickly passed by them.

After finally returning to his team's seats, Steamed Bun celebrated with everyone.

"Mm, as long as you win, it's good," Ye Xiu nodded his head.

For this match, it was too embarrassing to say that this win was due to Steamed Bun's crazy imagination… it could only be said that his Tooth for Tooth, which he had used on Flickering Stab for some inexplicable reason, gave Steamed Bun good luck.

Yes, luck.

The key factor to this win was luck. It was something that could eclipse hard work and talent: luck.

"With this kind of luck, he could have probably won just lying down!" Wei Chen sighed.

These words were somewhat exaggerated, but it could be considered as a strong comment towards that fight.

The loser on Void must be feeling very wronged, right? Ye Xiu looked towards Team Void. But then again, if Li Xun didn't like one hit kills, this sort of luck might not have happened.

In the end, luck only worked when the differences in skill weren't that large. Lying down and winning would never actually happen.

Chapter 1223
The Old General's Way of Winning

Two battles of the individual competition were now over. Whether through luck or strength, Happy now had a 2-0 lead. For this upcoming third match, the digital displays showed the players' names and the players stood up. After a pause from the audience, there was suddenly a small wave of cheers.

"Old Wei, can you really do this?!" In the audience seating near Happy's player area, someone hollered at him.

Wei Chen evidently heard it. He turned in the direction of the shout, swept his gaze over, then lifted his index finger and waggled it in that direction. Void's players were dumbstruck. Waving your index finger wasn't as much of an insult as showing your middle finger, but there was at least some scorn in the gesture. To do this towards your own home audience, what was he thinking?

But what surprised them more was that the audience members whom Wei Chen gestured at, although they were boiling and starting hooting at him, were in an undisguised laughing and joking mood.

Anyone could tell, it wasn't that they didn't support Wei Chen. This was a sort of good-natured teasing between close friends and people who knew each other well. If people didn't have a close enough relationship, they couldn't crack such jokes.

To have such a relationship with fans?

Void's players continued to stare. It seemed somewhat unacceptable, but in their hearts there was a bit of… envy. They didn't have this, thus they felt envy. It was a very natural thing.

In this kind of atmosphere, Wei Chen went onstage. Happy's fans didn't have this same kind of relationship with the other players of Happy. The reason for this was that after everyone became pro players, only Wei Chen still had the air of being close to the earth with them.

Even now, his Windward Formation would still make frequent appearances in the game.

His professional career had only lasted two years, but he had spent over a decade in the Glory game. This was a deeply-ingrained part of his life that had no way of being eliminated. Preventing him from going into the game would be even more difficult than preventing him from smoking.

Windward Formation wasn't an especially famous name, and it was clear that Wei Chen's primary role at Happy was just as a substitute, so he didn't receive much attention. His character in-game wouldn't be surrounded or gawked at to the point where he couldn't move.

Since he was playing the game, he couldn't avoid interactions with other players. So the understanding that many people had of Wei Chen didn't solely come from the Alliance, the team, or the official reports from the media. It came from casual conversations in the guild chat, or chatter from a dungeon raid.

And so Wei Chen became this particularly special pro player. Plus, he also carried a record of his own - he was the oldest pro player to date to participate in the Glory Alliance. People even asked him, since you're still coming to play even now, why did you leave a blank space of so many years?

Wei Chen couldn't answer this question.

He only knew, he stood here now. Even though he couldn't do much anymore, he would still put in his full effort. Because, he was a pro player.

Individual competition round 3, begin.

Happy, Wei Chen, Warlock Windward Formation.

Void, Yang Haoxuan, Launcher Translucent.

Yang Haoxuan, a pro player from Season 7, entering Void's training camp at age 15 and offered a professional contract at age 17 from Team Void. Now, he had worked at Void for four years, and wasn't even 20 yet.

"How young…" Wei Chen sighed.

The battle quickly began. Against a Launcher, Windward Formation's high attack range naturally wasn't much of an advantage, so as soon as the battle began, Wei Chen began strategic movement. He had chosen the map, so of course he was very familiar with it.

And Yang Haoxuan? When the match began, he did the same thing as Wei Chen, strategic movement. His character Translucent also took a roundabout path on the map. He quickly made his way to the center and didn't see the opponent's character, so he instantly understood what was going on.

Boom!

Yang Haoxuan immediately had his Translucent to fire a cannon shot, planning to use the sound to lure Wei Chen to expose the position of his Windward Formation.

But when Wei Chen heard the shot, he didn't look around, instead directly controlling Windward Formation to make a U-turn. Everyone saw that this new direction was exactly the direction towards Translucent's current position. The old veteran's hearing ability was still exceptional.

But after Yang Haoxuan fired this shot, he didn't have Translucent stand there motionlessly. He moved Translucent to a different position with a wider view like an oriole behind a mantis.

The method of luring a snake out of its hole.

Many viewers were used to seeing this kind of strategy. Wei Chen had been around for so many years, would he fall for it?

The audience saw from the omniscient view Wei Chen's Windward Formation, creeping bit by bit toward Translucent's original position.

The crowd was becoming anxious. They worried for Wei Chen, but Wei Chen was just foolishly going ahead, as though this possibility of a trap hadn't even occurred to him.

Windward Formation revealed himself, and the crowd sighed.

Yet Yang Haoxuan didn't begin his attack immediately. This strategy was so low-level that even ordinary players could see through it. Wei Chen had the judgment to make his way here through sound alone, how could he not know this sort of simple strategy?

Especially now that he could see that the opponent's character wasn't here, it should be even more obvious to him. So Yang Haoxuan didn't think that Wei Chen was just hastily crashing over here, he had to have some defensive preparations. If he attacked immediately, he felt that the opponent's defenses would be at their highest, and he might not be able to achieve any good effect. Better to hide and wait patiently, wait until the opponent felt that this wasn't a trap and lower his guard.

And so Yang Haoxuan didn't move.

And so Wei Chen spoke. "I'm here already, come out and fight! What are you hiding and dawdling for? You think I'll just let down my guard?"

He's trying to trick me! I'm not moving, thought Yang Haoxuan.

"Yes, I'm talking to you! The one at position 45, 56," Wei Chen said.

Yang Haoxuan jolted, and glanced at the coordinates of his Translucent's position. Indeed: 45, 56.

The crowd burst into applause. What incredible judgment! To predict the opponent's movements so accurately and clearly, this demonstrated an incredible all-around familiarity and understanding of both the map and the opponent!

His coordinates were exposed just like that, Yang Haoxuan felt very awkward, but he knew that right now there were countless people watching them. If he just walked out like this, that would be too humiliating!

As he agonized, Wei Chen continued to yell. "What, you're still not coming out?"

The helpless Yang Haoxuan prepared to control his character to reveal himself…

"Haha, I know, you're actually at 48, 31!" Another message from Wei Chen suddenly jumped out in the chat. Filled with confidence, Windward Formation scurried in that direction.

Fuck!

Just as he was about to charge out, Yang Haoxuan brought himself to a screeching halt.

"This old fox!" Yang Haoxuan's forehead was covered in cold sweat. He had really been

just about to reveal himself. Good thing he had spaced out for a moment. It looked like this round, luck was now on Void's side!

After thinking about Wei Chen's final shout of position 48, 31, Yang Haoxuan had Translucent walk out, preparing to carefully circle around and then bombard Windward Formation with continuous heavy firepower.

Yang Haoxuan took several deep breaths, bracing himself for the intense moments to follow.

But the crowd was filled with the sounds of tsking.

"Young people!" someone sighed.

Yang Haoxuan, among the esports players, couldn't be considered young. He was 20 years old, right in the middle generation that was at its peak. But compared to Wei Chen, who was older than him by over a decade, he really was just a young person.

The young person prepared for the upcoming intensity, but suddenly, a Hexagram Prison descended from the sky. Before he had time to dodge, Translucent was already locked in.

Shit!

Yang Haoxuan instantly knew that, in the end, he had been tricked.

Luring the snake out of its hole. Same strategy, different execution. The older the ginger the spicier it was!

With this ambush, Wei Chen gave himself an excellent advantage. And then, after several exchanges in this sneaky and complicated map, he finally defeated Yang Haoxuan.

A win in every individual match, 3-0!

The live crowd became a wave of excitement.

10-0!!

Countless Happy supporters were shouting. To win all of the individual battles, that

was the rhythm of a 10-0!

Yang Haoxuan walked out of the competitor booth, downtrodden and depressed as he came offstage; on Happy's side, Wei Chen lingered inside for quite a while.

"That old thing, trying to act dull on the outside, but he's really passionate on the inside!" said someone in the audience, laughing. Because there was a relatively long break between the individual round and the group arena, the judge didn't immediately come to urge him out.

Wei Chen sat in the competitor booth, a cigarette stuck between his fingers, but eyeing the "no smoking" sign above his head, he still didn't dare light it.

"That was close…" Wei Chen's gaze turned to the computer screen, and he looked at Windward Formation's remaining health: 8%.

He won, but it wasn't easy. That ambush early on had greatly succeeded, instantly giving him a 30% health advantage, but in the end, his health had been whittled all the way down to 8%. This made Wei Chen rather unhappy, and in his heart, an agitated voice once again reminded him of that reality.

"I really am old…" Wei Chen said to himself. "And so, this is my win method.

"But 8% or 80%, does that matter? Tch, this isn't the group arena," Wei Chen muttered. He stood up and exited the competitor booth.

When he finally showed his face, the crowd burst into thunderous applause.

"That's right. A win is a win. As long as this is the outcome." Wei Chen smiled, and his heart suddenly felt lighter.

"Old Wei, you did it!!!"

As he walked along the side of the stage, the audience members nearby again cracked jokes with him. Some of them might not have actually known him well, but seeing other people do the same, they felt that Wei Chen was the type of player you could interact with like this, and so they followed along.

Wei Chen didn't disappoint them by refusing interaction. Towards those who were shouting at him, he responded, even cracking some dirty jokes like "this old man's still

got it." He gave a wink and proudly and gleefully walked by.

"A small character like that, I can defeat him with a wiggle of my finger." Upon returning to Happy's player area, Wei Chen gestured with the tip of his little finger and spoke.

"Very strong," everyone praised him.

"You really should've given me a spot on the main roster. An old guy like you should rotate out and rest more!" Wei Chen gruffly patted Ye Xiu.

"Thanks!" Ye Xiu laughed. "But I'm still very young!"

"As long as you don't brag, that's best," Wei Chen said.

Chapter 1224
Void's Ghost Duo

"What's wrong, are we planning to lose to Happy 0 to 10?" In Void's player area, looking at the current scoreboard showing Happy: 3, Void: 0, Void's Captain Li Xuan, the one called the number one Phantom Demon, finally couldn't sit around any longer.

As a member of the Golden Generation, he garnered attention in his very first season, and in his second season he gained an exceptional partner and helper. But in six years, what had they achieved?

Even for the little award of Best Partners, he couldn't compete with his fellow player from the Golden Generation, Su Mucheng. He had to wait until Ye Xiu retired and left before he could pick up that award.

The tacit understanding between the Ghost Duo wasn't any less deep than that between Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng. But the value of the Best Partners title wasn't limited to the partnership itself. It also considered how much this partnership brought to the team as a whole.

Void was a frequent participant in the playoffs. And the old Excellent Era? After losing to Tyranny in the finals of Season 4, they had never entered the finals again. On some level, Excellent Era and Void weren't that different in terms of their. But during Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's many years at Excellent Era, the award for Best Partners always seemed to go to them without any competition at all. Their so-called strongest competitors, the Ghost Duo, had in reality never managed to put any pressure on them at all.

The reason was simple. Void's Ghost Duo, when in direct confrontation against Excellent Era's Long Spear Short Cannon combination, always came up inferior.

They'd never won the championship, they'd never even entered the finals. Even for an individual award like Best Partners, they'd been beaten down for so long. There was no way that Li Xuan felt no anger in his heart. What "number one Phantom Demon"? It sounded cool, but in Li Xuan's opinion? He wasn't even number one in one of the 24 classes of Glory. One of the 24 classes was called Ghostblade, and he, he was only the

number one of the Phantom Demon branch of Ghostblade.

There were only around 200 Glory pro players, so on average, each class didn't have more than 10 players. The Ghostblade class was further divided into the three branches of Phantom Demon, Sword Demon, and Phantom Sword, so if they took an average again, there were only three Phantom Demons. And so, Li Xuan was the number one of three people. First among three, was that anything impressive?

To this, Li Xuan could only shake his head and laugh bitterly. Of course, to be the number one Phantom Demon meant that out of the millions of Phantom Demon players in Glory, he was the best. But Li Xuan truly had no interest in using those outside of the pro circle to comfort himself.

Number one was number one.

In the old days, no one said that Ye Qiu was the number one Battle Mage.

Li Xuan also wanted to become a true number one. But after so many years, he was still just the number one Phantom Demon. He couldn't even get the title of number one Ghostblade. But the one who was blocking him from this title was his own teammate, his closest friend and best partner since Season 5, Wu Yuce.

What was up with this?

Sometimes, Li Xuan would mock himself like this.

But even if they were best friends and partners, Li Xuan and Wu Yuce, who was the best Ghostblade player in the end? This question, even Li Xuan himself couldn't help but ponder sometimes.

To be honest, he had no way of giving a clear answer, and the outside world had debated this question for many years, only to find that both sides had their arguments. And within Void? Everyone carefully avoided this question, and when asked by the reporters, the two would by tacit agreement always praise the other as superior. But even so, they wouldn't talk themselves down too much, either. And so everyone could tell, their responses were just out of courtesy. Who was the stronger between the two of them, they themselves never gave a true answer.

For now, judging from their positions in the team and the All-Star vote rankings, Li Xuan was still in the lead. But some people felt that this was only because Li Xuan

debuted a year before Wu Yuce, and thus had a head start.

Who was stronger? Who was the true number one Ghostblade?

In the past, Li Xuan had been very sensitive about this topic. Regarding his lead, although he'd never say it aloud, he had been secretly pleased.

But now, after so many years, he was used to it, he was numb to it, he was no longer interested in this question.

What he wanted was to be the true number one, the number one of the league, and not some number one Phantom Demon or Ghostblade.

And the dream of being this number one was too much more difficult than those other number ones.

In the blink of an eye, it was already Season 10 of the Glory Professional Alliance.

Last season, the team promoted a rookie, Ge Caijie, and everyone said that the Ghost Duo finally had a new reliable helper, that they had a lot to look forward to.

Li Xuan also carried such hopes as he entered Season 10.

But up through now, he hadn't seen any sign of his team's strong rise. Void was still struggling against the other second-string strong teams for a spot in the playoffs. And now, Happy, this new team, was actually their direct competitor, and in this current confrontation had a 3-0 lead…

"What is our goal?" Li Xuan said, looking at his teammates.

Void hadn't announced it to the public, but within the team, they felt that their roster was complete, and they had this strong rookie, Ge Caijie. They felt that this season was the season to taste the rhythm of charging for the championships. But playing up until now, they'd lost to Samsara, they'd lost to Wind Howl, they'd lost to Thunderclap, they'd even lost to Miracle. What kind of championship rhythm was this?

They'd lost to Miracle! And it had been their home game!

The seventh round of competition had been a harsh blow for Void.

Then what about now?

"Do we plan on losing 0-10 to Happy?" Li Xuan repeated this question.

"No…" Of course, his teammates could only reply like this.

"If not, then get your spirits up!" Li Xuan said.

"Yes…" everyone answered.

"Zhaolan, you're up!" Li Xuan nodded toward one of the players.

"Yes." Ge Zhaolan nodded and followed the orders to head onstage.

Void's Spitfire was named Transparent. It was instantly apparent that the name had a common source as Yang Haoxuan's Launcher Translucent. Indeed, these two characters were brought into the team by the seniors who established Team Void, and had always stayed in the team. But now, these two characters were just side characters in the team, largely because Void had never found any especially talented players for these two classes.

When Zhang Jiale retired from Hundred Blossoms, the team was caught off-guard and had no plan. They were entirely unable to find a replacement player and could only promote someone from within the team in a hurry. To some extent, this was a sign that the current Spitfire players weren't up to par. It wasn't that they were bad, it was just that they weren't outstanding enough.

Ge Zhaolan unfortunately was one of the Spitfire players who had been deemed not good enough. But the good thing was that he wasn't an especially ambitious person. He knew his position very clearly, and something like this didn't affect him. He continued to work diligently for Void. And now, Void needed him to show his strength.

They lagged behind the other team 0-3 after the individual round. In the group arena, Ge Zhaolan and his Spitfire Transparent would lead the battle for Void.

And Happy? Their first player in the group arena was Fang Rui, with his Qi Master Boundless Sea.

Happy's roster had basically been figured out by all of the opponents by this point. In the individual round and group arena, Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, and Tang Rou

would always appear.

There was no dispute over having the three All-Stars appear. Even if Fang Rui had been affected by his class change, it was exactly because of his class change that he needed more battles to improve more quickly. As for Tang Rou, despite her infamy, objectively speaking no one dared underestimate her strength onstage. But after that promise-breaking incident, people suddenly had higher expectations of her. As long as she didn't 1v3, in everyone's eyes it was a weak chicken performance. 1v1.5, 1v2, these performances were normally impressive, but if it was Tang Rou, everyone would just laugh and say: look, that person who wanted to 1v3, couldn't even do a 2.5, how weak…

In this match's individual round, Ye Xiu, Steamed Bun, and Wei Chen had appeared onstage. Thus, it was already clear who would be appearing in the group arena. Now, Fang Rui was first onstage.

The map selected for this group arena battle was relatively open, a bit better for unobstructed sight that Su Mucheng needed and the simple direct confrontations that Tang Rou liked. However, this map didn't have any of the complex features that Fang Rui needed for his dirty playing.

This was also a difficulty in picking a map for the group arena, and was also a factor to consider when deciding the player order.

Fang Rui was the sacrificed piece in Happy's selection of this map. After entering the battle, he had Boundless Sea charge right towards the center of the map. It looked like he wasn't about to try and force some dirty playing onto this relatively simple map.

The two sides' characters quickly met at the center of the map. A Spitfire didn't have too many demanding requirements of a map, and Ge Zhaolan, this rejected player, didn't have a particularly distinctive playstyle, he was right in the middle. Seeing that this was the map, he simply controlled his character to head right toward the center. When he spotted Fang Rui's Boundless Sea, he calculated the distance, and as soon as he entered the Spitfire's attack range, Transparent lifted his gun without any hesitation.

Gunshot, Boundless Sea ducked to the ground. That rolling and crawling Thief-like moving style once again appeared with this Qi Master Boundless Sea.

The audience applauded. This Qi Master style that Fang Rui had invented had already attracted attention and a few imitations.

To ordinary players without any sort of high-end in-depth background, they just made their best approximations, drawing a tiger like a dog. But in the professional circle, the Qi Masters who saw Fang Rui's current playstyle could only shake their heads. They didn't reject his style altogether, but this kind of style was just entirely different from their habits. This sort of rolling and crawling was only familiar to Fang Rui. If they had to do the same, they would all feel that it was strange.

And this kind of playstyle wasn't as simple as making such postures. After some detailed analysis by some so-called experts, they all concluded that this sort of playstyle was closely linked to Fang Rui own personal qualities.

Chapter 1225
Darkness and Light

What were Fang Rui's qualities?

If this question were posed to one hundred Glory players, approximately one hundred answers would be "dirty," without any hesitation.

This of course wasn't wrong, but the analysis by the so-called experts wouldn't be so unspecific. They used many technical details to pick out what qualities Fang Rui had, and the conclusion they reached was: this playstyle fits Fang Rui exactly, but possibly would not fit anyone else.

Those that supported this view included the previous Qi Master All-Star, Zhao Yang. Although he had already retired, he hadn't stopped paying attention to Glory, and the reporters that were close with him easily obtained his views on Fang Rui's Qi Master. Zhao Yang believed that even he himself had no way of playing Fang Rui's style of Qi Master, and that it truly was a unique style that arose from the player.

What would be the fruits of this playstyle?

As of now, Fang Rui growing accustomed to his new playstyle was an indispensable contribution to Happy's recent strong performance. After being thrown off by Ye Xiu's unspecialized Lord Grim, the various members of the Alliance now faced another playstyle that they couldn't immediately understand, that caused them just as much difficulty as Lord Grim.

Losing wasn't scary. But losing without knowing why you lost, that was scary. This meant that you had no way of obtaining experience and improving.

And because of Happy, the Alliance players felt this strongly. The unknown unspecialized, the chaotic Steamed Bun, and now this new playstyle from Fang Rui.

This new team was really very new. New people, new characters, even new playstyles.

How to counter this entirely new element? The teams all spent time to study and try

and figure out. But each team had 19 opponents in the Alliance, not just Happy. In the end, no team would do too much study or have too much focus on just one team. They had to follow the rhythm of the match schedule. Whatever team they were about to face, they would focus on defeating that team. And so Happy took advantage of this; after stabilizing their style they accumulated points like crazy. Now at Round 14, their footsteps hadn't slowed at all. Void's first player in the group arena, Ge Zhaolan, went down rapidly, having only knocked away 37% of Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

A beautiful opening. The cheers from the crowd sent the dejected Ge Zhaolan offstage.

Li Xuan sighed and shook his head, his gaze falling upon the one at his side. His closest friend, his best partner, but at the same time the one who was in conflict with him for the title of number one Ghostblade. Wu Yuce.

"It's up to you," Li Xuan said.

Void's next players were Wu Yuce and himself. Right now, Happy had a significant lead, with 2.63 people remaining.

Wu Yuce nodded. Without saying anything else, he stood up and resolutely headed toward the stage.

The Happy supporters in the crowd gave vocal support to their home team, and of course they would also boo the Void players to disrupt them. But Wu Yuce seemed as though he already had a natural defense against booing. His steps were very steady, and when he crossed paths with Ge Zhaolan, he even paused to say some words to him. He wasn't affected by the atmosphere of the stadium at all.

Wu Yuce quickly arrived onstage, entered the competitor booth, and logged on to his character.

Ghostblade, Carved Ghost. Among the recent All-Star characters, one of the only two female ones.

"Bring it, Miss Wu!" So when the battle began, Fang Rui immediately used this to trash talk.

Wu Yuce didn't reply, and Carved Ghost moved along the map. And Fang Rui? He didn't seem to hope for any response from Wu Yuce. As he tossed this bit of trash talk, he controlled Boundless Sea to rush forward.

In reality, Fang Rui wasn't too unfamiliar with Wu Yuce, as they had debuted the same year. But although both of them had proven themselves from the beginning within their respective teams, neither of them could compete with that other rookie from their year.

That year, Zhou Zekai made his dazzling debut on the professional stage. In his first season, he had carried the mediocre team Samsara into the playoffs.

What were Fang Rui and Wu Yuce up to during that time?

Fang Rui arrived at Wind Howl, initially as the successor to Lin Jingyan's Demon Subduer, but in that first season, Fang Rui revealed his talent for the Thief class. And so, he settled on becoming a Thief player, stepping on the road to becoming an All-Star player.

And Wu Yuce? When he first arrived at Void, the team had also wanted him to play a different class, but Wu Yuce refused to cooperate, insisting that he wanted to play Ghostblade. But Void at that time already had Li Xuan, a Ghostblade player from the Golden Generation. Wu Yuce's behavior was viewed as extremely unwise and provocative. He had been treated coldly at the beginning, until, by chance, he obtained an opportunity to go onstage. With that battle, the team finally began to reevaluate its position toward him, and they decided… having two Ghostblades wasn't impossible. From there, the double Ghostblade partnership was slowly established.

Neither of these two players' beginnings were as shining as Zhou Zekai's; they each had their own twists and turns, but they reflected the different attitudes of the two players.

Fang Rui was very casual. He played a Qi Master at Blue Rain, then was raised by Wind Howl to play a Brawler, and then when he finally became a full pro player, he found that Thief suited him, so he became a Thief… It could be said that Fang Rui was constantly compromising, but in the current pro player environment, if a player who hadn't yet made a name for himself wanted to be valued by the team, most anyone would choose this kind of compromise and obedience. And Fang Rui, his compromise and obedience was a bit more than normal, as evident by how many twists and turns there had been from his training camp days to becoming a full pro player. In the end, he succeeded. But this guy, after succeeding, changed classes again. With his current status and position, his class change generally wasn't viewed as compromise and obedience. Yet Fang Rui felt that this wasn't much different from what he had done in

the past.

Wu Yuce didn't have much in common with Fang Rui. He hadn't gone along with the team's needs, instead stubbornly sticking to his choice. Most teams would perhaps directly give up on a player like this, but Wu Yuce's luck wasn't bad. He entered the team like this, maintained his decision, and then afterwards, he waited for an opportunity and seized the opportunity. His persistence paid off, and he too walked upon the road to becoming an All-Star.

Two entirely different paths, but they had both resulted in equally excellent All-Star players. And now, the two met. Fang Rui's playstyle was like his own character, casual, and so he became the master of playing dirty. Wu Yuce, on the other hand, was tough and unyielding, thus his Ghostblade also exuded a toughness from the bones.

Fang Rui only tossed that one word of trash talk when Wu Yuce first entered because Fang Rui was clear that this was someone who wouldn't be disrupted by trash talk at all. His personality was just that tough. As a rookie, he had dared to stubbornly refuse the plans of his team - this wasn't something that any player would be brave enough to do.

The two sides quickly met at the center of the map. Without any further interaction, they began fighting. Boundless Sea began Fang Rui's trademark Thief-style posture and movement, and before the opponent used a skill, a Qi Bullet was sent flying toward him.

Ghost Slash!

It was met by a Ghostblade's Ghost Slash. A magic aura rippled from the blade, directly travelling through the Qi Bullet.

The Qi Bullet wouldn't be complete dissipated by the priority of that attack, and it continued to fly toward Carved Ghost, but Carved Ghost's slash also continued toward Boundless Sea.

With a bang, the Qi Bullet landed upon Carved Ghost. He hadn't tried to dodge at all, doing everything he could to send this Ghost Slash onto Boundless Sea.

This guy!

Fang Rui grit his teeth. The Ghostblade wasn't very suited to hard and direct fighting,

since it wasn't a class with high defense or health, but Wu Yuce still preferred this method, as it suited is personality.

But Fang Rui hadn't expected this kid would be so fierce right from the start.

He wanted to dodge this attack, but if he did, Carved Ghost's second attack would arrive instantly, and Wu Yuce would have the initiative. He refused to let that happen!

Fang Rui inputted controls and activated Reinforced Iron Bones on Boundless Sea, taking the brunt of Carved Ghost's Ghost Slash.

Qi Blade!

Boundless Sea sent this attack just when he was hit by the Ghost Blade. But at this point, Carved Ghost was still surrounded by the ghostly aura from using the Ghost Blade. Through the mist of purple, this Qi Blade carved a clearly visible path.

Carved Ghost leaned to the left.

Heh, it won't be so easy. Fang Rui smiled coldly. The Qi Blade suddenly twisted toward the right, instantly cutting Carved Ghost.

But even after taking this attack, Wu Yuce didn't stop attacking. Even as Carved Ghost was hit by the Qi Blade, the blade in her hand was still sent out.

Ice Seal Ghost Slash!

The difference between Sword Demon and Phantom Demon was that Phantom Demons summoned the Ghost God's power to create effects, controlling or damaging the opponent. Sword Demons, on the other hand, directly applied the Ghost God's power to their blades, increasing the damaging power of their slashes.

Ghost Slash, Moonlight Slash, Full Moonlight Slash, these were the three slashing attacks that Ghostblades could learn under level 20. And Sword Demons could apply any type of Ghost God power to these three slashing skills.

Carved Ghost's attack just now applied ice spirit power to the blade, thus creating an Ice Seal Ghost Slash. The blade emitted faint blue icy mist, which was sent several body units outward with the slash. Although Boundless Sea was already rolling, he was still hit by the icy mist, and his movement speed decreased significantly.

Flame-Bitten Full Moon!

Carved Ghost slid forward and made another slash, this time invoking the spirit of fire along the blade and using a Full Moonlight Slash. The enchanting fire spirit power swept in the shape of a full moon, but it wasn't very eye-burning. These flames conjured from magic weren't a pure scarlet, but carried some dark purple within. But their power would be even stronger, because it wouldn't just deal fire damage, it would also carry the dark damage inherent to a Ghostblade.

Flame-Bitten Full Moon, slash down!

Qi Guard!

A tangible protective shield suddenly expanded around Boundless Sea, blocking the Flame-Bitten Full Moon.

If Ghostblades were said to be naturally dark-aligned, then Qi Masters were naturally light-aligned. But the players playing these two classes right now…

The dark-aligned Ghostblade walked the direct and fierce path, while the light-aligned Qi Master was the representative of dirty playing.

Chapter 1226
A Loss, But A Spectacular One

he power of the Ghost God brought by the Flame-Bitten Full Moon battered against Boundless Sea's Qi Guard, but it could not suppress the radiance of the shield. The Qi Guard's defensive capabilities could hold against this attack.

Who would have thought that at this moment, a circle would appear below Carved Ghost? A wave of Ghost God energy suddenly rose and condensed onto the tip of his blade, supplementing the power of Flame-Bitten Full Moon.

Sword Boundary?

Everyone was stunned. No one had noticed Wu Yuce summoning this Sword Boundary.

Sword Boundary might be a low-leveled skill, but its supportive effects were top tier. Let alone a Phantom Sword Demon hybrid like Carved Ghost, even a pure Sword Demon would max this skill. This low-level skill had a very fast cast time. It could be used in between two attacks for a sudden damage buff.

Wu Yuce used it in this way. No one knew when he had cast the Ghost Boundary, but it had been set down after Flame-Bitten Full Moon. The buffs from Ghost Boundaries were immediate, and Flame-Bitten Full Moon dealt both physical and magic damage. Under the Strength and Intelligence buffs from the Sword Boundary, the power of the attack instantly shot up.

The radiance shining from Qi Guard dimmed.

Break!

The qi from the Qi Guard was consumed, and the remaining energy of Flame-Bitten Full Moon slashed towards Boundless Sea. Fang Rui immediately had Boundless Sea dodge, but Wu Yuce's follow up attack came soon afterwards.

Full Moonlight Slash!

This slash had finally come out. What Ghost God would be attached to it this time?

No ice. No fire. This Full Moonlight Slash was pitch black.

Dark Moonlight Slash. This time, Wu Yuce summoned the dark ghost. It stripped the light from the world, temporarily filling the area with darkness.

I can't dodge it!

Fang Rui instantly made this judgment. Wu Yuce's Carved Ghost had attacked one slash after the other. With even his Qi Guard forcefully broken, he had no way of dodging this attack.

If I can't avoid it, then we'll trade!

Just when the Dark Moonlight Slash was about to strike Boundless Sea, Boundless Sea raised his hands and used Sand Toss.

The damage from Sand Toss was insignificant compared to the damage from a Sword Boundary buffed Dark Moonlight Slash, but it would at least induce a blind effect similar to the Dark Ghost.

Pu!

Boundless Sea was the first to be hit. Darkness surrounded him, and Fang Rui's screen turned black as if his monitor was dead. However, the sound in his ears was still as clear as ever, so he knew that the fight had yet to stop. Soon after Boundless Sea threw sand at Carved Ghost, he could hear the tiny pattering of the sand colliding.

Did it hit? Did it blind him?

Fang Rui didn't know. He could no longer see anything, so he had Boundless Sea run for his life, while also shooting a Qi Bullet at a target he couldn't see. He just instinctively did something.

But soon, Fang Rui realized that his Boundless Sea was in the air.

He wasn't Blinded? Boundless Sea was hit by another attack. Such a tightly linked combo clearly could not be done by someone who was blind. From this, Fang Rui inferred that Carved Ghost had not been blinded by the Sand Toss.

The viewers could see everything clearly. Not only did the Blind fail, Carved Ghost didn't even eat the miniscule amount of damage from the Sand Toss. After Dark Moonlight Slash, a shadow circled around Carved Ghost, blocking the tiny particles of sand.

Ghostblade skill: Shadow Image.

The unaffected Carved Ghost continued his assault. Shadow Claw threw Boundless Sea into the air, and starting from the ghost slash up until the Blind effect wore off, Boundless Sea never fell from the air.

"I say, don't be too savage!" As soon as the darkness disappeared, Fang Rui's spirits rose. Even though he had taken quite a bit of damage from the combo, it was far from enough to extinguish his morale.

Boundless Sea's back faced the ground, welcoming Carved Ghost's sword. His two hands formed a ball of qi in front of his chest.

He's sneakily charging his attack again!

Quite a few people had gotten a grasp of Fang Rui's battle style now, and they were starting to discuss it.

Wu Yuce wasn't careless either. He knew exactly how long the Blind from Dark Moonlight Slash lasted, and once the effects wore off, if Boundless Sea's arms were suddenly raised to his chest, then…

Carved Ghost immediately slid to the side, adjusting his position first. He swung his sword, blocking off the angle at which Boundless Sea could attack with by twisting his body.

Who would have thought that Boundless Sea wouldn't twist his body. The ball of qi contained in his hands was let out just like that.

Sky Piercing Strike!

It really was Sky Piercing Strike. An intense wave of energy flew out towards the sky, leaving traces of spinning qi.

There was nothing in the air, so this Sky Piercing Strike obviously didn't hit anything.

However, through its momentum, Boundless Sea suddenly accelerated towards the ground. The sealing attack from Carved Ghost missed.

Landmine Quake!

Right before Boundless Sea landed on the ground, his two palms once again charged up qi. He didn't even turn his view, and his two hands hit the ground before his body did.

The skill was released, and qi spread along the ground, striking everything within its range. Carved Ghost was no exception. The force coming from the earth shot up, flinging him to the side.

Quick Recover!

Wu Yuce had Carved Ghost roll on the ground, but Boundless Sea, whose hands hit the ground, rolled faster! For this sort of rolling and crawling on the ground movement, who could be more skilled at it then this master of playing dirty?

Carved Ghost was still flying in the air, when Boundless Sea reached his side.

Pulse Break: Break Intelligence!

One finger stabbed into Carved Ghost, lowering his Intelligence significantly.

Then, Flash Burst and Qigong Blast!

Two high-level skills landed on Carved Ghost one after the other. Qi whirled crazily around Carved Ghost, creating a cyclone of qi lifting the earth along with it. Carved Ghost didn't look like he had just been hit by an attack. It was like he was exploding forth with some sort of small Cosmo (Saint Seiya).

Fang Rui wanted to continue following up, but Wu Yuce quickly recovered. Being hit all of a sudden by such heavy attacks didn't seem to shake his willpower.

What a spectacular and evenly-matched fight!

Quite a few members of the crowd stood up, clapping for this fight. The fans wanted their own team to win, but that didn't mean they wouldn't show respect. High-level matches were a joy to watch. For this type of fight, even if their own side lost, they

would leave the field with the least amount of regret.

In the end, Fang Rui walked down from the stage with this attitude from the crowd. He had lost, but the applause he won was as if he had been the winner. Even though he didn't win, facing a strong opponent like Wu Yuce brought Fang Rui's brilliant performance to new heights.

When people discussed Fang Rui's Qi Master playstyle, people wondered whether this new playstyle would be able to stand the test of time.

New playstyles would always have surprising results when they first appeared because everyone was still new to them. The best way to test whether or not a playstyle could become mainstream was through time. In the ten years of Glory, countless playstyles had come and gone. In the current state of Glory, the meta had matured and steadied. New playstyles were usually short-lived. The number of new playstyles that could last was becoming less and less.

Fang Rui's Qi Master playtsyle had only been around for ten rounds. Could it truly become mainstream? The more conservative people weren't too optimistic about it. But in the fight that just ended, in the 1v1 against a skilled opponent like Wu Yuce, Fang Rui's playstyle shone as brilliant as ever. It could be considered to have passed a difficult test.

"Yay, I'm so happy!" Fang Rui clearly knew about the value of this fight. He had lost, but the implications for the future were huge. What's more, it couldn't really be said that he lost! He had taken out half the health of Wu Yuce's Carved Ghost. Fang Rui had achieved a 1v1.5, quite a good result. This was the group arena, which couldn't be judged from the outcome of a single battle.

"Mmhm, nice job," Ye Xiu said.

"I really want to go up and play another round!" Fang Rui gripped his account card, with his desire to continue written all over his face.

"You can go ask him if he wants to play all night with you after the match," Ye Xiu said.

"Okay okay, that's a good suggestion. I'll text him." Fang Rui took out his cellphone in a hurry. As for Happy, their second player was Su Mucheng, who walked onto the stage with a smile.

Dancing Rain started at full health, while Carved Ghost started at half health. Launchers, with their extremely long-ranged attacks, could be considered as Ghostblade counters to an extent, as Ghostblades had very few movement skills. In the end, in another spectacular fight, Dancing Rain won with 67% of her health left.

Team Void's anchor for the group arena was unfortunately another Ghostblade. The Launcher's suppression over Ghostblades was still there. Su Mucheng usually played in the individual competition. Being moved to the group arena specifically for this match clearly showed Happy's intentions of countering Team Void's two Ghostblades.

A third of her health to take away Wu Yuce. Two thirds of her health to welcome Li Xuan.

Li Xuan was a Phantom Demon. He didn't have long-ranged attacks, and his opponent wasn't going to fight him at melee range. The boundaries that Phantom Demons could set down weren't really useful. He needed to take the initiative and find a way to close the distance between his opponent, but how could it be that easy…

The Ghostblade duo had been crushed in all sorts of ways by the Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng duo in the competition for Best Partners over many seasons. Ye Xiu? Even if he wasn't there, just Su Mucheng alone left them in pitiful states again and again. Su Mucheng was even nicknamed the Nemesis of the Ghost Duo.

This Ghost Duo wasn't in a general sense; it was specifically pointing towards these two from Team Void. Su Mucheng had much experience in dealing with Ghostblades, and was the source of much misery for these two.

From the looks of it, even after a season of absence, their nemesis was still a nemesis. She took out Carved Ghost's half health with a third of her health, and Li Xuan wasn't able to finish her off. Team Happy won the group arena with just two players.

"Ah…" Fang Rui would glance at his cellphone from time to time. Happy had won the group arena, but he looked depressed. "He hasn't replied back yet. It seems like he's not in a very good mood!"

With a lagging score of 0 to 5, who would be in a good mood?

Chapter 1227
The Two Towers

Of course Void wouldn't be in a good mood.

For the group arena, Li Xuan had tried to boost his team members' morale, but when he himself went up, he couldn't find his footing. He hadn't even gotten to see Happy's group arena anchor before being blasted down by Su Mucheng, which made the whole situation quite awkward. The good thing was that all of Void's players were old members, and the newer member Ge Caijie was a mature and stable individual who knew that Su Mucheng was always a source of suffering for this team's captain and vice captain. There was no bitterness because of this.

They were losing 0-5. In the confrontation between these two directly competing teams, Void was completely lagging behind. If they lost again in the team competition, then this round would end with a ten-point difference between the two teams. As soon as a difference reached double-digits, it would always seem rather insurmountable. Even a difference of 10 points would provoke a much different feeling than a difference of 9.

"I think, no one here wants to be swept 10-0 by Happy?" Thus, this is what Li Xuan said to his teammates.

"Lose the team competition and we'll be overtaken; win it and we'll maintain our tie. I won't say any more about what we need to do. Get your spirits up, everyone, this isn't the time to hang our heads in dejection. Remember last round, remember round 11, we have the ability to defeat any team!"

Last round, Void defeated Misty Rain 8 to 2. In Round 11, defeating Tiny Herb 8 to 2 was the highlight of Void's season thus far. Li Xuan hoped to remind everyone of how they had defeated strong teams in the past in order to summon their confidence.

"Let's go! Let's win these five points!" Li Xuan said. Turning his head, he saw that Happy's players for the team competition had already stood and were walking onstage.

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, the pair that had completely defeated the Ghost Duo.

Fang Rui, who turned the light-aligned Qi Master into a dark and sneaky master of playing dirty.

Tang Rou, who hadn't been able to play in the group arena, had been waiting a long time to go onstage.

An Wenyi had always been seen as Happy's weak point, but after 13 rounds, had anyone managed to target this weak point to create any real danger for Happy? No, not at all, Happy's strategies always carefully created a protection for him. This kind of protection wasn't just a protection of his life and safety, it also protected his development. They tried to prevent any situations that An Wenyi couldn't handle, this was a principle that Happy's strategies always carried out, and it had already been analyzed by many specialists.

After these five, the sixth person was Steamed Bun, an incredible rookie who had demonstrated a level of luck approaching a miracle this round. Would he carry this luck to the team competition as well?

"Let's go!" Seeing that the opponent had already gone out, Li Xuan said this immediately.

Team Void, Li Xuan and Wu Yuce's double Ghostblade pairing would of course make an appearance. Then, there was the healer, necessary for any team competition; Void's healer was called Tang Lisheng, who used a Paladin called Soul Defender. As for the other three positions, Li Xun's position typically didn't change, and Ge Caijie's position was becoming more and more stable as he proved himself. He was even quietly becoming the axis around which Void's tactics revolved. For the final player, Void sent Yang Haoxuan, who had appeared in the individual competition earlier.

In this season, Void more often sent out Spitfire Ge Zhaolan as their sixth player, but in this round against Happy, they made special adjustments, sending out Launcher Yang Haoxuan instead, replacing Li Xun as one of the five players who would go onstage first. The intent of this adjustment was very clear. As expected, Void was extremely wary of Su Mucheng, so they also added a Launcher to their roster, so that both sides could be more equally matched in terms of long-range firepower.

The two teams' players went onstage. The team competition was the main event of

each match, and there was a longer break beforehand to allow them to prepare. During this time, the players from each team often would chat while onstage.

"Why didn't you reply to my text?" Team Void's Wu Yuce received Fang Rui's greeting.

"My phone wasn't on," Wu Yuce answered.

"Oh, what time are you guys heading back?" Fang Rui asked. Void was in City X, rather far away from City H. Even though the Glory pro scene was rapidly developing, as of now, there was no team rich enough to have their own special charter plane or whatnot. Because Glory matches didn't have a set duration, it was rather difficult to make post-match plans. In order to let the players focus on the match, most guest teams would choose to spend the night at the city before leaving if their home city was far away.

"Tomorrow." Indeed, Void had made such plans.

"After the match is over, let's play a few rounds!" Fang Rui didn't send another text, and just directly asked for a match.

The others stared, dumbfounded, as they watched these two arrange a private fight before this match had even ended. To the side, the listening judge also felt that there was something wrong with this, but he also couldn't find a rule to prevent this, so he could only glare at the two of them.

Fang Rui was the only one proposing the fight. Wu Yuce, who was dragged under the harsh look of the judge simply because he was the one being invited, felt that he was unjustly wronged. He didn't say any more to Fang Rui, only tossing out a "we'll talk after" before heading with the rest of his Void teammates to the competitor booths.

Soon enough, the two sides were both ready and the countdown began. Five seconds later, the battle officially began.

The map was The Two Towers.

Void spawned at the northeast corner, Happy at the southwest. The two corners were directly opposite each other. The northwest and southeast corners were in a more sunken basin, and each corner had a rock forest. At the center of the map, the directly opposite ten o'clock and four o'clock directions each had a stone watchtower, from which this map took its name.

The two watchtowers were at the same height, and their distance from each other was within the firing range of a Launcher. These high points were clearly designed for a Launcher to use suppressive attacks with their firepower. Seeing this map chosen, Void could only grit their teeth. It was clear that Happy also knew that Su Mucheng was the greatest threat to their Ghost Duo, and they had chosen this map to maximize Dancing Rain's firepower coverage.

But in this round, Void also sent out a Launcher. Who didn't have firepower coverage?

"Go!"

Li Xuan gave his orders and Void's five swiftly began moving toward the map's center, wanting to get to the watchtowers as quickly as possible.

The two watchtowers were equidistant from the two teams' spawn points, for the sake of fairness. Void's players were confident that their movement speed wouldn't be any slower than Happy's, but as they rushed out of the northeast corner and the four o'clock tower came into clearer and clearer view, they suddenly saw a silhouette appear at the top of the watchtower.

Dancing Rain had one foot on the floor and the other propped against the guardrail of the watchtower. Shouldering her heavy cannon, her hair billowing in the wind, how was this such a valiant and heroic sight?

Su Mucheng's Launcher arrived at the 4 o'clock tower cleanly before Void.

How was she so fast?

Void's players weren't too confused. There was only one way she could arrive so quickly: Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain hadn't travelled at the same pace as the rest of the team; she had charged here alone to seize this watchtower. Travelling alone was always faster than travelling with a group. The movement speed of a character didn't just come from equipment - skills that aided movement would help increase a character's speed significantly. And Clerics and Paladins, these two healing classes, didn't have such skills. They were the short legs of the 24 Glory classes. The movement of an entire team, in order to protect the healer naturally couldn't be fast.

Void could have also sent their Launcher to move solo. But if both sides sent out one player in advance, then those two players would meet first. Yang Haoxuan duelling Su Mucheng… Li Xuan couldn't say that he didn't believe in his own teammate, but

perhaps because he was always a victim of Su Mucheng, he dreaded her. And Yang Haoxuan was crucial for this team competition, so he didn't dare send him out to take on Su Mucheng by himself. Void moved as a whole team, and Su Mucheng boldly arrived first.

"How brave, everyone forward!" After giving a word of praise, Li Xuan ordered the whole team forward.

If they weren't shocked, that meant that they had predicted this situation. And if they had predicted this, would they have no plan? Void's five players instantly scattered, surrounding the 4 o'clock tower as quickly as they could. Tang Lisheng's Paladin quickly fell behind, and he looked a bit like a stumbling old man as he took the road furthest to the left. But after passing a certain point on the road, this character suddenly increased in speed drastically, starting to run with an unimaginable speed.

How?

After everyone was stunned for a moment, the display screen clearly identified in the close-up that this character was no longer Soul Defender. Void had actually boldly switched characters. The Paladin's sharp leftward movement wasn't to avoid Dancing Rain's attack range, but to reach the support zone. The Paladin left battle, and Li Xun's Assassin Ghost Lantern switched in. With a Swift Run and Swift Movements, wasn't this Assassin's movement speed a solid 1.5 times faster than the Paladin's?

With this, Void's plan couldn't be any clearer. They had guessed that Su Mucheng would arrive solo to claim a watchtower, so they gave her that chance. Then, they directly switched out their healer, five characters would attack at once to try to take Dancing Rain down first!

The two Ghostblades activated Ghost Step, the Exorcist Blue Exorcist used a Speed Talisman, the Launcher Translucent used Aerial Cannon, the Assassin Ghost Lantern felt that Swift Run and Swift Movements weren't enjoyable enough and used a Shining Cut as well. Five characters, through their individual methods, reached their top movement speeds, instantly converging upon the 4 o'clock watchtower. Their positions had also clearly been planned in advance. From Su Mucheng's high ground, she could stop one of them, but she couldn't simultaneously attack all five.

And so Su Mucheng ignored four of the players and focused her firepower on Li Xuan's Phantom Demon, Crying Devil.

Under the firepower suppression, Crying Devil naturally couldn't continue forward easily, and quickly fell behind the other four. But those four had already swiftly approached the 4 o'clock tower, and Yang Haoxuan's Translucent was already occasionally lifting his cannon to fire attacks toward Dancing Rain at the top of the tower.

"Successfully in position!" As expected of the fastest class, the Assassin. Even though he had a late start because of Tang Lisheng's Paladin, he had actually reached the bottom of the tower first. As he reported in the chat, Li Xuan controlled Ghost Lantern to circle around the base to reach the stairs behind it. But when he circled around, Li Xun instantly came to a halt.

This… this… aren't there too many people here?

Behind the watchtower, one, two, three, four… Happy's four players were in formation and waiting for him…

Chapter 1228
A Risky Move

Li Xun's shock couldn't described with just words. Speaking of which, only Team Void's six players didn't know about the four Happy players hiding. Even the Team Void players sitting at their bench had seen Happy's movements through the viewers' omniscient view. Unfortunately, they couldn't inform their teammates on stage. They could only run around in circles anxiously like cats on a hot tin roof.

As for the crowd?

They didn't feel shocked like Li Xun. They could only wait expectantly for Team Void to rush forward and run into an unexpected situation. And now, the time had finally come.

This was the climax of the script!

When Li Xun's Ghost Lantern ran past the watchtower and came across Happy's four players, the crowd fired up.

Li Xun only needed a glance to understand what had just happened because the four characters waiting here were Lord Grim, Boundless Sea, Soft Mist and Steamed Bun Invasion.

Yes, no healer. They had no one slowing them down. Happy came up full force. It wasn't just Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain, but everyone. As for Little Cold Hands? He had probably switched with Steamed Bun Invasion as soon as the match started… the starting spawn point was also the support zone.

1v4?

Li Xun wasn't that naive, but what should he do now? He had run here as fast as he could, so his movement skills were all on cooldown. He couldn't escape nor could he beat them. He had to hurry and inform his teammates of his situation.

"Trapped!"

Li Xun chose to use the most concise way possible to notify his teammates as Happy's four character threw themselves at him.

Trapped? Did they need a reminder? Team Void's four other players weren't far from Li Xun's Ghost Lantern, so they saw the ambush from Happy's four players. Everyone was stunned.

Ghost Lantern was surrounded in an instant. Team Void was now at a huge disadvantage.

How did this happen?

Li Xuan wasn't famous for his tactical skill, and he didn't like to take risks. He quickly felt the difference between the two team's tactical levels.

The difference was "risk"!

When the match started, Void could have sent their Launcher, Yang Haoxuan, to fight for this position, but because they didn't want to risk it, fearing that Yang Haoxuan would be suppressed by Su Mucheng. Thus, the team spread out further to be safer.

As for Happy? They directly abandoned their healer and made a beeline towards this position to get there as fast as possible. Without Void knowing, Happy arrived, while having Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain make a feint towards the high grounds. Happy had played extremely risky. If Void hadn't impatiently tried to take down Dancing Rain and continued their advance forward, even if Dancing Rain held the high grounds, being without a healer wasn't something that a skilled support character could make up for. In fierce close combat, Launchers could not stop a relentless offensive.

Unfortunately, Void didn't do this.

They did not dare risk it, but they did not steadily advance forward either. When they saw Su Mucheng take the high grounds, they viewed it as their opportunity to victory, so they started moving full speed ahead, even switching out their healer for a damage dealer midway.

The risk they took had been after seeking for stability. Compared to Happy, who risked it all at the start, their risk had been much smaller.

Ghost Lantern was instantly surrounded. Void's other four players immediately

understood the situation too.

What should they do?

"Rescue!"

Li Xuan typed a single word in chat.

They had no choice but to save him. Li Xun alone probably had no chance of escaping a 4v1 situation. If he died, it would become a 5v6. Although Void could have their sixth player sub in, it would still be a 5v5. However, Happy would have an extra player as a backup, allowing them to play more forcefully to take the initiative. Forcing the two sides to trade would be disadvantageous for Void.

Thus, at this moment, Li Xuan didn't choose to retreat, instead calling for everyone to hurry over. After all, the rest of Void wasn't that far from him. With a ghost boundary placed down, Li Xuan felt like he should be able to quickly find an opening for Li Xun to get away.

Ice Soul!

Li Xuan's character was the number one Phantom Demon in Glory, Crying Devil. The Silver weapon in his hands Four Heavenly Wheels strengthened three elements, Fire, Ice, and Darkness. The glittering ice crystals swept over the darkness of Ghostblades. The cast time was extremely short too; the Ice Boundary was set down almost instantly.

However, almost instant meant it wasn't instant. The moment the Ice Boundary started to form, Li Xuan saw a grenade at his feet.

The grenade exploded. Crying Devil dodged it, but the Ice Boundary failed to be placed down. Li Xuan looked upwards and saw Dancing Rain's long hair and clothing fluttering in the wind at the top of the watchtower.

She really is our nemesis! Li Xuan sighed, but…

A shadow flickered past Crying Devil, practically the instant the grenade exploded. Ice crystals flowed from the tachi in his hands; it just wasn't as dazzling as Four Heavenly Wheels.

Carved Ghost's weapon, Heavenly Crimson Lotus strengthened fire element skills. His Ice Boundary wasn't skilled very high either, so the ice crystals swirling around Heavenly Crimson Lotus didn't look as glamorous. Moreover, compared to Crying Devil, Carved Ghost's cast time was a bit slower. But at this moment, the phantom soul from Heavenly Crimson Lotus flew out, forming the Ice Boundary. The area surrounding Ghost Lantern froze into ice.

Who could be more skilled at coordinating with boundaries than Void's Ghostblade duo? Whether it was each other's thoughts, habits, or characters, the two had reached the point of perfection. They no longer needed to speak to communicate.

Crying Devil, the number one Phantom Demon, had just been cover. The one to actually lay down the Ice Boundary was Carved Ghost. In that instant, Void completed an extremely beautiful display of teamwork.

How could Happy not retreat from an Ice Boundary?

The threat of Carved Ghost's Ice Boundary might be slightly lower, but its effects couldn't be ignored.

However, Happy didn't retreat.

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea swung both his arms, creating a Qi Guard. This Ice Boundary had been blocked by it. The two opponents who fought intensely in the group arena once once again clashed in the team competition.

The ice energy struck the Qi Guard, but the power of Carved Ghost's Ice Boundary was limited. It evidently could not break through Boundless Sea's Qi Guard. The skill used to try and save Ghost Lantern as soon as possible was blocked.

Missing this opportunity, Ghost Lantern took more damage. Li Xuan's Crying Devil charged forward to place down another boundary, when he heard the whistle of missiles flying above his head. Dancing Rain let out all of her firepower towards the two Ghostblades.

The two dodged, one to the left and the other to the right. They ignored Dancing Rain and continued to charge towards the encirclement. Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist waved his hands and took out his scythe. Lightning descended from the sky and gathered on the scythe. He had clearly placed a Lightning Talisman on it.

Qi Guard was unable to completely block this attack. A Soul Guidanced weapon had very high priority. It couldn't be blocked by a normal attack, but among the ones that could, another Soul Guidance was naturally included!

Inside the encirclement, Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella left his hands and spun towards the scythe.

The two skills collided. It could be seen that Lord Grim's Soul Guidance priority was slightly weaker. After all, he wasn't an Exorcist. However, this collision stopped Blue Exorcist's attack from reaching its desired location. Although it didn't completely block it, it helped the others in Happy dodge this attack.

After this collision, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was recalled back by Lord Grim and started hitting Ghost Lantern's head again. Along with a Fling, Ghost Lantern was thrown out. However, before Void could be happy about it, they saw that the others in Happy had prepared in advance for this toss and were already heading towards there. Ghost Lantern wasn't even able to land on the ground before Steamed Bun Invasion grabbed him with a Strangle.

Happy focused their attacks, while moving with their target. Turning around the watchtower dumbfounded Void's Launcher. Yang Haoxuan had just been about to launch a Satellite Beam, but with this turn, he no longer had any vision of them. However, he wasn't able to stop himself in time and the Satellite Beam was still completed. In the end, it awkwardly landed on Carved Ghost's head, who was chasing after them. On the watchtower, Su Mucheng took advantage of this Satellite Beam and shot him tumbling with a Laser Beam.

Carved Ghost and Crying Devil crossed each other and switched positions, while also using Ghost Step, which had gone off cooldown. The two characters sprinted, leaving afterimages behind them, but Happy suddenly caught them off guard.

Shatter the Lands!

Tang Rou's Soft Mist leapt high into the air and let loose a high-level skill.

Who dared to take this skill head on? The two Ghostblades could only retreat. Soft Mist didn't continue fighting, after her attack got rid of them, she immediately went back to attack Ghost Lantern. Ta ta ta ta, Lord Grim fired a Gatling Gun to follow up. A shower of bullets spilled out happily.

Void was having a headache!

They thought that their Ghostblades, who specialised in controlling the field, would be able to quickly let Li Xun escape. Who would have thought that they would be forced into such a pitiful position. As a result, not only did they fail to rescue their teammate, they fell into a trap. They wouldn't be able to get a healer to support them in a short amount of time, but Happy? It was already Round 14. Everyone had seen Lord Grim suddenly wave his umbrella and cast a few heals before. No one would disregard his healing.

"Retreat!"

They had just yelled "Rescue!" and in the blink of an eye, it had turned into a "Retreat!" It couldn't be said that this was Li Xuan hesitating. The circumstances had changed. Seeing that rescuing wasn't working and fighting would be difficult, they could only let go of one of their players and save their own lives so they could fight another battle.

Who would have thought that while Void had given up, Happy hadn't. Sensing Void's intentions, Happy abandoned Ghost Lantern and chased after them.

Chapter 1229
Team Void's Launcher

Team Void was still a pro team; even in retreat, there was strategy. They could not ignore the enemy as they backed away, and saw Lord Grim and Boundless Sea standing nearly mirrored, opening their palms with almost identical stances…

Cloud Grasping Fist!

And it was two at the same time!

Of Team Void's four players, besides Yang Haoxuan's Translucent, everyone else was within range of these two grabs. Luckily, they noticed their movements in time and hastily scrambled around frantically. If Cloud Grasping Fist could not be interrupted, the only other way to escape from it was to run around constantly so the enemy couldn't pinpoint them. The qi released by Cloud Grasping Fist was completely invisible.

The attention of these three players were entirely focused on the two Cloud Grasping Fists, when they saw Yang Haoxuan roar in chat: "ABOVE!"

Above?

The moment they saw the message, they felt an abnormality in the lighting of their field of view, but it was already too late do anything. A Satellite Beam descended from the sky.

The three had only been focused on the two Cloud Grasping Fists, so for a moment, they forgot about Dancing Rain, who was above them. And the price for their mistake was painful. The central Satellite Beam struck Crying Devil, and the following smaller beams thoroughly disrupted their rhythm.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Tang Hao's Soft Mist seized this opportunity to force her way into their ranks. Although her charge didn't hit anyone, her follow-up Tyrant's Destruction sent Blue

Exorcist, who was busy dodging the rotating beams of light, flying away.

Blue Exorcist lost his balance. However, Tyrant's Destruction wasn't a grab skill that locked the body. As Blue Exorcist flew in the air, Ge Caijie hastily regained his balance. In this instant, Ge Caijie's calmness showed. The Soul Guidanced scythe flew out, not towards Soft Mist, nor was it to stop Happy's counterattack. Instead, it was thrown to its max distance, towards Steamed Bun Invasion, who had pinned Ghost Lantern to the ground was beating him up.

Lock Talisman!

A Talisman, which could help Li Xun break out from the assault, was attached to the scythe.

Li Xun and Ghost Lantern had already been abandoned, but because of the change in circumstances, Ge Caijie calmly made this decision. With Team Void's rhythm disrupted, this was a decision to disrupt Happy's rhythm. If Li Xun was saved, he could form a pincer attack with the rest of Void and again open up the enemy's formation. This was the best case scenario for Void's current situation.

Suddenly, a "biu" sounded. Ge Caijie looked up and saw a beam of light fire from Dancing Rain's cannon and accurately strike the scythe.

Soul Guidance had high priority, but the burst from Laser Beam was not weak either. This Laser Beam was unable to completely stop the scythe dead on its tracks, but it knocked it towards the ground. With a hum, the scythe stuck into the ground about half a unit away from Steamed Bun Invasion. The talisman on the scythe activated, but it didn't do anything. As for Steamed Bun Invasion? He didn't react until now. If Su Mucheng hadn't shot down the scythe, Steamed Bun, who was in the middle of beating up Ghost Lantern, would have most likely been hit.

If the attack had connected, the Lock Talisman would have taken effect. Void would briefly have a 5v4 situation, and the tides would turn. Ge Caijie's calm, swift decision was truly terrifying, however…

Looking up at that Launcher at the top of the watchtower, Ge Caijie was filled with awe.

He had joined the Alliance last season, just when Excellent Era had been relegated from the league. As a result, he had never fought against Su Mucheng's Launcher.

Although there was quite some controversy over Su Mucheng in the public eye, Team Void had suffered under her hands and had nothing but praise for her. When Li Xuan and Wu Yuce, his two seniors, had heard about Team Excellent Era getting relegated, Ge Caijie clearly heard them let out a "sigh of relief". The person who had given these two All-Stars such pressure was Su Mucheng.

What type of player is she?

Ge Caijie had always been curious about Su Mucheng?

And now, after personally going into battle against her, Ge Caijie could finally feel just how unbearable of an existence this top supportive player was. Li Xuan and Wu Yuce probably had the strongest feeling of this unbearableness.

Ge Caijie had nearly reverse the situation with Soul Guidance, but because of Su Mucheng's Laser Beam, his attack had been blocked. Team Void had scattered like sand. Right now, Yang Haoxuan, who had been picked for the team competition specifically to counter Su Mucheng, felt very ashamed of himself.

His purpose was to restrict Su Mucheng, but what had he done so far?

When the match started, Team Void had not sent him out to fight for the high grounds. Yang Haoxuan knew what the team had been worried about, but he didn't have the confidence to stand out and take the initiative to express that he could do it. If he had displayed this kind of courage and confidence, Yang Haoxuan knew that the team would have certainly given him the chance to prove himself. However, he hadn't. He had even felt glad that the team hadn't forced him to carry out this task. This was Yang Haoxuan himself not confident in himself, but at the same time, it was the shadow that Su Mucheng had placed in their hearts.

After the two sides started fighting, Su Mucheng occupied the high grounds and had an amazing field of view and position. However, it wasn't like Yang Haoxuan was sitting there doing nothing. He could also utilize his long-ranged attacks to suppress Su Mucheng. But from the looks of it, it seemed like he wasn't doing anything. At least, in the crucial moments, he hadn't displayed any usefulness. On the other hand, Su Mucheng had repeatedly disrupted Team Void several times.

It shouldn't be like this. What should I do?

Yang Haoxuan told himself that, but in this chaotic situation that he could read clearly,

he wasn't able to make a precise and effective judgement. In the end, he was just a long ranged attacker, standing at the farthest and safest position, a decoration for their team's offensive prowess. Change the tides? Yang Haoxuan had neither the courage nor the confidence. Even if he had the ability to make a difference, the probability of it happening was unlikely.

Yang Haoxuan's Translucent stood there far far away as if he were truly translucent. Sometimes, he would throw some AoE attacks towards where the Ghost Duo were attacking. Sometimes, he would nervously look upwards to observe Su Mucheng's actions and then send a few attacks towards her.

"Yang Haoxuan, what exactly are you doing!"

Finally, Wu Yuce yelled out in the chat. This enduring vice-captain very rarely gave any orders or directions, perhaps he was intentionally avoiding it. After all, Team Void's Ghost Duo was a pair with debate over who was better. Wu Yuce didn't want to exceed his place and disrupt the balance by meddling in other people's matters. He very carefully kept a certain distance away from captain Li Xuan. His voice was oftentimes even less heard than the regular team members during a match.

But now, this vice captain had done what he rarely ever did. He spoke. Let alone, Yang Haoxuan, even the others felt a shiver in surprise.

"Focus on Su Mucheng. Don't bother with anything else!" Wu Yuce said with unwavering certainty.

Yang Haoxuan tensed up. He looked upwards with practically zero thought behind it and saw Dancing Rain aiming at a target from the edge of the watchtower. Yang Haoxuan didn't even think and shot a Laser Beam towards her.

An involuntary action was the fastest. Yang Haoxuan lifting up his head and Laser Beam was practically simultaneous because he had done it without any thinking at all.

When Su Mucheng saw Translucent look towards her, she didn't think the attack would be so fast. Laser Beam's speed was extremely fast too, flashing in front of her in the blink of an eye. Even if Su Mucheng wanted to dodge, it was too late. The Laser Beam struck her ferociously, pushing her off the watchtower.

"Beautiful!" Their captain Li Xuan was busy, but he took the time to praise Yang Haoxuan. Picking Yang Haoxuan to counter Su Mucheng was proof of his capabilities.

Everyone approved of him. The problem was that he lacked the courage and confidence to face Su Mucheng.

Su Mucheng was said to be Li Xuan's and Wu Yuce's nemesis, and when they faced Su Mucheng, they cowered at times. How could the other players not show fear for Su Mucheng in this kind of atmosphere? What's more, Yang Haoxuan was a Launcher, while Su Mucheng was an All-Star Launcher. All Stars were chosen out of popular vote, but where did popularity come from? The foundation came from skill, so it was also a form of of recognition towards a player's skill. Thus, Yang Haoxuan always felt like he couldn't compare to Su Mucheng. That was in addition to Team Void's atmosphere. Putting him to face Su Mucheng? Not having confidence or courage couldn't entirely blamed on him. So the team tried to encourage him. When they saw this attack, their team captain immediately went out of his way to praise him.

Sure enough, this Laser Beam woke up Yang Haoxuan. Even though it didn't instantly make him feel like he was invincible,he had to do what he needed to do. His mind suddenly cleared up.

Wu Yuce roared at him to focus on Su Mucheng on nothing else, but this was just to point out how important it was. How could pro players only single mindedly work on one task? As a result, the instant Dancing Rain was blasted away, Translucent shifted his attention back to the other battles, providing support for his team. From time to time, he would pay attention to Dancing Rain.

Dancing Rain was pushed out of the watchtower, but Su Mucheng reacted extremely fast. She fired several cannon shots to counteract the knockback from the Laser Beam and slow her descent. Then, she used the Launcher's Rotor Wing, putting her back on top of the watchtower.

In Glory, character skill trees could be reset as long as you spent the money. Normal players might try to avoid doing so to save money, but pro teams wouldn't care about this bit of money. Whether it was to test out new skill setups or picking skills specifically to counter opponents, resetting skill trees was a common practice. Sometimes, it was possible to make surprising changes to one's playstyle. Li Xuan's Crying Devil was as Phantom Demon, but it wasn't like he had never reset his points and reallocated it as a Sword Demon. This sort of situation wouldn't happen too often though. After all, his Phantom Demon was his best character.

Su Mucheng had probably reset her skills to learn Rotor Wings specifically for this

match! As Yang Haoxuan guessed, Translucent's cannon once again aimed towards the air.

Chapter 1230
Caution at the End

Boom!

The missiles flew out from the chamber and towards Dancing Rain, who was on top of the watchtower.

Fighting with the lower ground was very difficult, and many skills couldn't even be used. For example, Heat-Seeking Missiles would never be able to get so high and Stingers couldn't be launched so far either, otherwise these AoE attacks would easily send Dancing Rain toppling from her perch.

Yang Haoxuan, with the lower ground, was at a disadvantage. However, right now, his helplessness from before had been completely swept away, his attacks determined and confident, his aim precise. Three Anti-Tank Missiles were shot towards Dancing Rain's landing point.

Boom boom boom!

The three missiles exploded on the side of the watchtower just as Dancing Rain was landing. Dancing Rain, still airborne, couldn't dodge so far. The force from the three consecutive explosions threw Dancing Rain even higher. Su Mucheng hurriedly had Dancing Rain carefully bring her cannon muzzle around. She had to adjust Dancing Rain so that she could still remain on the watchtower when she landed.

As expected of Su Mucheng!

Yang Haoxuan fell into awe at Su Mucheng's mechanical skill, but he didn't plan on just admiring it. Translucent took out a gatling gun with a swish to follow up with another attack to the airborne Dancing Rain and send her completely off the watchtower. Currently, her Rotor Wing's wason cooldown, so there was no way she could fly back up.

Ratatatatatatata…

The sound of bullets came rapidly, the frequency was so high that it was a little unbelievable… The rpm of this skill depended on equipment stats, not mechanics. Such high rpm meant that this couldn't be a skill from Translucent.

Tatatatata!

The bullets formed a line, shooting out from under the watchtower. On the other end of the line was Translucent's left hand, which was holding his gun.

Thud thud thud!

With sound of bullets hitting flesh, blood splashed everywhere. Translucent's left hand wasn't really blasted into smithereens, but it still couldn't take the momentum. Immediately, the bullets he was shooting into the air went off target.

"Damnit!" Li Xuan was depressed, cursing.

Yang Haoxuan had already done very well. His amazing performance had almost succeeded in throwing Dancing Rain off from the watchtower, yet this time, it was Li Xuan and co who failed. In this most crucial time, they didn't give Yang Haoxuan the support he needed, allowing Lord Grim to destroy Translucent's offensive, with the exact same skill.

There was only one chance!

Under Su Mucheng's precise manipulation, Dancing Rain landed accurately back onto the watchtower.

"You should never neglect my presence!" Ye Xiu pointed out methodically but sarcastically. It was clear that the opening Void had given him this time was far too big.

Yes, too big.

Void's members were so focused on the trouble Su Mucheng was giving them that they had forgotten Su Mucheng was always only ever a supporting character, and the person she was supporting was the true core of the team.

Ye Xiiu…

They had somehow forgotten Ye Xiu and given the opponent's core player such a large

opening.

This mistake meant that Void had to suffer the terrible consequences. Dancing Rain, back on the watchtower, immediately threw out a Stinger. The stingers rained down like flower petals thrown by a goddess, and then Gatling Gun swept over them wildly, creating small pits in the ground. Yang Haoxuan's Translucent dodged around with his heavy cannon, flowers of blood occasionally blooming on on his body.

Not grasping the chance meant an even worse blow.

Under Dancing Rain's cover, Happy focused everything onto offense. Tang Rou's Soft Mist broke right through the Ghost Duo's "Slash and Boundary", beginning a direct conversation with Crying Devil. Wu Yuce's Carved Ghost wanted to come to the other's support, but Crying Devil suddenly vanished from sight, Lord Grim clocking the way with his umbrella.

Ge Caijie suddenly felt that this was a good chance, hurling a Sealing Talisman towards the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. However, that was when he saw a message pop up in the chat: "Boss, careful!". A Brick smacked the back of his head and Blue Exorcist was stunned.

At the same time, Li Xun's Ghost Lantern was blown flying by a Flash Burst. Li Xun had wanted to sneak attack Boundless Sea, but Fang Rui was the master of this kind of dirty play. Noticing Li Xun's intentions, Fang Rui had purposefully given the other an opening. Li Xun's Ghost Lantern had came over all delighted, but went back, ridden with internal injuries.

Void's formation had been completely ruined, and the result was clear. Happy took advantage of the chaos Void had been thrown into, switching targets several times, and giving each member of Void a warm greeting.

This made Void depressed.

Happy, with the absolute advantage, didn't rush and hurry to get rid of a single opponent first, but open fired on all of Void.

If they focused their attacks and wiped out one of Void's members, then their healer would be forced to switch in. They wouldn't know what would happen in that short period of 4v5, but so long as they endured until their healer came, then they'd fight a 5v5 with a healer and have a chance to turn things around, even if they might be one

character short.

But now, Happy launching an attack on everyone in Void's team cruelly deprived them of this unknown chance.

Void knew that they couldn't let Happy chip away at them like this, but apart from Yang Haoxuan's Translucent, none of the others had much of a chance to escape. Yang Haoxuan was trying to deal with Dancing Rain's supporting fire from above. After Wu Yuce had yelled at him, he had found his courage and was performing exceptionally well. They really couldn't have him leave to switch out with the healer.

They had to risk it!

That was when Li Xun suddenly activated Life-Risking Strike.

With how much of a mess Void was right now, there was no way to give him support and increase his chances of success. Under these circumstances, Li Xun still used this skill. Everyone immediately realized what he was doing.

He was sacrificing himself. If he managed to hit, then that would be amazing for their team, if he didn't, then Ghost Lantern, with only a sliver of life left, would soon make a noble sacrifice and their healer would be switched in.

As for ignoring Ghost Lantern and purposefully keeping him alive? That wasn't possible. If they kept a character they didn't dare get close to alive, then that would be equal to giving themselves a huge handicap. If Happy did decide to do that, then that would be like deciding to kill their own characters.

The situation ended up going in the most predictable direction.

Li Xun's Life-Risking Strike didn't hit and Ghost Lantern was immediately killed. Void's healer, Tang Lishengi's Paladin, Spirit Guardian, was switched in from the closest support zone, hurrying over.

However, in this short time, Happy switched tactics. They began to focus all their attacks onto one person. Could they manage to wipe out one of Void's players before their healer arrived?

This became the deciding factor, and everyone watched with wide eyes.

Void's core Ghostblade Duo weren't very tanky. Ghostblades utilized the power of the Ghost God to fight, finding their strengths in Spirit and Intelligence, then Strength, then Vitality. Then, their armor was cloth armor. Against physical damage, Ghostblades weren't much better than Elementalists and others.

At the same time, the Ghost Duo's Wu Yuce was a very headstrong and forceful fighter. In this moment, his playstyle had been grasped by Happy, and they immediately caught Carved Ghost and began to beat the other down.

Void was practically going crazy, trying to save him, however, Happy clearly didn't plan on switching tactics now. In the end Carved Ghost was finally caught by Steamed Bun Invasion's Strangle and thrown against the wall of the watchtower, allowing Happy to put everything into destroying him. During their offensive, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim's presence once again shone through. Though it might be weak, it was better than nothing. The unspecialized Lord Grim was able to provide an important healing role. Void had realized that upon seeing Happy's no-healer arrangement.

They had realized, but they couldn't do anything against it. It wasn't like they could change Lord Grim's skill build.

In crucial moments, the few tricks Lord Grim had was enough to help Happy stabilize the situation. Wu Yuce's Carved Ghost eventually fell against the wall.Tang Lisheng's Spirit Guardian ended up being just one step too late.

6v4, currently a 5v4 on the field.

Void didn't want to give up though. Spirit Guardian healed the remaining three characters like crazy. Void was planning to make a final charge.

And then, Happy dispersed.

Yes, even Dancing Rain, on the watchtower, jumped down of her own volition, using her cannon to adjust her position in the air, gliding down smoothly.

Happy, who had the advantage, could retreat with ease, and at the drop of a hat.

Speaking of which, wasn't the direction they were retreating in the direction of the support zone on that end?

Seeing Void's healer arrive, Happy decided to not rush things and ran off to get their

healer on the field, too. They really weren't planning on giving Void a single chance.

At the start, Happy had thrown their healer away to get to the best positions quicker, very brave, very crazy.

Yet, after getting the absolute advantage, Happy became cautious again. They, who were two people ahead of Void, went back to get their own healer.

Void couldn't stop the retreating Happy, chasing after them as the shadow of defeat grew within their hearts.

When Happy got to the support zone, Steamed Bun Invasion switched out for Little Cold Hands. Then, when they turned back to continue, Void's spirit had pretty much died. The battle ended quickly.

10 to 0!!!

The audience erupted.

Another 10 to 0. Happy really did it. After completing a 10 to 0 against Misty Rain, this time, they got another 10 to 0 against Void. Who would doubt Happy's strength now? If they did, they were probably blind! 10 to 0 after 10 to 0 couldn't be luck speaking!

The Happy supporters in the venue cheered wildly, raising an open-palm hand into the air, waving.

Five!

Their opened palms represented the number "five".

Five times!

This was the number of 10 to 0s that Happy had achieved so far. Such a flawless record was something that many powerhouses couldn't boast having. Currently, Happy was the only one, right?

Just as Happy's fans were excitedly confirming this with each other, a shocking piece of news came from another finished battlefield. Team Samsara, having also achieved a flawless victory against Team Heavenly Swords, had obtained their fifth 10 to 0 of the season as well.

With the thought that one of these 10 to 0s were won from Happy, everyone immediately felt that this was exceptionally annoying.

Their archenemy! Many people had this thought.

Chapter 1231
Round 14 Finished

The antagonizing glares from Happy's supporters shifted straight towards Samsara. From this, it could be seen just how powerful an existence Happy was in their hearts, and Happy's recent performances on the point rankings lived up to these hopes.

After losing to Tiny Herb in Round 8, Happy began their win streak. Starting from Round 9 until the recently completed Round 14, Happy had won six rounds in a row. Four of Happy's six perfect 10-0s had taken place within these six rounds, and their other two 9-1 wins were domineering enough too.

During these six rounds, Samsara had achieved three 10-0s, two 9-1s, and one 8-2. Comparing their total points gained in these six rounds, Happy actually beat Samsara by 2 points; it was needless to say the other teams as well. Happy had unexpectedly taken the lead in the Alliance. Let alone Happy's fans, no one would take Happy lightly. Those who had hoped for Happy to fall couldn't help but feel nervous. Happy's achievements were too far off from their expectations.

After Round 14, Happy had taken another 10 points, moving up one place in the rankings with 89 total points and stepping down on Hundred Blossoms, who had been in seventh. More importantly, outside of the playoffs zone, Happy now led the ninth place Void by 10 points.

Team Void was very disappointed. The thought of Happy suddenly being ten points ahead of them, despite having the same points just the round before, had never crossed their minds. They couldn't blame any one person. In fact, over the course of the match, there had been no lack of highlights, matching vulgar post-match comment: we performed well, but our opponents performed better.

To be more specific, Void's long-time nemesis, Su Mucheng, was as domineering as ever, giving Void a huge headache. This was practically something that Void had never found a good solution to in their many years of existence. Then, there were the team competition strategies. Happy took a huge risk but succeeded with a beautiful opening, while their carefulness at the end thoroughly destroyed any last thoughts from Void. They had utilized their home map advantage extremely well.

"We lost to Happy. I can only say that this isn't the end. I look forward to our next match together," Team Void's Li Xuan said, concluding Void's post-match press conference.

Happy versus Void, a clean sweep.

Samsara versus Heavenly Swords was an even cleaner one.

In this round, Tiny Herb, Blue Rain, and Tyranny, the traditional three powerhouses ended their matches 9-1 against opponents much weaker than them. Apart from them, Misty Rain beat Hundred Blossoms 7-3 after losing to both Void and Happy in Round 12 and Round 13.

Even so, Hundred Blossoms still held onto 8th with a total of 83 points, just inside the playoffs zone. On the other hand, despite winning this round, Misty Rain's four consecutive losses had lost them a lot of points. Misty Rain was still 10 points behind Hundred Blossoms, sitting at 11th with 73 points. Their hopes for playoffs were becoming dimmer and dimmer. It seemed to be proof that their unconventional playstyle didn't work in the pro scene.

Between the 11th place Misty Rain and the 9th place Void was Team 301, who lost 3-7 in their away game versus Miracle.

Team Miracle was currently at 14th place with 50 points. If not for the other new team Happy being so demonic, they would have certainly received much more attention. Up until now, as a newly joined team, Miracle was doing very well. They just happened to catch a good opportunity and fished up three experienced Excellent Era players. Their original lineup wasn't without its bright spots either. Guo Shao had received quite a bit of attention, especially out of all the new rookies this season.

Royal Style, who had previously been strong contenders for the playoffs, had thoroughly fallen. They had been beaten by Tiny Herb 9 to 1 this round and were currently in 12th place. Their position on the rankings didn't seem that bad, but what about their total points? With a total of 58 points, they were 15 points away from the 11th place Misty Rain, let alone the points difference between 8th.

Team Royal Style had been a team that had contended with Team Excellent in the finals of the Season 1 championships, but now they had fallen to such a level. But then again, the former three-time championship winners, Excellent Era, had been relegated and

disbanded. In comparison, Royal Style was doing much better, at least they were far away from the relegation teams.

The two relegation teams, Bright Green and Seaside, had 27 and 23 points. The third to last place Team Radiant had 41 points. Their fates seemed to have already been decided.

Seaside wasn't too surprising. These past few years, they had always been struggling in and out of the relegations zone. However, Seaside used to have an All-Star player and character on their team. They had never swam in the playoffs, but they had been a solid mid-tier team.

Zhao Yang retired, and Boundless Sea was sold. They had been mourned for a time. Seaside hadn't given up though. They could only respect Zhao Yang's decision to retire, but for Boundless Sea, they knew that as a mid-tier team, raising an All-Star level character as well as a suitable player was a big burden. And just a single All-Star was no longer enough to carry the team in the increasingly competitive Alliance. A God like Zhou Zekai was someone who could only be chanced upon. What's more, Zhou Zekai had a team of skilled teammates supporting him before winning the championships. In order to further solidify their dominance, Samsara even added in Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf to their roster.

Seaside's resources were limited. Pouring in their resources for a luxury like an All-Star was something they couldn't support. Selling Boundless Sea had been a show of their decision to walk a more steady path of improving the strength of the team as a whole.

Hope is beautiful, but from the looks of it, Seaside hadn't really improved. In these fourteen rounds, they had even lost to Bright Green, their brother who was just as bad as them and sitting at 23 points.

The post-match press conferences for these two terrible teams were cold and deserted. The remaining reporters who stayed had great opportunities to ask whatever they wanted.

Did Team Seaside have any plans?

When a reporter asked this question, Seaside's captain, Zhang Lintao, showed an expression of perplexion, mumbling and faltering through it without actually saying

anything.

Compared to these departing weak teams, the fans paid more attention to those fighting for the championship throne. The most watched match this round was Wind Howl versus Thunderclap. The Alliance also chose to broadcast this match. In the end, Thunderclap continued with their steadiness in the team competition, winning 6 to 4. Thunderclap relied on their five points from their team competition victory to steal the win from Wind Howl. At the end of the match, there cameras zoomed in oneTeam Wind Howl's team captain,Tang Hao, kicking a bottle of water away as he returned to his seat.

Anyone could see that Tang Hao was unhappy with this match.

2 points in the individual competition and 2 points from the group arena, giving them a 4 to 1 advantage. Wind Howl went into the team competition in high spirits, but in their home game, Wind Howl was downed with their tails behind their legs against Thunderclap.

Did Thunderclap have All Stars?

Xiao Shiqin was obviously considered one, but in the group arena, he didn't win against Tang Hao. There was no one in Thunderclap who Tang Hao cared about, yet in the team competition, this group of nobodies crushed them in the map that their Wind Howl had chosen.

"This is a disgrace!!" In the post match press conference, Tang Hao fully expressed his dissatisfaction. He didn't point his fingers at anyone, but rather his discontent towards his team as a whole for losing to Thunderclap. Even if Thunderclap was at 3rd place, in Tang Hao's eyes, Thunderclap wasn't a strong team.

"If a loss like this happens again, I really don't know what we'll have to fight in the championships," Tang Hao said.

Becoming the champions was Tang Hao's goal and Team Wind Howl's goal. They weren't satisfied with just being frequent playoff visitors. But this season, Wind Howl's performances had been inconsistent. Their momentum this season couldn't even compare to last season's. After thirteen rounds, they were only at 6th with 86 points. Although they weren't far from the other teams above them apart from Samsara, this wasn't enough for Tang Hao. Even in the regular season, he hoped to

reach the same heights as Samsara. But after fourteen rounds, Samsara had 123 points, while Wind Howl had 90 points, a difference of 33 points.

Samsara. Samsara was supposed to be their only opponents. Thunderclap? How could a sudden upstart stop Wind Howl's advance? But Thunderclap really did stop them. How could Tang Hao not be unhappy?

After fourteen rounds, although Happy's recent six round point total surpassed even Samsara's, Samsara still stood far above in the rankings with 123 points. Even the second place Blue Rain was only at 99 points, an entirely different tier than Samsara.

What was even more terrifying was that Samsara had gone through a devilish schedule in the early parts of the season. The teams that could threaten them had already fallen under their hands. Their upcoming opponents might try to study them, but the disparity in strength would only result in them giving their points to Samsara as expected. It was hard for people to think that these teams could drag down Samsara.

The suspense for this season was ending too fast, no?

Much of the media, players, and commentators expressed similar thoughts. Samsara's advance could not be stopped. There seemed to be no saving Bright Green and Seaside either. Those spots could be considered as locked into position. Then, next up, the only thing left to look at were the spots for the playoffs.

301, Void, Misty Rain, these three teams were outside the playoffs zone but they were still on the offense.

These three teams are going to need to work hard!

The people silently praised. If these three teams didn't put in more effort and make some chaos in the playoffs zone, this season's regular season would be too boring!

Chapter 1232
Round 15

After Round 14 ended, numerous reports and commentary appeared over the next two days. Scenes such as Tang Hao kicking a water bottle after a match were also reported, but those didn't make the headlines.

Tang Hao had yet to reach the point, where he could lose but still be the central character. The headlines sung for the winners.

Happy's fifth 10-0, Thunderclap's team competition record, and Samsara's fifth 10-0 would not be neglected. 123 points in 14 rounds, leading the second place team by 24 points, these were absolutely ridiculous achievements. This dominance cemented their place as the true central characters this season. Even though there was competition, the Esports Home's headlines displayed Samsara's 10-0. Happy would have to give way. Even Thunderclap's team competition record was inferior in front of Samsara.

Team Samsara had won all 14 matches, while Thunderclap had lost to Royal Style in Round 9. Thunderclap was one missing from a perfect win streak, a pity.

The headlines gave more than enough respect towards the bellwether, but the detailed discussion consisted more of Happy and Thunderclap. After all, Samsara's perfect win had been against Heavenly Swords. To everyone, this win should be easy as pie without any worries of losing. What was there to talk about? However, Happy and Thunderclap were different. Happy had a perfect win over Void, while Thunderclap made a comeback against Wind Howl. Those matches had high-level content to talk about.

After discussing these two team's performances this round, everyone agreed by chance that how long their momentum would continue for would be something to pay attention to.

Next round, Happy would be challenging Lightly in their away game, while Thunderclap would be welcoming Misty Rain in their home game.

No one questioned Happy's strength anymore. Facing the 16th place 46 point Lightly, victory seemed to be there's already. People were simply wondering whether Happy would be able to pull off another 10-0. As for Thunderclap versus Misty Rain, given Misty Rain's recent ups and downs, as well as their questionable unconventional playstyle, Misty Rain would would be facing Thunderclap, who excelled at the team competition. Very few people had hopes for Misty Rain.

In fact, more people were looking towards the round after, Round 16, because Happy and Thunderclap, these two teams that had given them the most surprises this season, would be facing against each other in Happy's home game.

Get out of the way, Round 15!

Quite a few people had these sorts of thoughts.

But time couldn't be skipped. Each round needed to be played one at a time. Round 15 couldn't just pass by in the blink of an eye. On 12/13, Round 15 began on schedule, and the broadcast chose Hundred Blossoms welcoming Void as the highlight match.

In the end, Hundred Blossoms barely beat Void 6-4. There were no changes in their placings on the rankings. Eighth place and ninth place were neighbors, but the difference between them were night and day.

A rather surprising result this round was Blue Rain losing 4-6 to Parade in their away game. Blue Rain had a huge lead after the individual rounds, but unexpectedly lost in the team competition. With this loss, Blue Rain instantly slid down from 2nd to 5th. And right below Blue Rain was Happy, who had advanced another place once again this round.

Happy won their away game against Lightly 9-1; everyone felt that it was a pity they couldn't get one more point for a 10-0. Coincidentally, Samsara also got a 9-1, although their opponents were 301.

Tyranny and Tiny Herb won 8-2 against their mediocre opponents. Another surprising result was Wind Howl, who had the situations reversed by Thunderclap last round, once again stumbled, losing their home game against Royal Style 7-3.

This time, Tang Hao didn't kick a water bottle, but in the post-match press conference, he didn't even show up. His attitude showed just how unhappy he was with Wind Howl's recent performances.

Wind Howl had lost three rounds in a row, and their placings were dropping. Right now, they were at 7th place, lower than Happy by 5 points.

But to be fair, Wind Howl's opponents these three rounds had been Hundred Blossoms, Thunderclap, and Royal Style, all fairly strong opponents. With the team competition's 5 points lost in each of those rounds, Wind Howl had obtained 3, 4, and 3 points. Using comparisons like 8-2, 7-3, looked to be huge disparities, but because the team competition was worth 5 points, these were the most common results.

In an 8-2 win, if the losing side had won the team competition, it would turn into 3-7. In a 7-3 win, if the losing side had won the team competition, it would be a 2-8.

In reality, the wide disparity between points was a result of the way the rules were set up. It was completely different than a 7-3 or an 8-2 in football.

Wind Howl's three consecutive losses were these point differences. It could be said that their strength still had a solid foundation. However, three consecutive losses still raised some doubts over them, although in comparison to the public, Wind Howl themselves had a huge reaction to it. After two losses in a row, their captain Tang Hao couldn't bear it anymore and kicked a water bottle. After their third loss in a row, he wasn't even in the mood to show up for the post-match press conference.

"I think our loss streak ends here…" With their captain not there, vice captain Liu Hao spoke up in the press conference.

Yes, Liu Hao.

The former Excellent Era vice captain had switched to Thunderclap and became Thunderclap's vice captain. In the summer, he transferred to Wind Howl and gradually created a position for himself. After their original vice captain Fang Rui left, Liu Hao was appointed vice captain.

After all, Liu Hao was skilled, and he had plenty of experience. He had acted as vice captain and as captain before, so he had experience in leading. At Wind Howl, he was seen as someone who would be a great help to Tang Hao.

For example, Tang Hao had gotten angry and didn't show up to the press conference, while Liu Hao talked fluidly as if he were used to be in this position. It was as if their captain didn't exist.

Everyone was a bit astonished at his bearing, but then again, of course Liu Hao was used to this because when he had been in Excellent Era, their captain Ye Xiu never showed up for press conferences. It was always him who had to face the media as the vice captain. Liu Hao had experienced his team's captain not participating in the press conference countless times. How could he not be calm?

Experienced with the media, he resolutely expressed that they would definitely win next round. The reporters quickly checked next round's schedule. Next round Wind Howl would be facing Heavenly Swords in their home game. These three rounds never really showed whether Wind Howl was truly weak. Next round, as long as their mentality was fine, they shouldn't have any problems winning against Heavenly Swords. However, Team Wind Howl's team captain and core, the Tang Hao who succeeded the senior as the junior, seemed to be undergoing an unbearable setback!

"I'm not worried at all," Liu Hao continued to speak calmly, "Our captain thirsts for victory more than anyone else, so he also feels more ashamed than anyone else when he loses. But when the match comes, he'll still be striving for victory. That I believe without a doubt."

A good answer!

Wind Howl's PR team felt very gratified. They were especially moved by their vice captain this time. Thinking of their previous Wind Howl vice captain for many years, Fang Rui… what an irresponsible guy! He would often babble nonsense in the press conference without the bearing of a vice captain at all. The PR team wanted to rush up and beat him up numerous times.

As the PR team, they looked at things from their perspective, and to them, the difference between Liu Hao and Fang Rui was light years apart. As for Fang Rui being an All-Star, what did that help? It didn't!

With Liu Hao's skillful response, Wind Howl's captain Tang Hao's attitude after three consecutive losses didn't garner any particular attention. When the press conference ended, Wind Howl's PR team gave Liu Hao a huge thumbs up and started chatting with this newly appointed Wind Howl vice captain.

This was the scene for Wind Howl, but how about Blue Rain, who had been upset?

Blue Rain's performance in the early season had been quite strong. Apart from their

loss to Samsara 3-7 in their away game, whether it was Tiny Herb, Tyranny, or Wind Howl, they always had the last laugh.

But after the early season, Blue Rain was a team whose honeymoon had clearly ended. In Round 11, they lost to Hundred Blossoms 3-7 in their away game. In Round 12, they had a beautiful 5-0 lead in their home game, but Thunderclap won the team competition to even it up 5-5. In Round 13, they were knocked down by Royal Style 4-6 in their away game. In Round 14, Blue Rain unexpectedly lost to Parade.

From their performances these few rounds, Blue Rain had stayed at 2nd place. It could be seen just how strong Blue Rain's opening in the early season was. However, in an instant, this 24 point difference disappeared. After the end of Round 15, Blue Rain dropped three places from 2nd to 5th. They were now only 5 points away from Happy, who was in 6th. 5 points. In Glory, this could be a difference of just a single round.

Blue Rain's decline wasn't just this past match, but rather during this phase. However, no one had been so frustrated to the extent of kicking a water bottle like Tang Hao. In their post-match press conferences, their captain and core replied calmly to the reporters' questions as always.

Where did Team Blue Rain's problems lie?

This was what everyone was wondering.

"I think, it's just a matter of bad luck," Team Blue Rain's captain, Yu Wenzhou, smiled.

"If we keep saving up all the good luck like this, then I think it'll be a good thing when the playoffs come around!" Yu Wenzhou continued.

Saving up luck…

The reporters didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This was a completely unscientific explanation! However, speaking of playoffs, Blue Rain's recent performances had truly started to worry people about their playoffs spot. They never directly said that they would definitely win. They just gently took out the word "playoffs" as if it were as simple as eating food.

This was also a form of confidence!

Chapter 1233
Thunderclap's Secret Weapon

After the early season ended, all sorts of twists and turns started appearing.

Blue Rain, Wind Howl, Misty Rain, and Void, these powerhouses all experienced different degrees of setbacks. In comparison, Tyranny, who had a disappointing start, stayed firm in this smoke-filled battlefield.

Tyranny had only obtained 47 points in the first 8 rounds, tying with Hundred Blossoms for 7th and 8th place, right at the edge of the playoffs zone. But in their next seven rounds, Tyranny obtained 58 points. Not only did their performance not decline, it went up.

Of course, a part of that was because Tyranny's opponents weren't that strong. However, facing these mediocre opponents, Tyranny won quite a few 10-0s and 9-1s. The points they should have gotten were gotten. That was the sort of air they gave off. On the rankings, they had quietly climbed to 3rd place.

Placed ahead of them was Tiny Herb with 106 points. They had the same consistency as Tyranny, rarely losing points against weak teams. However, against strong teams, Tiny Herb faltered. The other top five teams, Samsara, Blue Rain, Tyranny, Thunderclap, could bump into Tiny Herb in the regular season, the playoffs, or the finals.

But in these fifteen rounds, Tiny Herb always lost to these four teams, whether it was their home or away game.

If you said that Tiny Herb's strength didn't belong there, then that would be false. If you looked closely, you would see that in these four rounds, the final point tally was always 4-6.

This meant that Tiny Herb always won two individual competition rounds and the group arena, but lost in the team competition. If Tiny Herb had won the team competition, their matches against these four teams would have been 9-1.

Team competition…

Tiny Herb's weakness seemed to be obvious. It looked like there was something stopping them in the team competition, stopping them from beating the top teams. From the statistics, people discovered another surprising fact. Tiny Herb had yet to lose a group arena. Even in their 2-8 match against Void, their points had been through the group arena.

Apart from Tiny Herb, no one else had achieved such a feat this season.

The strengths and weaknesses of many teams had been exposed. While everyone was discussing these enthusiastically, they could not ignore Happy's existence.

Samsara had never lost the team competition, Tiny Herb had never lost the group arena, as for Happy? One person had never lost an individual round!

Ye Xiu. He had retired, returned, and then switched classes, but his performances on stage were as eye-catching as ever. After getting swept 0-10 in Round 1 against Samsara, Ye Xiu started playing in the individual competition, becoming a stabilizing piece for Happy. From then on, no matter if it was a loss, this 1 point had never left Happy's pockets. Before, Ye Xiu had always stayed hidden, never appearing on camera. After returning to the scene, even though he wasn't particularly great for the media, he at least didn't completely avoid them, though it was hard to say if that was a curse or a blessing.

Another week quickly passed, and 12/20 welcomed the Glory Pro League's sixteenth round. The most hyped match was Happy versus Thunderclap, the two most surprising teams this season, were chosen without question as the highlight match.

Thunderclap was in 4th place with 104 points, while Happy was in 6th place with 98 points, a difference of only 6 points. This round was Happy's home game. If they did a good job, they could pass Thunderclap in just one round. But if they wanted to do a good job, beating Thunderclap in the team competition was necessary. Up until now, Thunderclap had only lost to Royal Style in the team competition. In all of their other matches, they always won the team competition. Even down 5-0, they had won, tying the score. And the the team they had tied was Team Blue Rain, who had the Master Tactician, Yu Wenzhou.

Just how mysterious were Thunderclap's team tactics? Many people were curious and

had even studied this issue. At the moment, opinions differed, and when Xiao Shiqin was interviewed, he simply smiled and gave three words as a reply: believe in yourself.

What was that supposed to mean? Was that his philosophy? Was that the way to a psychological win?

Not many approved of his reply, so everyone continued to analyze Thunderclap's mysterious tactics. Confrontations between Master Tacticians were always the best research material, so this match would bring in more valuable data. Happy's Ye Xiu, may be the current 1v1 King with a 14 round win streak, but don't forget that this old general was also one of the four Master Tacticians.

"You guys are doing well!"

"Back at you."

After a quick greeting, the two teams went to their own sides. As the two most surprising teams this season, each knew how the other felt. Thunderclap's captain, Xiao Shiqin, could be considered as having the deepest impression of Happy before the season. He had fought against Happy in a bitter struggle in the Challenger League. In particular, the group arena 1v3 had nearly killed Happy's heart, but in the end, Happy was the one to have the last laugh. Excellent Era lost in the Challenger League finals, and Xiao Shiqin, who had risked everything to run to the Challenger League in hopes of a better future, looked like an idiot. There had been no lack of mockery thrown at him.

Xiao Shiqin should hate Happy very much, no?

This was also a popular pre-match topic. As a result, as soon as the broadcast started, the camera zoomed in on Xiao Shiqin, hoping to catch something, especially during the greetings between the two teams on stage before the match. The camera spent nearly 70% of the time focused on Xiao Shiqin's face. When Xiao Shiqin shook Ye Xiu's hands, the cameras locked tightly onto him. The crowd fixed their eyes on his expression and held their breath.

Murderous spirit!

Let's see some murderous spirit!

The drama loving people hoped to see some sparks.

But all they saw a very normal and warm smile.

He's hiding it well!

The drama loving people didn't believe that Xiao Shiqin bore no hatred towards Happy. Since they couldn't see any murderous spirit on him, that must mean Xiao Shiqin was hiding it. Afterwards, even when Xiao Shiqin was just wiping his glasses, his actions were interpreted in all sorts of ways. It was like everyone suddenly became body language experts.

The individual competition began, and Happy's first player would be…

Ye Xiu, Ye Xiu again.

Everyone knew that Ye Xiu always went out first. In that case, it was easy to come up with a strategic plan to counter him.

But did that matter?

Ye Xiu's 14 consecutive wins was the best answer.

It didn't matter. Even if you knew Ye Xiu would be the first player sent up and prepared a countermeasure, it was no use. The winner would still be Ye Xiu.

Was that because the ace players defended the group arena for those 2 points instead of 1?

These were some people's opinions, and it was a valid reason. However, arranging the lineups was up to every team. If you're going to send your ace player for the group arena, then who are you to blame for not getting that one point in an individual round? This sort of perspective had a bit of sour grapes feeling to it.

As for Thunderclap? Who would they send?

Thunderclap performed spectacularly in team competitions, but in the individual competition and group arena, their performances weren't too noteworthy. Apart from Xiao Shiqin, no one else in their team was particularly eye-catching. They probably didn't have anyone for Ye Xiu, right?

A name popped onto the screen. Thunderclap's first player in the individual

competition was…

Mi Xiuyuan.

Not a sound could be heard. Everyone looked at Xiao Shiqin, and then started whispering to each other.

Mi Xiuyuan? Who was that?

The crowd was discussing this question. The reporters were hastily looking at their data. On the broadcast, Pan Lin had been predicting who Thunderclap would send onto the stage and when the answer was revealed, he said "Ah, so it's Mi Xiuyuan." After that came silence. He was also caught off guard. Who the fuck was this?

"Mi Xiuyuan… a new rookie this season?" Li Yibo was flipping through his data as he said earnestly. He had a "in the end, nothing can trouble this senior" look on his face.

"Ah… before, it seems like…" Pan Lin was also looking through his data, "he's never appeared on stage before." He finally confirmed it.

"Yes," Li Yibo said.

"But this round, facing Happy and the 1v1 king Ye Xiu, Thunderclap sent him up!" Pan Lin's voice started rising.

"Yes."

"Why? Could he be a secret weapon?" Pan Lin said. The camera zoomed in onto this rookie, who was pulled aside by captain Xiao Shiqin. The two people looked in one direction. The camera followed their line of sight to Ye Xiu.

"Xiao Shiqin is personally giving him instructions. What has he come up with to beat Ye Xiu? Yes, let's look at Mi Xiuyuan. His class… Assassin. Ah, could he be looking for a one hit kill?" Pan Lin started displaying his imagination.

Xiao Shiqin finally finished talking with Mi Xiuyuan. The young player stepped onto his first match on stage.

This was truly an amazing first appearance on stage. The broadcast gave him quite a few close-ups. Everyone instantly took note of this new Thunderclap rookie.

He was the secret weapon prepared for Ye Xiu! Everyone thought to themselves. They sucked in a deep breath of air and looked forward to the match.

After 3 minutes 42 seconds, Mi Xiuyuan returned to his seat.

Accounting for about 2 minutes to walk to his player booth and then about 1 minute to walk back to his seat, this match took precisely 58 seconds, not even a minute.

Mi Xiuyuan lost.

There were no hidden killing moves nor a one hit kill. The two players loaded into the small 1v1 map chosen by Ye Xiu and then quickly came across each other. Ping ping pong pong, Mi Xiuyuan's Assassin died.

Secret weapon?

A super killing move?

The entire world wanted to laugh.

Chapter 1235
Calm Individual Rounds

Commentating Happy's matches is truly filled with opportunities and challenges! Pan Lin sighed endlessly. There never seemed to be a lack of topics, and it was always full of traps.

Of course, this time, it wasn't Happy's fault. Mi Xiuyuan was from Thunderclap. However, Thunderclap's opponent was Happy, so Pan Lin's first thought was to focus on Happy. Fortunately, Pan Lin's remark had only been a hopeful guess, not a serious analysis, so it didn't result in too embarrassing of a situation. Pan Lin could already feel a premonition creeping into his heart though.

The broadcast still gave Mi Xiuyuan more than enough camera time.

Losing an individual round in less than a minute was very embarrassing for a pro player. But when the cameras locked onto Mi Xiuyuan, he looked calm. After he returned to his seat, the entire Thunderclap team even stood up and clapped their hands to welcome him. Dai Yanqi even rubbed Mi Xiuyuan's head roughly as if she were a big sis, despite only being a third year rookie.

"It looks like… Thunderclap gave up on beating Ye Xiu, so they just sent up a rookie to gain some experience," Li Yibo carefully observed for a while before speaking up.

"Uh, I don't know how much experience a less than one minute loss is going to bring to a player," Pan Lin said. His words carried a slight sting to it. He clearly wasn't happy with Thunderclap's methodology. As for whether he was unhappy with Thunderclap's arrangements, or because Mi Xiuyuan didn't turn out to be a secret weapon, no one knew.

The match continued. Su Mucheng went after Ye Xiu, while Thunderclap's Fang Xue went after Mi Xiuyuan. Fang Xue was also an Assassin. In the end, he was no match for Su Mucheng, and Happy won yet another point.

2-0. The crowd riled up. Cries for another 10-0 started echoing around the stadium.

But in the third match, Thunderclap unexpectedly sent Xiao Shiqin, while Happy sent Mo Fan.

Xiao Shiqin was famed as a Master Tactician, but his 1v1 skills weren't weak. In Thunderclap, he was often the anchor for the group arena, but in today's match, he came out in the individual competition. What arrangements had Thunderclap made?

"Xiao Shiqin vs Mo Fan… these two have actually fought before in the Challenger League. At that time, it was in the group arena. Xiao Shiqin performed spectacularly that round, winning the group arena with a 1v3. Let's see how their rematch is going to turn out," Pan Lin set the backdrop for the match.

The atmosphere that Pan Lin had drawn out for this match didn't end up appearing. Xiao Shiqin won with a steady lead against Mo Fan.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo didn't know what to say. The match was so dull. What should have happened, happened. That was all there was to it.

The emotions of the loser weren't as calm as the match.

As Mo Fan walked down from the stage, he didn't have that usual expressionless face. His gaze had stopped on Xiao Shiqin. A clear pondering expression showed.

After losing twice to the same person, Mo Fan was searching for where the issue lay. Even if there was a difference in strength, competition wasn't just about strength, it was about utilizing that strength.

Seeing Mo Fan's attentive expression, Ye Xiu didn't say anything. Once you reached a certain level, improving depended more on yourself. After all, the only person who truly understands you is you yourself. Other people could only help give and clear the clouds.

How to beat Xiao Shiqin?

If Ye Xiu could instruct him on how to do it with just a few words, then pro players would be of little value.

With the individual competition finished, Happy led 2 to 1. A 10-0 was impossible now, and the crowd appeared somewhat downcast. Happy's fans had been spoiled too much by Happy's crazy performances recently. If it wasn't a 10-0, they couldn't feel

satisfied. Despite not being a powerhouse, Happy's fans had the same expectations as powerhouses.

For the following group arena, Pan Lin and Li Yibo both believed that Happy had an advantage. After all, Thunderclap's players weren't very top notch. Happy at the very least had Fang Rui as the anchor. In addition, while Tang Rou's image may have been destroyed, her explosiveness hadn't.

"If nothing surprising comes, Happy's chances should be fairly high," Li Yibo's cautiousness had already reached this point. He was too afraid to even use the word winning, only saying their "chances should be fairly high." Fairly high chances didn't mean he thought Happy would definitely win. Li Yibo was truly quite crafty.

But in the group arena, no surprises came and Happy won.

Pan Lin announced this expected outcome and discovered that he unexpectedly felt a bit bored.

What's going on? Am I too used to being slapped by Happy? Am I masochist? Taking advantage of the long break between the team competition and group arena, Pan Lin did a deep self reflection.

In the meanwhile, the two teams were preparing for the following team competition.

"Something feels off," said Fang Rui.

"What is it," Ye Xiu said.

"I don't know. It's just a feeling," Fang Rui said.

"This senior also feels like something's off. It's too calm," Wei Chen said.

"It won't be for the team competition," Ye Xiu said.

"Are you saying they've been saving up their strength?" Wei Chen asked.

"Maybe not saving up strength, but in the individual rounds, their strength wasn't very impressive. However, to be so calm despite losing so many points means that they must be incomparably confident in the team competition." Ye Xiu said.

"Confidence in themselves? Could that actually be the reason for their dominance in the team competition?" Fang Rui had evidently seen Xiao Shiqin's interview response about Thunderclap's performance this season.

"Without confidence, there will be a lot of choices that you'll be too afraid to make. The more confident you are, the more options you'll have, and the more variations there will be," Ye Xiu said.

"Are you talking about Xiao Shiqin? He's always been confident, huh," Fang Rui said.

"His confidence now isn't just in himself," Ye Xiu said.

Fang Rui was starting to understand. The others were as well. Everyone subconsciously turned their heads to look at Thunderclap. It turned out that Thunderclap was also looking at them. The two sides made eye contact, and Xiao Shiqin gave them a friendly wave.

"This match is really lacking the gunpowder…" This scene had also been grasped by the cameras, but the broadcast was currently playing ads, so Pan Lin could only say this to himself in private. If his mics were on, saying these words definitely wouldn't be good. He would have to comment on the friendly and peaceful relations between the two teams.

"This match isn't going to be easy. Everyone, focus. Let's start things slow," Ye Xiu said.

He obviously studied all of his opponents, studying the styles of the players and the team's tactical styles. However, Thunderclap, this strong team competition team, was truly difficult to deal with.

Thunderclap was not like Samsara. Samsara's overwhelming momentum was inseparable from the strength of the individual players. The image of the Battle God One Autumn Leaf was slowly being transformed. On Samsara, One Autumn Leaf was no longer that unrivalled "one". There was another "one" beside him, Cloud Piercer.

Many people had been worried about compatibility issues between Sun Xiang and Samsara, but their worries never turned into a reality. And as a result, Samsara's incredible win record came about. Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai were titled as the "Two No.1s" this season. Two number ones pointed that the two best players had number one characters to go along with them.

Possessing this powerful duo, Samsara was able to achieve this perfect win record. But Thunderclap? The individual rounds showed that their players weren't top of the pack. However, their team competition record had 14 wins. Why? Tactics!

Thunderclap had always relied on tactics to win. However, their tactics had never brought them to such formidable heights. According to the current public opinions, if Thunderclap could continue their team competition win record, then the Four Master Tacticians should be changed. Xiao Shiqin should be taken out and given an even greater title.

After all, Ye Xiu, Yu Wenzhou, and Zhang Xinjie, whether it was now or before, the chips held in their hands were quite a bit stronger than Xiao Shiqin's. Their teams were similar to Samsara. All of them possessed top individual players.

It was like a chef cooking food.

Ye Xiu, Yu Wenzhou, and Zhang Xinjie had fresh high-quality ingredients and had the skill to turn those ingredients into wonderful dishes.

But Xiao Shiqin was someone who could take mediocre ingredients and turn them into just as, or perhaps even more delicious dishes. If one looked at it from this perspective, it was obvious who was superior.

When these words came out, many agreed with this opinion. However, someone soon pointed out: Last season, in the Challenger League, Ye Xiu had taken rotten food and then beat Xiao Shiqin, who had outstanding Excellent Era ingredients. What did that mean?

As a result, the other side took this season and brought out Xiao Shiqin's matches against Yu Wenzhou and Zhang Xinjie. Thunderclap had won those team competitions. This was also a solid argument.

The only remaining uncertainty was Ye Xiu.

This time, the ingredients in Ye Xiu's hands were far better than his ingredients back in the Challenger League. The rookies had grown. Su Mucheng and Fang Rui had joined. The team now had two All Star characters, and the other characters had improved significantly as well.

On the other hand, Thunderclap's roster dimmed in comparison to Su Mucheng and

Fang Rui. Their characters were more in line with the gradual step by step improvement from not-so-wealthy teams.

Ye Xiu's ingredients had vastly improved, while XIao Shiqin's ingredients had diminished in quality compared to Excellent Era. This time, what would the confrontation between the two sides be like?

The start of the match was approaching, and the commentators focused their discussion of this round's team competition on this fight between two Master Tacticians.

Whoever won would become the existence above the Four Master Tacticians.

Pan Lin didn't directly say these words, but many people thought of it. Everyone's eyes were focused on the screen as the match began.

Chapter 1236
Thunderclap's Aggressive Offense

The map was War Grasslands, a map divided by rocks and shrubs in a staircase-like arrangement. The spawn points were located on the northeast and southwest corner, and after each side crossed their two story high platforms, the two teams would meet on a field of grass. It was a map, where the two spawn points were relatively close together, and it was often used by teams who liked rushing their opponents. The map restricted more tactical teams to a certain extent because of the close distance. If the offense was launched fast enough, the other side might not have time to set up any tactical formation.

Pan Lin quickly introduced the map before the two teams loaded into the map. However, both Thunderclap and Happy were tactic-heavy teams. By choosing this map, who exactly was the one being restricted? The map had been chosen by Happy, and Pan Lin didn't dare try to guess what Happy was planning, so he simply stopped the subject there. After explaining the features of this match, he was done. As for why Happy chose the map, Pan Lin let the viewers guess, he himself wasn't going to open his mouth. Out of consideration, he also didn't toss this hot potato to Li Yibo. Li Yibo noticed his good intentions and gave Pan Lin a smile.

A map suitable for a fast offense.

As a result, as soon as the teams loaded in, the viewers looked at the two teams spawning, wanting to know which team would take the initiative.

"We'll rush them!"

It was Thunderclap. Xiao Shiqin immediately gave the order.

Everyone was surprised.

Even though Pan Lin and Li Yibo weren't analyzing the situation out loud, anyone who understood Glory would have their own thoughts. These two were just afraid of getting their faces slapped. They certainly had their own viewpoints in their mind.

From their view, Happy had chosen this map, so the one to rush the opponent should be Happy. However, it was Thunderclap who decisively gave the order as soon as the match began.

Thunderclap's players didn't have any objections towards their captain's orders. They immediately went into position and started moving as a whole.

Thunderclap had spawned on the northeast corner. This map was split into three-story platforms. Two of these six three-story platforms made up the spawn points, while the other four were support zones, lined up symmetrically from east to west. The two starting points were linked to their respective east and west support zones by two-story platforms. The three-story support zones of the northeast corner and southeast corner were directly linked together by large slopes that met in a grassy area in the center. The six three-story high platforms were not directly connected to each other and could only be traveled to through two-story or ground regions. As a result, the fighting often took place in these two-story or ground story regions.

Thunderclap wanted to rush, so they didn't take a roundabout path. The team charged out from their three-story high spawn point directly down towards the grasslands.

How close were these spawn points? The answer could be seen right now. As soon as Thunderclap leaped down to the grasslands, they saw Happy also leaping down. The two sides could already see each other.

"Yo, nice rush!" Ye Xiu typed in the public chat.

"Same to you," Xiao Shiqin replied.

"No, we're moving strategically," said Ye Xiu.

"That's a bit of stretch, don't you think?" Xiao Shiqin replied.

Moving strategically required at least a little bit of covertness. In this map, if one walked along the two-story high platforms, the rushing opponents would not be able to see them so quickly. But Happy charging directly towards the grasslands? How was that moving strategically? Unless they thought Thunderclap wouldn't do the standard rush.

"Rushing isn't your style. Shouldn't you guys be waiting and watching first before coming up with counter strategies?" Ye Xiu said.

"We can't wait and watch because you guys would also wait and watch," Xiao Shiqin replied.

He hit the nail on the head…

Waiting and watching was a part of combat. Another part of it was pre-match preparations, studying the opponent and coming up with countermeasures beforehand. These two teams both had the same tactical style, so when the two confronted each other, it became awkward.

To put it simply, the two teams were used to waiting for their opponents to act before they acted. If neither side acted first, then there would be no fight.

"So?" Ye Xiu asked.

"So we can only fight," Xiao Shiqin said in the public chat. This wasn't a bluff, because in the team chat, he clearly gave the order: "Go!"

Thunderclap set out and charged at their opponents.

Everyone was shocked. Team Thunderclap had been watched closely this season, but they had never taken the initiative and attacked aggressively. After all, their players and characters weren't that great. A direct clash often relied on each individual player's own skill to be effective.

But against Happy, Thunderclap unexpectedly launched an aggressive attack!

No one would regard Happy as a weak team anymore. The return of Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng, the class-changed Fang Rui, these three All Stars had proved that their skills were still at the peak. In terms of individual player skill, even Xiao Shiqin, who was the best in Thunderclap, didn't seem a match to any of Happy's top three. However, Thunderclap had bravely rushed at Happy, an unprecedented aggressiveness. They had never done this against any other team.

Why?

Every person who followed Thunderclap this season asked this question.

While no one else in the Alliance dared to underestimate Happy, Thunderclap did the very opposite. Was this… a psychological tactic?

"You're coming to us? Are you underestimating Happy?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Of course not," Xiao Shiqin, who was already charging over, replied.

"Then it looks like we'll need to be careful," Ye Xiu said.

"You always need to be careful in a match," Xiao Shiqin said. In the team chat, he gave another order: Scatter!

Thunderclap had spread into a line and surrounded Happy in a wing-like formation. On the left end was Dai Yanqi's Elementalist, Firebird Messenger. On the right end was Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, Life Extinguisher. These two were at the very tip of the wings as if they were going to escape.

Positioned in the middle was Cheng Tai's Grappler, Shattering Wind. And Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric, Returning Wind, was between Shattering Wind and Firebird Messenger. Between Life Extinguisher and Shattering Wind was Fang Xuecai's Assassin, Demon Talent.

"Thunderclap is being very proactive. They've quickly pulled apart into a formation very skillfully. Did they practice this specifically for Happy? What are your thoughts on this formation, Coach Li?" Pan Lin had restrained himself for a long time, but he was still a passionate commentator in the end. Thunderclap had chosen an unprecedented aggressive offense. This surprising choice instantly riled him up. He excitedly shouted and dragged Li Yibo into the water as well.

Li Yibo was in an awkward spot! He hadn't even figured out why Thunderclap would choose to go on the offensive against Happy, when Pan Lin directly asked him to explain Thunderclap's offensive formation.

"Uh, this… it looks like they're planning on surrounding Happy and then shrinking the circle," Li Yibo snorted.

"But Happy isn't lacking in attackers!" Pan Lin immediately answered back.

"Thunderclap surely has a method to deal with them. Let's see what they're going to do," Li Yibo was finally able to dodge this topic.

These two could pass over it with some vague words, but Ye Xiu, who was playing on stage, couldn't be so unclear.

Xiao Shiqin's decision for an aggressive offense had surprised him. He said "being underestimated", but he knew that Xiao Shiqin wasn't that type of person. Even when facing Seaside or Bright Green, the two weakest teams practically guaranteed to be relegated from the league, Thunderclap still carefully planned out their strategy. Xiao Shiqin wasn't someone who underestimated his opponent. If he dared to attack aggressively, then it could only mean he was confident that it would work, that in a direct confrontation, Thunderclap would have a greater chance of winning than Happy.

Their chances of winning didn't come from their players or characters individually. It was publicly acknowledged that Thunderclap was weak in this area. Thunderclap's chances of winning came from their tactics. For example, their team must have spread out for a purpose.

But for what purpose?

It wasn't just Ye Xiu asking this question.

However, no one else's judgement was more accurate than Ye Xiu's because Ye Xiu knew better than anyone else who the weak point of their team was.

Lord Grim retreated to Little Cold Hand's side.

"Group up, towards…" Ye Xiu typed. He wanted to have everyone group up and break through an opening in Thunderclap's formation, but when he swept his eyes across their formation, he discovered that he wasn't able to find such an opening.

Thunderclap's five characters were in a very simple line, but they used each of their classes well, allowing for the best possible options from any direction. If Happy tried to break through, they would be met with a lot of trouble no matter which direction they went towards. There were no clear holes or weaknesses. Breaking through from any point would be troublesome, which also meant that breaking through from any point would be the same.

"Firebird Messenger, break through!"

Ye Xiu had only hesitated for an instant. He quickly made a firm decision. As soon as Happy heard the order, their decisiveness in carrying it out was not much worse than Thunderclap's.

"Oh? We've been underestimated!" Happy's intentions were clear. Dai Yanqi, who was controlling Firebird Messenger, used Ye Xiu's own words from before. Happy had clearly chosen this direction to break through because they thought it would be easier to do so.

"But this is all according to plan!" Dai Yanqi followed.

When she said these words, everyone's hearts thumped. No one thought Thunderclap would just rashly attack. They felt like Thunderclap must have an ulterior motive. Dai Yanqi's "all according to plan" immediately confirmed this notion.

Whether or not the viewers believed in it wouldn't affect who won this match. Dai Yanqi's words were aimed as a psychological attack towards Happy. However, even if Happy believed her, it was probably too late for them to make adjustments.

That was what most people thought, but on stage were a particularly special group of people amongst the countless Glory players…

"Dang, that girl said it's all according to plan. We should find a different breakthrough point," Wei Chen said.

"Sure." Ye Xiu said.

As a result, Happy really did make a switch. Everyone turned towards Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher instead of Dai Yanqi's Firebird Messenger.

Fuck!

The viewers were dumbfounded. This was a high-level pro match! You guys are just going to switch up your tactics because the opponent said a few words? Where's your determination? Decisiveness? Confidence?

Chapter 1237
Thunderclap's Focus

"Ah, the older generation really is…" Dai Yanqi was also dumbstruck. She had already put her guard up. Who would have thought that Happy would turn away so decisively just because of the words she said? This sort of reason wasn't logical! But the problem was that it truly happened, and Dai Yanqi couldn't help but feel a bit afraid. She hadn't ruined her own team's rhythm, right?

"Concentrate. Defend your position well and get back on track!" Xiao Shiqin messaged the team chat. Seeing the captain's words, Dai Yanqi seemed to have been hit by a tranquilizer and calmed down. Soon afterwards, her Elementalist Firebird Messenger hurried forward.

"Be careful of them switching targets, " Xiao Shiqin added.

"Switching targets?" Dai Yanqi was a bit surprised.

The crowd was in an even more of an uproar, because just when Xiao Shiqin typed out those words, Ye Xiu had typed in Happy's team chat: turn!

All of Happy suddenly turned around and switched back to Dai Yanqi's Firebird Messenger. Their shift towards Xiao Shiqin had been a bait. Unfortunately, Xiao Shiqin saw through their little trick and promptly warned Dai Yanqi no to cut in too deep. Dai Yanqi had originally readied a Teleport, and the moment she paused because of the warning, she saw Happy suddenly turn around and rush towards her.

"How crafty," Dai Yanqi wasn't a chatterbox, but she was among those who liked to talk in matches. As she grumbled, Firebird Messenger quickly retreated. Her staff flashed with lightning and a Lightning Bolt shot out. It was the very first attack in this team battle.

Lightning spells were fast, but in the end, it wasn't as immediate as firing a bullet. It only took the blink of an eye for elemental power to condense into electricity, but it still took some time, enough to react to. To pro players, a window for reacting and a close enough distance to complete the necessary action was more than enough.

Firebird Messenger's Lightning Bolt pierced through Happy's formation, but it didn't hit anyone. Following afterwards, Dai Yanqi had Firebird Messenger activate Absolute Focus and cast the Level 75 skill, Fire Bird. A Fire Bird formed at the tip of her staff and flew out with with its wings spread. The heat waves swept over the grasslands, wilting the once tall and straight stalks of green grass. Stalk after stalk bent over to half the size of their surrounding friends.

Compared to Lightning Bold, the area covered by Fire Bird was much larger, so Happy could not just open a path for the spell to pass by. Since it was no longer possible to continue maintaining their formation, Happy split up to the left and right. As the Fire Bird flew, the heat waves blurred their figures.

From the rear, sounds of machinery turning could be heard. They hadn't targeted Xiao Shiqin, instead, it was Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher who took the initiative to look for them. The knee-high grass hid lots of the ground machines. Happy could only see rustles from wherever the machines passed by, but they didn't know what exactly was hidden in the grass.

Firebird Messenger retreated as Life Extinguisher advanced.

But Firebird Messenger didn't back away too hard, and Life Extinguisher didn't advance too fiercely either. They seemed to be intentionally leaving Happy some space. These two long-ranged classes carefully controlled the distance, maintaining a certain gap between them.

The unknown machines traversing along the ground were getting nearer and nearer from multiple directions, arriving at different times.

Landmine Quake!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea leaped into the air and slammed his two hands towards the ground. A wave of formless and colorless qi could be seen from its effects on the grass as it spread out towards the surroundings with Boundless Sea at the center.

Boom boom boom boom!

When the rustling grass and the grass wave collided, fire and light exploded into the air, creating a plume of smoke. Fang Rui had timed it well. He didn't care what the machines were and simply let out a Landquake Mine to destroy them.

But… those weren't all of them.

Who knew how many machines Xiao Shiqin had put into this wave. There were still three rustles in the grass. Perhaps they hadn't arrived yet, or perhaps Xiao Shiqin had maneuvered them away, but either way, they had avoided Boundless Sea's earthquake and started charging towards Happy again.

Qi Bullet!

Boundless Sea punched in the direction of a rustle.

However, Qi Bullet's flight speed was nothing worth noting. The mechanical tool sped up and easily evaded it.

Bang! Bang!

Lord Grm's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into its gun form and fired twice. But under the cover of the grass, it was difficult to get a good aim. After two shots, the rustling was still there.

Ta ta ta ta ta…

Su Mucheng saw that Lord Grim's few shots didn't hit, so she had Dancing Rain use Gatling Gun. The stream of bullets chased after the rustling grass in a line, finally shooting it into a smoke and fire. Su Mucheng didn't stop. While her skill was still in effect, she immediately switched to a different direction. However, Xiao Shiqin was clearly wary of Happy catching them all in one fell swoop. He had all three of his machines move along paths far from each other. Even though Su Mucheng quickly switched directions, she didn't have much time left on her skill. After a few bullets, her Gatling Gun stopped.

However…

Ta ta ta ta ta…

Lord Grim's Gatling Gun fired. His attack path followed along Dancing Rain's previous path. If you didn't look at the starting points of the bullets, it was practically impossible to tell that this attack had actually been done by two people.

Boom! The machine on that path exploded. When Lord Grim turned his gun, he still

had half of Gatling Gun's duration left. Bullets chased after the last remaining mechanical tool, but who would have thought that it wouldn't be enough! Everyone could clearly see that the bullets landed on the right patch of grass, but the mechanical tool seemed to be perfectly fine!

Mechanical tools weren't like summoned creatures with health. They would go boom with just a knock. A bullet hitting, let alone multiple, was enough. The only explanation was that it didn't hit, but… the bullets clearly landed on it, unless…

Ye Xiu suddenly reacted, but it was too late. A patch of grass rustled in front of them, and then something suddenly leaped up out of the grass.

This wasn't a mechanical tool that traversed on the ground. It was an aerial Air Drop. However, Xiao Shiqin had it fly extremely low so that it would be covered by the grass. But because it wasn't touching the ground, Ye Xiu's previous attacks missed because of the slight deviation in position. At this moment, Air Drop was suddenly in front of them. Its stomach opened up and was just about to drop some bombs…

Boom!

The Air Drop suddenly exploded before it could drop any bombs. Amidst the black smoke, a white flame could clearly be seen.

Sacred Fire!

Prediction and timing were An Wenyi's strengths. At the most crucial moment, a calm Sacred Fire block the Air Drop.

The crowd applauded.

This wave of machines had happened in just a few short seconds. All of Team Happy had worked together to intercept these machines. Their teamwork had been beautiful.

"Pay attention. The other side's Assassin has disappeared…" Fang Rui typed in the chat.

Fang Xuecai's Assassin Demon Talent had been between Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher and Cheng Tai's Shattering Wind, but he was now nowhere to be seen.

Was he crawling through the grass, or was he using the Thief skill on his weapon,

Stealth? Ye Xiu and the others started searching the grass. No matter which option he had chosen, any movement in the grass would leave behind a trace. The grass was only knee-high. The Mechanic's mechanical tools could hide there quite cleanly, but it wasn't so easy to hide an adult.

Demon Talent was gone right now, but Dai Yanqi's and Xiao Shiqin's pincer was still ongoing. While Happy was busy cleaning up Life Extinguisher's machines, Firebird Messenger took the opportunity to cast two high-level spells. Without trying to make any predictions, lightning and fire AoE spells were cast directly above Happy's heads. From the looks of it, she wasn't trying to stop Happy from advancing, but trying to blast Happy's formation apart.

A pincer from the front and rear. An Assassin gone without a trace. Chen Tai's Grappler, Shattering Wind, was the closest to Happy. He was constantly moving, and even though he had yet to make an attack, his presence alone gave them quite a bit of pressure. Happy had to dodge the attacks from the front and rear, while also making sure they weren't grabbed by Shattering Wind. If a Grappler grabbed them, the formation would certainly fall apart. Shattering Wind was moving around, looking for an opening. As Happy dodged, they also tried to see if they could swallow up Shattering Wind. However, Thunderclap had Xiao Shiqin watching over. His judgement towards tactics was clear and precise. Only the crowd knew just how dense Thunderclap's chat was. The density of messages was not lower than that of their match against Blue Rain.

Was Xiao Shiqin planning on using these varied and complex tactics to outpace Happy?

However, Happy's leader was Ye Xiu, not Yu Wenzhou. Their tactical skill was the same, but in terms of hand speed, if you said Ye Xiu was superior to Yu Wenzhou, then even Yu Wenzhou's most loyal fans could only concede tearfully.

Why? Why did Thunderclap need to make things so complicated? Xiao Shiqin made numerous commands, and every player's movements and attack rhythms were constantly changing. Not only were they adjusting according to Xiao Shiqn's instructions, but they had their own plans too. Thunderclap had clearly prepared this set of tactics.

What exactly is this?

"I get it!" Li Yibo suddenly shouted. His skill level was still far higher than the average

player's. He saw through Thunderclap's tactical intentions first. But right after he yelled it out, he immediately felt regret. He was exposing himself too much! Why am I so overjoyed? I should be calmly explaining the thought behind Thunderclap's tactics. That would have made me look even more knowledgeable!

Unfortunately, the deed had been done. Pan Lin helped lead him in: "Coach Li, you've seen through Thunderclap's intentions?"

"Haha, I had a feeling earlier, but now I'm certain. Thunderclap is doing exactly what I had thought," Li Yibo said mysteriously.

"Please guide us Coach Li." How could Pan Lin not know of Li Yibo's cunning plot. In his heart, he was looking down on him, but out loud, he had to praise him.

"Thunderclap's strategy is similar to their one against Blue Rain with lots of variations. But when facing Blue Rain, they were mainly focused on varying and adjusting their tactics. Right now, they're more focused on their attack positioning and variation in rhythm."

"The purpose is the same. They're targeting a certain player on the opposing team. Against Blue Rain, their target was Yu Wenzhou. If Yu Wenzhou is unable to give out enough commands on time, Blue Rain would have trouble keeping up with Thunderclap's fast-changing tactics. Against Happy, their target is An Wenyi, Happy's healer!" Li Yibo said with certainty.

Chapter 1238
Symbol For a Healer

Happy's healer, An Wenyi!

Li Yibo spoke with power and resonance, but since this was a live broadcast, he probably didn't know how many boos came his way when he said these words.

Happy's weak point was An Wenyi. We don't need you to say that. Who doesn't know it?

Yes, everyone knew, including Pan Lin. He hadn't thought that Li Yibo's secret ace would be such an obvious answer. After staring blankly for a few seconds, he finally followed up: "Yeah… An Wenyi really is Happy's weak point."

"Yes," Li Yibo was still smiling confidently, "Everyone knows this, but who among Happy's previous opponents fully took advantage of this weakness?"

Pan Lin was stunned again. He could hear that Li Yibo's words had substance to them, and he subconsciously started thinking about Li Yibo's question. Had any of Happy's previous opponents specifically created a plan to target An Wenyi?"

"We won't talk about matches too far in the past. Let's take a look at the two rather strong teams that Happy had faced in their recent win streak, Misty Rain and Void. Our friends who have watched Happy's matches against these two team, recall Happy's performances in the team competition," Li Yibo betrayed the key points in his analysis.

"Happy's performances in those two matches?" Pan Lin echoed as he pondered in his mind. His perception was quite a bit higher than the average player's. After thinking about it for a bit, he found out that he truly wasn't able to find anything.

"In Misty Rain's match, Happy utilized the terrain to set up their formation. At that time, An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands hid behind that big rock. Misty Rain didn't have the conditions to launch any attacks directly towards him," Li Yibo answered.

Pan Lin completely remembered now: "In Void's match, Happy switched out their

Cleric to get into position faster. By the time An Wenyi went onto the field, Void only had four players remaining, and Happy's victory had pretty much been decided at that point."

"For those interested, we can go even farther back. In their match against Hundred Blossoms, even in the Challenger League finals against Excellent Era, these matches against strong opponents give us an even clearer picture."

"Right," Pan Lin completely understood what Li Yibo wanted to say.

"Happy's tactics seem similar to Thunderclap's in the sense that they're always targeting a certain person. However, Happy's tactics are always built off a foundation: protecting their weak point, An Wenyi. In every match, they will always try their best to end the battle without there being too great of a burden on An Wenyi," Li Yibo said.

"Xiao Shiqin has completely seen through this point, so in this match, he's taken the initiative to strike preemptively at Happy's tactical framework. He doesn't plan on letting Happy set up a situation easy for An Wenyi," Pan Lin said.

"Yes, so that's why their offensive rhythm is constantly changing. For a healer, grasping the opponent's offensive rhythm is extremely important. A healer needs to pay attention to any possible dangers, sometimes even needing to predict a crisis ahead of time, in order to prepare a long cast time heal in advance. Does Happy's An Wenyi have the ability to deal with such a hurried situation?" Li Yibo said.

The broadcast team coordinated with him and cut to An Wenyi's point of view.

His screen was shifting around extremely chaotically.

Sure enough, the situation was just as Li Yibo said. Before a healer healed, the first thing that needed to be done was to figure out who needed to be healed, which meant that the healer couldn't solely pay attention to his opponents. The healer needed to look at the overall situation from time to time. However, Xiao Shiqin had set it up such that the battle was spread out all around. An Wenyi could not simply look in one direction to observe the battlefield. He had to look towards one side and then look towards a different side from time to time. Along with Thunderclap's constantly changing rhythm, his inability to keep up and his confusion was completely exposed by the cameras.

The broadcast and the crowd's electronic screens aptly showed the health bars of the

two teams.

This sort of image was usually shown to let the viewers know which side's healer was controlling the field well. A good healer would keep his teammate's health above a certain safe line at all times. The health bars would leap up and down like musical notes.

But the health bars of Happy's characters were a complete mess. It was like he was banging around clumsily without any vision. No one could tell what An Wenyi's safe line was.

Without a safe line, it wasn't possible to heal dependably.

Happy's stadium was quiet.

An Wenyi was Happy's weak point. This had been known since the very beginning, but up until now, it had never been fully exposed because every time the team lost, it didn't look like An Wenyi was dragging down the team. But when Li Yibo gave his analysis, everyone discovered that though An Wenyi didn't drag down the team in Happy's losses, he didn't contribute too much in their wins either. An Wenyi's role in Happy seemed to just be a symbol, letting the opponents know: we have a healer. Had Happy ever used any tactics that relied on their healer? Never. Even though An Wenyi had his moments of brilliance, he had always played under relatively safe conditions - conditions that Happy had set up for him.

But in this round against Thunderclap, Xiao Shiqin didn't give them an opportunity to set up these conditions. These multi-directional and constantly changing attacks forced out Happy's weakness. In a team battle, if the healer could not keep up, the entire team would suffer. Thunderclap's attacks weren't focused on any one person. They frequently changed targets, forcing An Wenyi to constantly search for their focuses, pressuring him into making more mistakes.

Happy wasn't routed yet. Their team still had Ye Xiu and Ye Xiu's Lord Grim. The unspecialized had limited healing capabilities, but it was better than nothing. These heals might be enough for crucial saves, but relying on Lord Grim to keep up the entire team's health was impossible.

What are they going to do?

This was Happy's home stadium, so the crowd was obviously worried for Happy.

Thunderclap couldn't be too relaxed either though. Maintaining this sort of battle tempo without making mistakes was not an easy task.

"Keep this up!" From time to time, Xiao Shiqin would give encouraging words to boost the team's morale.

Thunderclap's offense was maintained extremely well. No matter how amazing a team's tactics were, if the team couldn't carry it out, then it was pointless. And in terms of execution, Thunderclap's players were second to none. This team had always relied on tactics to beat stronger teams. The team's players were very accomplished at tactics, even more so under Xiao Shiqin's guidance. They understood his commands very quickly and executed them smoothly.

"Happy's in trouble," Li Yibo was already announcing it.

"Let's see if they've got a way out!" Pan Lin said.

"Thunderclap is utilizing the map extremely well. I nearly forgot who chose the map," Li Yibo chuckled.

"Uh… I'm sure Happy chose this map for a reason." Pan Lin chose his words carefully because he had a premonition that as soon as he came out and announced Happy's demise, he would definitely be slapped in the face.

Li Yibo could feel Pan Lin's cautiousness and laughed. What could Happy do in this situation? No matter which direction you rush towards, you won't be able to escape from battle. Thunderclap doesn't need to trap you here. As long as they can continuously harass you and can stop your healer from being effective, this harassment is equivalent to damage. And enough damage means that it's their win! In addition, Thunderclap's leader is Xiao Shiqin. With him watching over, what tactical intents could be hidden from him?

"Cheng, pressure with triangular movement!"

"Dai, turn 30 degrees."

"Fang, move back."

Commands continued to be given as Happy wasn't just sitting there letting An Wenyi deal with the pressure himself. However, their intentions were always seen through

by Xiao Shiqin, who would promptly respond and stop Happy from escaping this situation.

"Fuck. Bullying the rookie, you call that skill!" Fang Rui complained in the public chat.

"Keep pressuring them. Fang, move a little towards my location." Xiao Shiqin was unmoved. In a match, there was no such thing as trash talk only for the purpose of complaining. The words that jumped onto the screen always contained a message, which would automatically be read by the eyes. This sort of small distraction could lead to an unconscious change in emotions and ultimately, a mistake. Xiao Shiqin wouldn't be affected by it though. As soon as Fang Rui said these words, his first thought was that the opponents would be making a move soon, so he immediately warned his team to be wary.

Sky Piercing Strike!

After Fang Rui's grumble, Boundless Sea pushed out a blast of qi. The qi swept past the grass directly towards Life Extinguisher.

Laser Beam!

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain immediately added to Boundless Sea's attack with a Laser Beam.

But their coordination was a bit off beat, so the effects weren't the most optimal. Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher easily dodged it. However, his line of sight left that area for a short moment.

Chaotic Rain!

At this moment, greenish purplish raindrops suddenly poured down. It was Chaotic Rain summoned by a Warlock.

"Oh, so those attacks were cover for Chaotic Rain. Then, they plan on using Chaotic Rain's AoE to attack. In that case, we need to…" Xiao Shiqin thought and prepared to give another order.

Wait…

1, 2, 3, 4…

Happy was missing a person!

The missing person was Lord Grim?

"Where's Lord Grim?" Xiao Shiqin hastily asked in the chat. Did he disappear from view while I was dodging those attacks? Even if I didn't see him, my other teammates should have, right?"

"Ah?" His teammates all gasped in surprise.

No one saw?

Xiao Shiqin didn't ask further. Everyone's "Ah?" was clear enough.

Had there been a blind spot in everyone's field of view at that instant?

Was that a coincidence, or… had it been set up?

Xiao Shiqin reflected on this question. If it was the latter, then Happy's plan was currently being set in motion. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was hiding in the grass. What was he planning on doing?

"Cheng, approach and search. Fang, support him." Xiao Shiqin immediately ordered.

Chapter 1239
Hoist By Your Own Petard

Thunderclap's two close-ranged classes rushed forward. Xiao Shiqin didn't even blink as he looked around. But Thunderclap's attack formation didn't weaken because of this though, and Xiao Shiqin didn't neglect his shotcalling.

Happy might just be purposely trying to confuse them, using this to divert their attention and reduce the pressure. Xiao Shiqin considered this possibility. So even as Shattering Wind and Demon Talent pressed forward, they weren't just looking for Lord Grim, they maintained their attacks toward Happy's players. Happy didn't reduce the pressure, and in fact because of Lord Grim's disappearance, they had to work even harder under the conditions of a 4v5.

Show yourself!

Xiao Shiqin thought to himself. Ye Xiu couldn't play like this all the way until the end.

"2 o'clock." In the Thunderclap chat, Dai Yanqi suddenly called out. As she spoke, she prepared to fire a spell in that direction.

"Don't split your attention, leave it to me!" Xiao Shiqin immediately shouted. He was scared of this scenario exactly. If everyone switched their attention to target Ye Xiu's Lord Grim, then wouldn't this situation, which they had established with such difficulty, be broken? Seeing Dai Yanqi's Firebird Messenger already turning her head and about to cast in that direction, Xiao Shiqin truly applauded Ye Xiu.

It was just a small trick, but it caused a great disruption to Thunderclap's strategy. Ye Xiu truly understood the players' logic and reactions too well. At a time like this, anyone who suddenly discovered Lord grim's whereabouts would instantly try and attack, and with that, Thunderclap's strategic rhythm would be disrupted.

"But it's a shame, Ye Xiu's opponent is Xiao Shiqin." After seeing Xiao Shiqin's direction in the team chat, Li Yibo spoke with a smile. With an omniscient view, they of course saw Lord Grim's actions more clearly than Xiao Shiqin could. Li Yibo reached the same conclusion as Xiao Shiqin, but seeing that Xiao Shiqin saw through it entirely and was

prepared against it, Li Yibo didn't feel like going to praise Ye Xiu.

"Yeah…" Pan Lin agreed, his heart beginning to waver. It looked like Happy was really struggling in this match! Should he begin to sing praises for Thunderclap?

As Pan Lin wondered, the situation onstage changed again.

The exposed Lord Grim suddenly began to move. Dai Yanqi's attack toward him had been stopped by Xiao Shiqin, but he still continued to charge toward Dai Yanqi.

"Don't panic, it's Mechanical Seeker," Xiao Shiqin called.

"Haha, seen through again," Li Yibo laughed. "A Mechanical Seeker and a character are very different in size, and so they move a little differently. Perhaps a lot of people wouldn't be able to tell the difference, but Xiao Shiqin is an expert Mechanic!"

The little trick once again failed to come to fruition. Ye Xiu seemed rather helpless, and Lord Grim finally charged out, this time toward Zhang Jiaxing's Returning Wind.

Attacking from behind to try and save your allies?

Xiao Shiqin smiled. He'd already thought of this possibility long ago!

Fang Xuecai's Assassin Demon Talent twisted and used a Shining Cut in the direction of Lord Grim's movement. If this kind of thing didn't happen, no one would notice, but as soon as it happened, everyone suddenly realized that Thunderclap's players, in maintaining their nonstop offensive, were coordinating with each other extremely well. The tactics of this team proceeded as precise and orderly as the gears of a machine.

Zhang Jiaxing wouldn't just sit around doing nothing. When he saw Lord Grim coming toward him, he cast a Sacred Fire, hidden in the grass.

Would it hit?

Zhang Jiaxing didn't know. He was too familiar with this opponent in front of him and knew just how scary he was. A little trick like this wouldn't be much use, would it?

This thought hadn't even finished crossing his mind when, at the position of his Sacred Fire, a blindingly white fire blazed to life.

It hit!

Fang Xuecai was delighted at this development, and of course he wouldn't let this skill-sealing opportunity slip away. Demon Talent used Swift Run and Swift Movements, prepared to instantly kill with a Heart-Piercing Stab.

This is?

Fang Xuecai stopped. A green-skinned Goblin waved a club as it came toward him. From its excited state, he could tell that it must have eaten an attack, otherwise how could it run so quickly?

This was a trap!

"It's a Goblin!" Fang Xuecai hurriedly sent a message. This lowest-level little summon was of course nothing to him, and he quickly took care of it.

A Goblin!

Xiao Shiqin jolted. This wasn't an attack from the rear to save the allies, this was… making a sound in the east and striking in the west!

Just as he reached this realization, Xiao Shiqin watched as the grass began to rustle once again. This time, Ye Xiu no longer bothered to hide Lord Grim's body, because now there was no one nearby to stop him.

Slide Kick, Charge, Colliding Stab, Shining Cut…

Lord Grim chained all of these low-level quick movement skills from various classes. Relying on the effects of all of these skills used consecutively, Lord Grim's speed at that moment couldn't be bested by even an Assassin, let alone any of the slower classes.

Cheng Tai's Shattering Wind wasn't fast enough to block him, and in an instant, Lord Grim was in front of his target.

"Captain Xiao, having fun?"

Lord Grim made his move. Dragon Tooth!

As soon as he knew about the Goblin, Xiao Shiqin instantly realized that he himself

was Ye Xiu's true target, and he was already defending himself. But Lord Grim arrived too quickly, so quickly that Xiao Shiqin was feeling regret. Lord Grim could use skills to achieve this kind of movement speed; they really shouldn't have been tricked by that Goblin.

Roll!

Life Extinguisher rolled to the side, dodging the Dragon Tooth. He swung his Mechanical Box to the side and a Magnetic Field Coil was thrown onto the ground.

Boom!

The Magnetic Field Coil hadn't had time to release its magnetic energy when Lord Grim's spear pierced it, directly disrupting it. The spear jumped and again flashed in front of Life Extinguisher.

In the end, Ye Xiu was most familiar with handling a spear. All those years controlling the Battle Mage One Autumn Leaf hadn't gone to waste.

Xiao Shiqin could only have Life Extinguisher dodge again, but Lord Grim wasn't some ordinary Battle Mage. If the spear's range wasn't enough… The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shifted to gun form, and Anti-Tank Missile was launched!

Boom boom boom!

The flames of the explosions swallowed Life Extinguisher whole, but at this moment Xiao Shiqin still sent a message in the chat. "Leave me, maintain the rhythm."

The Thunderclap players who had been prepared to rescue him suddenly stopped, but they understood their captain's intentions. Ye Xiu's powerful offensive toward Xiao Shiqin was his attempt at breaking the current situation. If the Thunderclap players broke formation to save thier captain, Happy would be free of their current difficult situation, and might even be able to launch a counterattack. This could be considered a variation of BOX-1 tactics, and Thunderclap's players, with their high tactical background, instantly understood.

"Maintain the rhythm, respond as appropriate," said another Thunderclap player. It was Fang Xuecai, a longtime teammate of Xiao Shiqin's in Thunderclap, the vice-captain of Thunderclap. He knew that Xiao Shiqin didn't have much space to give commands, so he supplemented the strategic plan.

They couldn't gather the strength of the entire team to force a rescue, but they couldn't not rescue him. Maintain the rhythm, respond as appropriate, a playstyle like that was to incorporate Lord Grim and Life Extinguisher into the rhythm of the battle as a whole. It was the logical way of breaking BOX-1 tactics.

But… To Thunderclap, Xiao Shiqin was more than just a battle core. He was the commander. This battle against Happy in particular required many directions from him, constantly adjusting their tactics and attack rhythm to target Happy's weak point, An Wenyi. But at this moment, under Ye Xiu's offensive raining down upon him, an offensive that could instantly defeat countless formidable players…

"How about it? Still have time to type any words?" Ye Xiu, shockingly, could still find the space to ask this question.

The crowd was silent. No one knew how to express their current emotions.

Xiao Shiqin… This was retribution, wasn't it?

Against Blue Rain, he had bullied Yu Wenzhou. Yu Wenzhou's handspeed was too slow to keep up with a rapidly changing battle, so Xiao Shiqin purposely directed his team so there were many changes and ultimately defeated Blue Rain.

And now, Ye Xiu, this Glory Textbook was teaching a lesson to the helplessly sighing Blue Rain. Was there really no way of dealing with Xiao Shiqin's harassment?

Of course there was, and it was simple. Tooth for Tooth, use their own strategy against them!

If he wanted to harass with a complex and changing battle style, Xiao Shiqin also needed to rely on a large number of commands. His handspeed wasn't a problem, but, when faced with this explosion of attacks raining down upon him…

"Your life or your commands?"

Ye Xiu's question was the dilemma with which Xiao Shiqin was currently struggling.

Thunderclap's players quickly realized as well, without Xiao Shiqin's commands, the amount of damage they were dealing was quickly slipping, and it seemed like Happy's weak point An Wenyi could endure this level. After all, he had walked with Happy through the Challenger League and played half a season with them on the main roster.

He didn't neglect his daily training, either. Perhaps his talent was limited, but after a year and a half of growth, he was far from mediocre.

Thunderclap's strategy, broken!

The live crowd finally reacted with applause and cheers. And once An Wenyi was able to stabilize the situation, Happy's counterattack finally arrived. With regards to player quality, many people had already realized prior to this match that Happy was superior to Thunderclap.

"We have to save Captain!" Dai Yanqi said in the chat.

The others were also debating, but they also wanted to wait for Xiao Shiqin's direction. A "save" could be typed out! While he was tangled with Ye Xiu, Xiao Shiqin still occasionally had the space to issue a direction.

His life or his commands? This was the dilemma Xiao Shiqin faced.

To save or not to save? This was the choice Thunderclap had to make.

But Ye Xiu seemed like he knew that Thunderclap was facing this difficult decision. Lord Grim's attacks grew even more ferocious, so much so that people felt that the slightest slip could send Life Extinguisher straight to death.

Was it so bad that he couldn't even type a single word? The blood of the Thunderclap players went cold.

"Dai, help him!" At last, Fang Xuecai couldn't resist any longer, directing Dai Yanqi to give some support, or at least make an opening so that Xiao Shiqin could give a command. Just pointing them in the right direction would be enough!

"Understood!" Dai Yanqi's Firebird Messenger turned around.

The crowd saw all of this. Xiao Shiqin was suppressed, Dai Yanqi went to help him, this… this was a strategy often used by powerhouse teams with top-tier players during team competitions. Star 1v2.

This Ye Xiu… When the other side had stars, he played tactics with them. When the other side played tactics, he played as a star?

Chapter 1240
Bitter But Unable to Complain

Dai Yanqi shifted targets to Lord Grim. Fang Xuecai thought that as a long-ranged attacker, switching targets would be fast and easy. Dai Yanqi wouldn't need to approach either, saving time while still letting her take care of the other side simultaneously.

His thinking wasn't wrong. At the moment, this was the best way to maintain balance on the field. However, since she needed to take care of two sides at once, her presence on one side would be weaker. This small difference was quickly seized by Happy.

Who had Happy sent out for the team competition today?

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Wei Chen, An Wenyi.

Apart from An Wenyi, the rest were experienced veterans of the game. As soon as Thunderclap's balance tipped a little, those three raced towards a small opening that appeared.

Thunderclap's players felt their hearts suddenly turn cold. This feeling was as if they had caught a net packed with fish, but then a small hole ripped open in the net, resulting in all of the fish escaping for their life through this hole. In an instant, the hole enlarged, leaving them no opportunity to patch it up.

"Stop them! Stop them!" Fang Xuecai roared.

But Thunderclap's players felt powerless. A hole had been exposed already. They couldn't stop them. Agreeing by chance, everyone turned to look towards their captain. If Xiao Shiqin's shotcalling hadn't been cut off, this situation wouldn't have happened.

How could Xiao Shiqin not feel bitter? It wasn't that he didn't want to give out commands. If he had even a fraction of a chance, he would certainly take it to instruct his teammates on what to do. But he wasn't given any chances. He could only watch as their complete and perfect offense slowly fell apart due to a lack of precise

adjustments. There had been numerous crucial moments that Xiao Shiqin had wanted to say something, but he couldn't, because he discovered that whenever these crucial moments appeared, Ye Xiu would suddenly press even harder.

Ye Xiu… he wasn't only looking at the opponent in front of him. He was also carefully watching over the entire battle and then adjusting his attacks according to the situation. If Xiao Shiqin tried to type anything, he would be taking on a full frontal assault from an unspecialized. Under Lord Grim's explosive storm-like attacks, he might just die as a result.

If he lived, there would at least be hope. If he died, then it would mean he wouldn't be able to give any orders anymore.

In this instant, Xiao Shiqin hated the Alliance's ban on voice chat. He could completely feel the helplessness and misery that Yu Wenzhou had felt facing against him.

Fang Xuecai had Dai Yanqi provide support for him, and he knew that this wasn't that great of a decision. The outcome could be disastrous, but what else could be done? If they had continued like that, it would have been disastrous too. Change always created something. For example, what if Dai Yanqi suddenly played out of her mind and was able to completely take care of both sides at once?

That didn't happen, unfortunately. As soon as Dai Yanqi switched targets, she didn't even get the chance to show if she could overperform. Happy had immediately seized the opportunity to break free from Thunderclap's offense. The players that Happy sent out this time were too experienced. They wouldn't miss such a golden opportunity.

Is it over?

No!

Not yet.

Happy had broken free from their offense, but Dai Yanqi didn't hesitate. She became even more determined to rescue Xiao Shiqin.

Good!

Xiao Shiqin felt grateful for Dai Yanqi's decision. When making a tactical decision, the biggest taboo was hesitation. For the tactics-oriented Thunderclap, no one was

indecisive.

Lightning Bolt!

A bolt of lightning flashed in front of Lord Grim. The purpose of this predictive attack was that even if it didn't hit, you still had to be wary of it. This pause would at least let Xiao Shiqin free himself from a defensive position, giving him an opening to either counterattack or give an order to the team.

However, Lord Grim stubbornly took the step forward.

How persistent. The stun from lightning spells weren't weak. Even if you take it, an opening will still appear. But as Lord Grim stepped forward, he swung his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella to the side. The moment the Lightning Bolt arrived, his umbrella opened up with a whoosh.

Zzt. Lightning struck the umbrella, but before the electricity spread out, the umbrella closed, or it could be said that the umbrella never stopped. This was simply another attack towards Life Extinguisher. It was just that it came from the side, blocking the Lightning Bolt coming towards him in the passing. Lord Grim's offense wasn't interrupted one bit.

Dai Yanqi felt frightened by such precise movements, and she didn't cast her prepared follow-up. Dealing with Ye Xiu wasn't how she had thought it would be.

It wasn't until after she saw Life Extinguisher continue rolling to dodge did she regain her senses. She immediately cast another spell to attack, but Ye Xiu wasn't just fighting alone. The rest of Happy was helping him too. Before Firebird Messenger could cast her spell, a boom sounded first. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had started providing support for Ye Xiu. Not only did this attack interrupt Firebird Messenger's casting, it also helped blast Ye Xiu towards Life Extinguisher.

Fang Xuecai's Assassin, Demon Talent, rushed forward to try and stop Dancing Rain, but Su Mucheng had noticed him long beforehand. Dancing Rain Aerial Fired away. No matter how fast an Assassin's speed was, he wouldn't be able to catch up to her in a short amount of time. And right now, how could he have the time to blindly chase after someone? He wasn't like Dancing Rain. He wasn't a Launcher, who could move around while also providing support to the rest of the battlefield. His Assassin needed to get close. If he was just kited around by Dancing Rain, then his presence would be

equivalent to empty air.

Fang Xuecai was helpless. He just thought of it as bothering Su Mucheng for a bit. He looked around to see where to go next and in the end, he locked onto Little Cold Hands.

An opening!

Fang Xuecai keenly discovered that because Happy had been trapped for so long, after breaking free, they ran wild, unexpectedly forgetting to protect their healer. If he could eliminate Happy's healer in one go…

This was definitely possible because Fang Xuecai's Demon Talent was an Assassin. He also knew Life-Risking Strike. He may not love the move as much as Void's Li Xun, but no Assassin would completely give up on Life-Risking Strike. The mere existence of Life-Risking Strike was a threat, and in certain moments like these, it could also be used.

Right now… is that moment…

Fang Xuecai pretended to have his Demon Talent continue chasing after Dancing Rain. Suddenly, he moved diagonally as if trying to circle around Dancing Rain. But halfway through this movement, his figure flashed. Shadow Clone Technique. His real body instantly moved towards Little Cold Hands, and he closely followed with a Shining Cut to suddenly reach Little Cold Hands' side.

Life-Risking Strike!

Fang Xuecai directly used this risky strike. Little Cold Hands' health wasn't full. He had been pressured by Thunderclap's fast changing offensive, resulting him in being unable to keep Happy's characters above a safe line. Every character including Little Cold Hands himself had lost quite a bit of health due to An Wenyi's panicked healing.

This is more than enough!

Fang Xuecai calculated it precisely. He was certain of this attack. They had analyzed An Wenyi's strengths and weaknesses very clearly. His reaction speed and hand speed wasn't that great. An Wenyi definitely wouldn't be able to react to this sudden sneak attack.

Go die!

Fang Xuecai roared in his heart. Afterwards, even if his own health dropped to nothing, if his character could trade for Happy's healer, then it would 100% be worth it.

But the instant the dagger was about to strike, Fang Xuecai saw the gown of Little Cold Hands flutter and a wave of qi circled around Little Cold Hands, slicing into Demon Talent's waist.

Qi Blade!

This was Fang Xuecai's final thought on the battlefield. After using Life-Risking Strike, he didn't have the health to take any attacks. A single Qi Blade was more than enough to take him down.

To use a Cleric as a cover and so perfect too! My intentions were completely seen through! Yet to dare use it at the last moment was brave. If that Qi Blade had been one beat too late, my dagger would have taken Little Cold Hand's life! Even if I were killed by the Qi Blade later, who cares?

This guy… is so bold, so dirty!

Demon Talent fell despite Fang Xuecai's unwillingness. Fang Rui hollered in the public chat: "This brother's Golden Right Hand is beyond precise!"

"Who would get actually get hit by such a cheap trick? You call this tactics?" Wei Chen sneered.

No one would have thought that in the blink of an eye, Thunderclap would lose a player. 4v5. The situation completely reversed. Thunderclap had no way of stopping Happy. Happy immediately found their target and focused on Life Extinguisher. They stopped at nothing to kill him and before Thunderclap's sixth player could arrive, Xiao Shiqin was sent out of the battle. Xiao Shiqin wasn't just another player in Thunderclap. Without him, Thunderclap's momentum was halted and, in the end, Happy won the team competition.

9-1. Another thrilling victory. Everyone was completely dumbfounded by this sudden reversal. Pan Lin and Li Yibo looked at each other with lingering fear in their eyes, especially Li Yibo. He had practically ascertained Thunderclap's win and nearly blurted it out, but he didn't, saving him face. As for Pan Lin, he had a feeling of relief. His caution had paid off. In the end, Happy had pulled off another bout of black magic.

"What a brilliant match…" Li Yibo said. He felt like he had just survived by the skin of his teeth and for a moment, he didn't know what to say.

"Yes, Thunderclap played very well for the first half, demonstrating how to give trouble to Happy."

"Happy also responded brilliantly. Yes… they… also showed how to stop Thunderclap's outstanding tactics." Li Yibo followed up with Pan Lin's words with some hesitation because Happy's way was similar to when Thunderclap beat Blue Rain. It was a sort of dirty way and shouldn't really be praised.

After Blue Rain had lost, they could only feel wronged at the voice chat restriction. But Thunderclap? They had benefited from it and then suddenly became victims to it. Thunderclap had no choice but to suffer in silence. Even if they were bitter about it, there was nothing they could say!

Chapter 1241
Keep Working Hard

The last time Thunderclap had failed in the team competition was during their away game against Royal Style in Round 9. After that, they went on a beautiful six round win streak, but in Round 16 their golden statue cracked again. And this time, their opponent was none other than the team Xiao Shiqin had already lost to last year in the finals of the Challenger League, Team Happy.

In that match, Happy had used lots of unusually exciting tactics against Excellent Era. In the Glory world, it was generally agreed that as Master Tacticians, Ye Xiu was still a bit more shrewd and ruthless. But after losing that battle, it seemed as though Xiao Shiqin had gained something. He returned to Thunderclap, which hadn't changed aside from the addition of the Cleric Zhang Jiaxing from Excellent Era, and he had obtained startling results for his team.

It was impossible for Xiao Shiqin not to be at least a little pleased. Such outstanding results would naturally bring high spirits. Xiao Shiqin now had more self-confidence than before. But this time, he once again fell before the opponents who had just recently defeated him.

When he shook hands with Ye Xiu after the match, Xiao Shiqin's emotions were complicated, and he was certainly a little frustrated. He felt that his year at Excellent Era hadn't been a waste, for in those depths, he had learned a lot and grown a lot. But after growing and improving, he found that he still had no way of defeating this person before him. No one could find happiness in such a situation.

"Keep working hard next time!" Ye Xiu patted his shoulder, as though encouraging some rookie.

Xiao Shiqin smiled bitterly. Of course, he was no rookie, he was someone with prestige and reputation in this circle. But this person in front of him had more qualifications than him, had more honors, and had defeated him twice in a row. When Ye Xiu said something like that, how could Xiao Shiqin respond?

He could only smile bitterly like this and watch as the other walked aside. And then,

another hand shook his, and patted his shoulder, and said, "Keep working hard next time."

Xiao Shiqin didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This Su Mucheng hadn't been like this during their time at Excellent Era together! After being with Ye Xiu, she had really changed a lot, hadn't she?

She hadn't even waited for him to say anything before vanishing, and another person shook Xiao Shiqin's hand, and patted his shoulder, and said, "Keep working hard!"

Fang Rui! By year, Xiao Shiqin was actually the senior of this kid, yet even he was going along with this act! Xiao Shiqin glared at Fang Rui, but Fang Rui cleanly ignored him and was all puffed up as he walked away.

"Kid, you gotta keep working hard!" After that, a more boastful voice reached his ear with this encouragement. This person skipped the handshake entirely and directly went to pat him on the shoulder.

"We're not like those little Blue Rain brats," the person said.

Little Blue Rain brats… Blue Rain did have a little brat, but Xiao Shiqin knew, in front of this person, "little Blue Rain brat" referred to more than just Lu Hanwen. Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, two major players in the Alliance, were really just little brats in this person's eyes.

Blue Rain's former captain, Wei Chen. The person with the most status to call the Blue Rain players little brats. Xiao Shiqin could say nothing to him.

After enduring four consecutive encouragements, this blatant ridicule, Xiao Shiqin really couldn't stand it much longer.

Was there more?

Xiao Shiqin adjusted his glasses and prepared to unleash some killer intent, but the youth who walked in front of him now was very respectful in tone.

"Thank you Senior for your teachings."

"Ah?" This sudden change of style caught him completely off guard. This person in front of him now was Happy's sixth player for this match, Qiao Yifan.

"You're welcome…" Facing this kind of respect, there was no way Xiao Shiqin could insert any mockery in his response.

The last one, An Wenyi, the weak point in Xiao Shiqin's eyes. This match, Thunderclap's strategies almost entirely targeted him. He must have a lot of resentment right now, no? As Xiao Shiqin thought this, he was already bracing himself. This was just a rookie, he couldn't lose in dignity.

But when An Wenyi came up to him, the rookie just extended his hand very ordinarily, shook hands, and nodded his head in acknowledgement. Without revealing any unusual expressions, An Wenyi departed.

The players of both teams finished their polite greetings just like that, and Happy's players gathered together and left, basking in victory. Xiao Shiqin was left onstage. He stared at the hand he had just used for the handshakes, and in the end he used it to pat his own shoulder. "You still need to work even harder, Xiao Shiqin!" he told himself.

During the post-match press conference, seeing those eager expressions of the reporters overflowing the space, Xiao Shiqin knew that this upcoming battle today wouldn't be a good one.

During this season so far, they had received too much phrase. But he should still be able to deal with an awkward situation like this!

He had to work hard! Xiao Shiqin lifted his chin, sat straight in his chair, and welcomed the media's interrogation.

The results of Round 16 of Season 10 continued to release, and those who liked statistics quickly found a pattern. In Round 9, the round where Thunderclap lost the team competition, there were five 10-0 swept matches. And this time, in Round 16, when Thunderclap once again lost the team competition, four 10-0 sweeps appeared this round.

Was Thunderclap's performance in the team round a weather vane for powerful 10-0 showings? The bored gave this title to Thunderclap's team competitions.

Looking at the four 10-0's, they were earned by Samsara, Tyranny, Blue Rain, and Wind Howl. Among them, Blue Rain and Wind Howl's performances had been lagging recently, but their 10-0 scores this round were a clean answer to those voices of doubt. And Samsara, after after achieving this 10-0, finally took the lead over Happy in terms

of 10-0 match count. Right now, they had six 10-0 matches, one more than Happy.

Aside from them, Hundred Blossoms, Void, Misty Rain, Tiny Herb, and Miracle all achieved victory. This round had been a huge victory for the home teams - among all ten matches, it had been the home team who had won, and the victories were very close to what was predicted by comparing the teams' strengths on paper. There had been no surprises or unexpected outcomes, if one didn't count Happy's victory over Thunderclap as a surprise.

With this, Happy's ranking increased by one on the leaderboard. With 107 points, they were now in fifth place. And the team they had defeated, Thunderclap, was the only team among the current top ten that had lost during this round. Because the other teams had all gathered a sizable number of points this round, Thunderclap instantly slid down two places, from fourth to sixth, with 105 points. And the team that now rose to fourth was a team that had swept 10-0 this round, Blue Rain. Tyranny and Tiny Herb had the same number of points this round, but Tyranny had defeated Tiny Herb in their match, so Tyranny was second, and Tiny Herb third.

Even as the debate continued over whether or not Tyranny was still strong enough, the team had actually quietly climbed up to second place. Samsara was truly too strong this season, leading by such a large margin that people overlooked their presence. The conflict that people paid attention to was that between all of the teams aside from Samsara. People still held the impression that Tyranny was stumbling had nothing of the dominating strength they had shown last season, but just as the season was about to reach the halfway point, they had returned to their place second only to Samsara?

How in the world had Tyranny chased them up here? Even as everyone was still worrying over whether or not they could even secure a playoff spot, now they were actually second place on the leaderboard?

What was Tyranny's performance?

Everyone discovered that their minds were empty. Their impressions of Tyranny had apparently stopped at when they had begun their rotations. After that period of stumbling performances, they had begun to steadily obtain points. Had anyone noticed? Without drawing attention, they had already quietly risen to second place. This sort of cool and calm performance sent chills down everyone's spines. These old generals in Tyranny still couldn't be overlooked!

Although the rankings among the top 8 had changed, it was still the same eight teams. Wind Howl and Hundred Blossoms were sitting steadily at seventh and eighth place, respectively. Void was chasing them ferociously, but they were still five points behind the eighth place Hundred Blossoms. Below them were Misty Rain and 301, with 82 and 81 points. The gap between them and the playoff zone was in the double digits.

Behind the top 10, among the teams in the lower half, the team that surprised everyone was Miracle. After sixteen rounds of play, this team was at 13th place. For a team that had just joined the Alliance, such a performance was extremely outstanding. As of now, they were even higher up than Heavenly Justice, who had garnered such high hopes last season. Everyone praised Miracle, but it seemed like they had forgotten, the other new team this season was solidly in the playoff zone! But no one thought of Happy as some new team. They had Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, these All-Star level players with whom everyone was familiar. No one could continue to view them as some new team.

After this round, the end of the year was upon them. The Christmas event, the New Year event, and the first weekend of the new year, the All-Star Weekend, they were all rapidly approaching. The in-game event during summer break had been officially named Carnival, but for those in the Glory circle, whether pro or ordinary player, these two weeks crossing the end of the year made up the true valuable carnival.

Every year, the Christmas event that rewarded wonderful presents took place in-game. Ye Xiu had participated in this event for two consecutive years, with great profits. But this year wasn't like previous years. Christmas Day was a Wednesday, and on Friday they still had a professional match to play. The in-game event mainly had to be left to Wu Chen, leading the guild to participate. If pro players were interested, there was nothing stopping them from helping out, but if they spent too much energy there, it could ruin their condition for their match.

Competitive condition, this wasn't just something that existed in the competitive Glory scene. Any sort of competitor for any event had to maintain their condition for competition.

Generally, one's competitive condition would vary cyclically through the weeks. For any sort of event, competitors relied on practice to adjust and maintain their condition. With different events and different competitors, the changes in condition might be different. Some people might only reach their peak condition once a year, and others might reach it two or three times. This required specialized team scientific

systems to help every person achieve some control. For Glory, the teams that were aiming for the championship needed their players to reach their full explosive potential during the playoffs.

Ye Xiu was the Glory Textbook, true, but that referred to his knowledge of the techniques of the various classes and the strategies within the game. As for competitive condition, which depended on an individual's skill, personality, skill, and even psychological strength, he truly had no solid grasp of it.

Happy didn't have anyone with such specialized knowledge; the Glory circle as a whole lacked such talents. After all, the Glory Alliance was a competition only ten years old, and everyone was still studying and researching how to best adjust the conditions of the Glory players.

For now, Happy had no way of having such a high-level department, and could only rely on Ye Xiu's intuition from years of accumulated experience to make judgments. And Happy's recent strong performance was unexpected even for him. They… had they entered their peak condition too quickly, too early?

Chapter 1242
Christmas Presents

Eght consecutive wins, plus it was almost Christmas. From top to bottom, Happy was filled with a joyous atmosphere. Ye Xiu didn't want to ruin the spirit. At least wait until after the holiday passed to remind everyone to stay cautious and focused!

That little clumsily handmade Christmas tree was brought out by Chen Guo again. But this time, she didn't set it up in the main area of the Internet cafe for some activity. Instead, she carried it to the practice room of Happy Internet Cafe, and after setting it in a corner she carefully began to decorate it.

Seeing this Christmas tree, Ye Xiu couldn't help but pause. This was now his third time seeing this Christmas tree, and it was now two years since the first time he had seen it. At that time, it had been less than a month since he left Excellent Era. In the blink of an eye, two years had passed, and he had actually established a professional team in this Internet cafe, slaughtered his way back into the Alliance, all the way to fifth place on the leaderboard…

Looking back, even Ye Xiu himself couldn't believe that all of this had happened. They had actually managed to do something like this, and they'd done a pretty good job of it, too.

"What are you spacing out for, come here and help!" Chen Guo's shout interrupted Ye Xiu's thoughts.

Chen Guo was currently hanging presents on the tree. These were all presents that she had prepared for everyone at Happy, each one carefully wrapped so that from the outside, you couldn't tell what they were at all.

"Which one is mine?" Ye Xiu casually asked as he helped her hang them on the tree.

"I don't know. When it's time, everyone will pick one for themselves, and whichever one they pick will be theirs. That way it'll be interesting," Chen Guo said.

"Then what about yourself?" Ye Xiu asked.

"There's one for me too, of course," said Chen Guo.

"You got yourself a present? What's the meaning in that?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"What do you mean I got myself a present! This is a present from Happy to Happy's every member. Am I not a member of Happy?" Chen Guo asked, filled with righteousness.

"Of course." Ye Xiu hurriedly nodded.

"Very good, then we'll just leave it like this!" Chen Guo hung the last present on the tree, studied it critically for a while, and after confirming that nothing was wrong, she nodded her head in satisfaction.

"Aside from picking presents, are we doing anything else interesting?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Isn't casually playing some Glory the most interesting thing for you guys anyway?" Chen Guo said.

Ye Xiu froze, and then laughed bitterly. "I don't object to playing some other things occasionally."

"Oh?" Chen Guo thought for a bit. "Go online and play Astrogeddon?" Astrogeddon was currently the most popular RTS game at the moment.

"It looks like you can't think of anything besides playing games, either," Ye Xiu said.

"Yes, I can't either." Chen Guo put special emphasis on the "either." She didn't think that Ye Xiu would have any good suggestions himself; after all, this wasn't the first holiday they had spent together.

"Let's wait for everyone to show up!" Ye Xiu sat down on the couch.

"Brainstorm?" Chen Guo sat down as well.

The two of them sat there like that, staring at the ceiling. One was Happy's captain, one was Happy's boss, but for something like this, neither of them had any good solutions. Perhaps it was because they had both spent too many lonely days without their loved ones.

Bang!

The door to the practice room was roughly pushed open, and Steamed Bun, clutching a steamed bun in his hand, walked inside.

"Yo, Boss!" Steamed Bun waved his steamed bun and greeted Ye Xiu, but just as he was about to greet Chen Guo as well, he saw the Christmas tree at the corner of the room. "Yo, a Christmas tree!" And so Steamed Bun's greeting skipped right over Chen Guo and was sent to the Christmas tree.

"Yup, it's a Christmas tree." Chen Guo wasn't upset that Steamed Bun had skipped right over her, and was actually quite satisfied with his reaction after seeing the tree.

"There are presents hanging on the tree. When it's time, everyone will pick one," Chen Guo explained.

"Alright, thanks Boss." Steamed Bun nodded, and then picked a present off the tree.

Something didn't seem right? Chen Guo blinked.

"What is it?" But Steamed Bun was already unwrapping the present.

"You-! When it's time, I said when it's time! Didn't you hear?" Chen Guo jumped up.

"When it's time? When it's what time?" Steamed Bun asked.

"When it's Christmas!" Chen Guo said.

"Isn't that today?" Steamed Bun was confused.

"That's tomorrow, today is the 24th, the day before Christmas, Christmas Eve, do you understand?" Chen Guo fumed.

"Oh, then I'll unwrap it tomorrow." Steamed Bun nodded, and finally stopped unwrapping. Chen Guo almost went up to get it back, but… Steamed Bun had already left his fingerprints all over the wrapping, since he had just been holding an actual steamed bun. Chen Guo was quite depressed. Should she just rewrap it? Just as she was pondering this, another person entering the room. With a "Huh?", they discovered the Christmas tree as well.

"It's a Christmas tree," Steamed Bun quickly introduced. "There are presents hanging on it, we all pick one, but you can't open it immediately! You gotta wait until tomorrow." After explaining, Steamed Bun shot a "you're welcome" look at Chen Guo.

"Hahaha, little kids, where's all this fuss coming from!" But the new arrival strode forward in large steps. Without waiting for Chen Guo to stop him, he had already come right in front of the tree, plucked the biggest wrapped present off, and swiftly tore it open.

"I…" At this moment, Chen Guo really wanted to burst into tears and wail.

"Let's see what this is, ha!" Wei Chen had already torn all of the wrapping off the present. As it turned out, this largest present was… a cartoon Xiha Monkey pillow.

Wei Chen, growing a chin of stubble over the new year, looked a bit clumsy and helpless as he held this cutesy pillow, with an air of not knowing what he should do with it.

"Is this for me?" Wei Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This present didn't fit him at all!

"You picked it yourself." Chen Guo's voice was extremely cold. She'd said that everyone would pick their own present, but in reality she had prepared to give some hints and prompting. But this guy hadn't even waited for the event to start before rushing forward and snatching a present. Chen Guo was truly heartbroken.

"This… this… Can I have a redo?" Wei Chen looked down. "The wrapping isn't too messed up. Steamed Bun go find some scotch tape, let's rewrap this."

"Yeah, you can't open it now, you have to wait until tomorrow, Christmas Day!" As Steamed Bun spoke, he really did go to find some tape just like that.

"No way! That one's yours!" Chen Guo refused to accommodate them any further. She took a few steps forward and roughly shoved the pillow back into his arms. Seeing the gruff old Wei Chen trying to put on an innocent face, combined with this Xiha Monkey, Chen Guo thought it was both infuriating and hilarious.

"This one! No trading allowed." And so she fiercely emphasized this again. This guy brought this upon himself, let him hold this Xiha Monkey and be embarrassed!

But Chen Guo had underestimated Wei Chen's ability to withstand anything.

"Alright!" Seeing Chen Guo's determination, Wei Chen just casually laughed. He carried this pillow over to the sofa, as though he were the pagoda-wielding Heavenly King Li, plopped himself down, and tucked the pillow behind his back and leaned against it.

"What's yours?" Wei Chen asked Ye Xiu, who was standing at the side.

"Don't know, haven't picked yet."

"Aren't you so noble," Wei Chen said disdainfully.

Ye Xiu was silent. He wanted to laugh, but Chen Guo was glaring at him.

"How about, I pick one too?" Ye Xiu said, cautiously testing the waters.

"Pick one, pick one!" Chen Guo was helpless. There was no point in resisting any longer.

And so Ye Xiu went over and plucked one at random.

"What is it, take a look," Wei Chen urged.

Ye Xiu looked at Chen Guo, who didn't seem to have any murderous spirit left, and was probably already in despair. So, he also began to tear open the wrapping. To the side, Steamed Bun saw that even Boss was opening them, he'd better keep up with the pace! So he too began quickly opening the present in his hand.

At this point, Su Mucheng and Tang Rou entered the practice room together. The girls were all close with each other, so although Wei Chen and Steamed Bun and the others didn't know about this, the girls had all gotten together and talked about it. But now, they saw Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun were already hurrying to open their presents, this… wasn't what Chen Guo had planned!

"This is?" The two were confused.

"Forget about it. You two go and pick too!" Chen Guo was depressed.

At this point, Ye Xiu had already opened his present. Holding what was inside, he laughed in delight. "Haha, this is useful."

"I'll switch with you." Wei Chen instantly said, without a moment of hesitation.

"Hehe." Ye Xiu used his laugh to reject him. He had gotten a lighter. At Happy, he and Wei Chen were the only ones who smoked, so it was clear that this present was intended for one of them. Ye Xiu had gotten quite a suitable present.

"What did Old Wei get?" the new arrivals Su Mucheng and Tang Rou asked, curious.

Wei Chen shifted on the sofa, pulling out the Xiha Monkey pillow to show the two of them.

"Hahaha…" The two burst out laughing. This present plus Wei Chen was a combination that you couldn't not laugh at!

"You're really good at picking!" said Su Mucheng. Seeing that Wei Chen had gotten that present, she knew that this situation had gotten out of Chen Guo's control. No wonder Chen Guo was a bit depressed. But the important part of sending presents was the feeling behind it. Su Mucheng didn't care too much about the process or result, the most important thing was creating this atmosphere, no?

"Will you bring that with you everywhere you go from now on?" Su Mucheng asked Wei Chen with a laugh.

"You hurry up and pick, if you get another lighter I'll trade with you," Wei Chen said.

"Don't even think about it," Su Mucheng said. "No matter what I get I'm not trading with you." She also picked a present from the tree and opened it. "Oh no, how'd I get this one?"

"What is it?" Wei Chen carried his Xiha Monkey pillow as he scurried over, prepared to exchange.

"This… should've been given to him!" In Su Mucheng's hand was a slender voice recorder, and in the direction of her gaze, Mo Fan had just entered the practice room by himself.

A voice recorder, the silent Mo Fan… This was really an exquisite pairing.

"What a shame, I suppose it's mine now." Su Mucheng put the present away.

Wei Chen appeared not to be very interested in this voice recorder.

"What did Little Tang get?" He made his way to Tang Rou's side.

The wrapping was torn off, Tang Rou's present was a more general gift, a beautiful music box.

"Are there any more manly gifts?" Wei Chen called.

"Are you talking about mine?" Steamed Bun turned around, wearing a glove on his right hand. Ordinary people might not recognize it at first, but everyone here instantly realized that this was the glove weapon used by Qi Masters in Glory, a piece of Glory merchandise. The intent of this present was also rather clear; it had special meaning for Fang Rui, who had just changed classes to Qi Master. Unfortunately, now…

"Steamed Bun, did you wash your hands?" Chen Guo asked with a sullen expression.

Chapter 1243
Art Book Signing

Chen Guo had by now entirely abandoned her original plans for Christmas Eve. By the time Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and the others entered, she voluntarily told them to pick their presents. By the end, the planned gift matchups had become a complete mess, resulting in hilarious pairings that everyone was laughing over. Chen Guo's initial bit of unhappiness quickly faded away. What was the point of giving gifts? Wasn't it just to make people happy? And now everyone was so happy, there was nothing wrong with this. It looked like the surprise element of this random selection was really quite exciting!

The presents that Chen Guo had gotten weren't just for the players. The in-game department, the R&D department, these were also crucial components of Happy. Chen Guo had done a headcount and gotten enough presents for everyone. These workers didn't work in the practice room, but Chen Guo quickly called them over.

Wu Chen and the others came over and picked their presents, and their unwrapping brought another wave of enjoyment. Guan Rongfei was a bit disappointing though. He had to be forcefully dragged over here, his face filled with reluctance. He charged over, snatched a present, and left, spending a total of less than ten seconds in the practice room before vanishing.

At the end, everyone finished picking their presents and chattering about their suitable or unsuitable presents. Everyone's eyes fell upon Chen Guo, and the final two presents hanging on the Christmas tree.

"Huh?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"Is someone missing?" she asked. The presents had been counted correctly, and she hadn't chosen yet, so by logic there should only be one present left. But in her memory, everyone in Happy had arrived! Even Guan Rongfei, who had only existed here for ten seconds. Chen Guo had clearly seen him holding something as he left.

"If there was no choice at the end, wouldn't that be very boring?" Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?" Chen Guo heard something significant in his voice, and turned back to look at the tree. Two presents, one very familiar to her eyes, undoubtedly one that she had prepared, and the other…

"You put it there?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

"It's your turn to pick now," Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo was startled. She never would've expected that at the very end, there'd be this little surprise left to her. If she was choosing, then of course she'd pick the one that she didn't know, but… Ye Xiu, that guy, he wouldn't have randomly and hastily thrown something together just to make fun of her, would he? Like a half-smoked pack of cigarettes or something? Something like that, Chen Guo felt that Ye Xiu could easily do.

But… Chen Guo walked up and studied it. That unfamiliar present was wrapped just as neatly as the others. It definitely didn't look like something that was slapped together last-minute. Was it also carefully prepared?

Chen Guo felt a bit moved. She didn't hesitate any longer, and plucked from the tree this present that had been specially prepared for her.

"What is it?" Chen Guo wanted to see what it was, and yet was a bit nervous at the same time.

"You'll know once you open it," Ye Xiu smiled. "It's something that you've really wanted."

"Something that I really want?" Chen Guo was at a loss. At the moment, she couldn't think of anything that she really wanted, and was even less clear on how Ye Xiu would know.

The present was very light, and when Chen Guo took it, she did wonder if it was really was a half-empty pack of cigarettes or something. But hearing Ye Xiu say this, Chen Guo felt that this wouldn't be some prank. She unwrapped the package, lifted out the paper box inside, opened it, and saw a card, a Christmas card.

This was what she really wanted?

Chen Guo was puzzled, and in her heart there was the tiniest trace of disappointment.

She took out the card and opened it. At the top was written, in none-too-elegant handwriting:

What you've always wanted, as you wish.

And then, two signatures.

Ye Qiu.

Su Mucheng.

Stunned, Chen Guo flashed back to several years ago, back when she was just an ordinary fan alongside all of the other Excellent Era fans, passionately supporting Excellent Era, loving Ye Qiu and Su Mucheng, these two gods. Of course, autographs from the gods were things that they all wanted. And then afterwards, on that snowy night, Happy Internet Cafe saw the arrival of a stranger, who used Chen Guo's account to defeat an opponent in the Arena in 40 seconds, and then asked to become an Internet cafe employee.

At the time, Chen Guo thought that this was some nobody kicked out of his team with nowhere to go. She invited him to stay, encouraged him, and jokingly asked that when he returned to the professional circle, he would get Ye Qiu's and Su Mucheng's autographs for her.

That had just been a joke, Chen Guo hadn't been serious. But two years later, she received this Christmas gift.

The autograph itself didn't mean anything anymore. If Chen Guo wanted a signature from Ye Xiu or Su Mucheng now, she only needed to say the word.

But it was exactly this point that reminded her. The Chen Guo of today was no longer one of those ordinary fans that could only quietly support their idols from afar. She stood right beside the people she had once worshipped. They were friends, and they fought together. This time, she was no longer a bystander; she was a participant.

Team Happy, it had Ye Xiu, it had Su Mucheng, and it had her, and it had everyone. This was the meaning behind these two signatures. Chen Guo instantly understood, and she felt the tears welling up in her eyes. But so many people were watching, and if she cried now that would just be too embarrassing.

Chen Guo quickly turned away and rubbed at her face. Fiercely gathering her emotions, she waved the card around and said, "This, this is just… just…"

Chen Guo wanted to make a joke, wanted to say "this is just too cheap," but she truly couldn't get it out, because she understood the significance of this card. She wanted to pretend she didn't understand, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

"Fuck, just two signatures, that's so lame! So shameless!" In the end, she didn't say it, but someone else did for her. What was the present? This was something everyone was curious about, and they had all politely waited for the revelation. But Wei Chen was never that kind of person, and barged over to take a look. Seeing what was written on the card, he hadn't thought as much as Chen Guo did. He immediately treated this as a prank that Ye Xiu was pulling, and began to condemn him.

"And you too!" After scolding Ye Xiu, Wei Chen turned on Su Mucheng. "You're just as shameless as Old Ye. Our boss doesn't have it easy, she pulled together this Christmas celebration for us, and you two use your pathetic signatures as a gift to brush her off? If you're going to give signatures, at least have everyone sign it! Don't cry Lady Boss, come come come, I'll sign for you too."

"Sign, everyone come and sign!" Chen Guo called, but she had already closed the card. She returned to that Christmas tree and retrieved the final gift that no one had chosen.

"We'll just sign this!" This final present was opened, and it turned out to be an art book. Chen Guo had prepared all of the presents, and so she had an idea of which present was which just from the wrapping. This art book was merchandise that Happy itself had produced. The pages were filled with art of their characters, made by professional artists based on the character designs. To invite everyone to sign their names on this, it couldn't be any more meaningful.

"Huh, the art book was printed?" Wei Chen took the book and flipped through it. Everyone knew that Happy was producing this, but they had no idea that it was already out, so Chen Guo obtained a copy from the first round of printing to serve as a present.

"Hm, not bad." Wei Chen quickly flipped to the page with his Windward Formation, and he was very satisfied with the image of the Warlock in the middle of casting.

"Look at me, look at me." The other Happy players all swarmed over. Even Mo Fan, this

antisocial person, was curious at this moment. He left his seat, but still maintained a distance of two meters from everyone, as though he were still considering whether or not he should join in.

"Hahaha, Mo Fan's here, so sneaky, so graceful!" The person in question hadn't even arrived, but everyone was already commenting on Deception's page. They then turned to look for Mo Fan, and saw his hesitating figure two meters away.

"Come and take a look," Su Mucheng invited him, and after a tiny bit more hesitation, Mo Fan finally came over.

In the image, a masked Ninja carefully crept along, indeed looking very sneaky.

This was him?

Mo Fan really didn't think he should look like this, but looking at everyone around him, they all seemed to think this was very accurate.

"Sign your name!" Chen Guo passed a pen to him, preparing to let Mo Fan be the first to sign the art book.

Mo Fan tentatively accepted the pen. Under the eyes of everyone watching, his writing hand trembled a bit. The written characters weren't much in the first place, and with this they suddenly became more askew.

"Your handwriting really needs work!" Fang Rui said from the side. "Here, let me show you guys my Golden Right Hand!"

After speaking, he took the pen from Mo Fan, flipped to the page with Qi Master Boundless Sea, and signed the two characters "Fang Rui" with a flourish.

"How about it, it's a hundred times better, right?" Fang Rui even flipped back to Deception's page to compare. Indeed, his signature was much better; those that wanted to speak up for Mo Fan couldn't open their mouths.

"Try writing a third character," Ye Xiu said.

"Go away!" Fang Rui had already swiftly passed the pen to someone else. Everyone paused, but understood soon enough. Fang Rui was an All-Star level player, and definitely wasn't a stranger to signing autographs. No matter whether or not he

practiced on purpose, after signing so many, he would definitely be practiced enough to have a good-looking signature. But aside from these two characters of his name, how good he was at writing any other characters remained to be discussed.

The art book continued to be passed along, everyone signing their name on the page of their character, and was finally passed to Chen Guo. She flipped through the pages, silent until she reached the end, when she said, "When you have time, you should practice your signatures!"

Aside from Fang Rui and Su Mucheng, who had to sign things often, only Tang Rou had a rather

eye-pleasing signature. Of the rest of them, none of them could be brought onstage, not even Ye Xiu's. When Fang Rui took a look at it, he fell over. "And you criticized me! Your third character isn't any good either!"

Everyone looked at Lord Grim's page. The two written characters "Ye Xiu," no matter how they looked at them, were awkward and misaligned. Chen Guo was stunned for a while, then pulled out the card she had received. Once she compared them, she understood.

Ye Xiu was incomparably practiced at signing "Ye Qiu." Even though he never revealed his face, he still would often sign merchandise for the team, at the level that Su Mucheng and Fang Rui had to. But now, he had to sign Ye Xiu, this "Ye" was still the same, but the "Xiu" couldn't keep up with the rhythm at all. Then, putting the two characters together, it was even uglier than the chaotic mess of equipment worn by Lord Grim.

It looked like Ye Xiu's "Xiu" was, unfortunately, his third character.

Chapter 1244
All-Stars

Early in the morning, Team Happy had already finished celebrating what was originally supposed to be the most lively holiday: Christmas Eve. Afterwards, Christmas Day wasn't a holiday for them. The things that they needed to do still had to be done, and the matches that they had to play still had to be played. Originally, Ye Xiu wanted to remind everyone to maintain a steady mental state for the next match, but after seeing their opponent for the next week, he had no way of saying these words out loud.

On the 27th of December, Round 17 of the regular season, Happy's opponent was Team Bright Green.

After Round 16, Team Bright Green had only accumulated 30 points and was ranked second from last. The gap between them and the 18th place team had already risen to 14 points. Along with Team Seaside, they were considered to be the two teams who would be relegated without suspense this season.

Faced with a team with such an awful record, Ye Xiu felt that nagging the team about being cautious and prudent was somewhat excessive. The Alliance could be said to not have any weak teams, with examples of strong teams being defeated everywhere. Even so, for a playoff team facing against a team struggling to keep their place, simply having the appropriate attitude would be good enough. Any serious talk about not underestimating their opponents could instead backfire and cause the team members to lose confidence.

Thus, at the end of the day, Ye Xiu didn't say anything unnecessary, only getting ready in the same way they normally did. Preparing against the opponents, coming up with strategies: they didn't belittle their opponents, but neither did they attach too much importance to them.

Team Happy, who was in their peak condition, naturally didn't get defeated in an upset by Team Bright Green. In their away match, they scored a grand 10 to 0, once again catching up with Team Samsara's perfect sweep record. In Team Samsara's away game against Team Conquering Clouds, they accidentally lost an individual match, resulting

in a 9 to 1 victory. Team Samsara thus remained with six 10 to 0 victories under their belt.

At the same time, Tyranny, Blue Rain and Wind Howl all achieved landslide victories in their away games. Tiny Herb lost in a surprise loss against Heavenly Swords after a fierce battle in the same city, but in terms of the number of fans, it could be said that the number of Tiny Herb fans completely overwhelmed the number of Heavenly Swords fans. Yet in Glory, the most benefit of playing a home game wasn't just the fan support received. More importantly, having the right to select the map was more crucial.

In this round, after winning one individual competition, Heavenly Swords suffered defeat after defeat, but finally pulled off a strong comeback in the team competition, defeating Tiny Herb with a score of 6 to 4.

It was just one tiny victory, but it was enough to make the brothers at Heavenly Swords go crazy with excitement. From their debut in the professional league until now, this was their first time defeating a true powerhouse team!

It wasn't too long ago when the team was formed and the rich kids from Heavenly Swords were in high spirits, fantasizing about winning the championships until Ye Xiu helped them to come back to reality. Thus ,when they entered the Alliance, they started off carefully and cautiously, and finally realized the true gap between reality and their expectations. Glory champions? To them, this was truly too distant a goal.

Heavenly Swords' cautious progression seemed to be the most suited for their specific circumstances. But deep in their hearts, could the players from Heavenly Swords really be satisfied dithering around near the relegation zone?

Their dream of winning the championships was something that they just carefully kept away, but it wasn't something that they had completely given up on. They weren't the kind of people who accepted mediocrity after facing reality.

They persevered and worked hard, but their team roster being fixed meant that they couldn't rely on external helpers to increase their fighting strength. They could only increase the strength of their characters and equipment, but otherwise, it was all up to their individual bitter training.

But in this season, Heavenly Swords' results couldn't be said to have improved very

much. The bunch from Heavenly Swords may have been a bit too idealistic, but they didn't actually believe themselves to be infallible. With these results, it was inevitable that they would begin to doubt themselves somewhat, feeling that they only had so much skill in Glory. Could they really achieve greater heights?

But at this very moment, they had unexpectedly defeated Team Tiny Herb.

This tiny victory had ignited a single answer in their hearts: we can!

No matter what the reason was, if they could win this round, they could win a second round, or a third. With enough successive victories, who could say that the dream hidden deep within their hearts was unreachable?

"God, isn't that right?"

This glorious and uplifting victory for Heavenly Swords led Lou Guanning to specially discuss it with Happy.

"Yes, that's exactly right, keep working hard!" Ye Xiu replied.

"Alright, you too. Happy New Year in advance!" Lou Guanning called.

Right, it was close to the new year already.

Round 17 had ended on the 27th of December. The next week was a winter break for the Pro Alliance, so the rounds put on hold temporarily, but the once-a-year All-Star Weekend would still happen the following weekend.

The voting for the All-Stars had already entered its final stages. The Alliance was counting the votes, the fans were watching closely, and even the pro players would talk about it in their free time.

From the start of the voting until now, Zhou Zekai's first place in the All-Stars was completely untouchable, and no one had any hopes for such a miracle to take place anymore.

But in second place was surprisingly Ye Xiu!

The Ye Xiu that had routed Excellent Era in the Challenger's League and proclaimed "I'm back" had become a real talking point over the past half a year. When the voting

had just begun, there were a few old fans of Ye Xiu and a few people who just went with the crowd who voted for him, allowing him to break into the list of 24 All-Stars.

Afterwards, at the start of the regular season when the teams were feeling each other out, aside from one great victory against Hundred Blossoms, Happy seemed to be on a losing streak. But after the 8th round when they lost to Tiny Herb, Happy rose abruptly and went on a winning streak, continually winning 10 to 0 and violently sweeping through the entire Alliance.

Some conspiracy theorists thought that the difference between Happy's strength at the start and end of the season was too dramatic. They even suspected that Happy was deliberately throwing games at the start of the regular season, waiting till the teams had a good idea of each other's strength before revealing their true prowess and snatching as many points as they could. And from Round 2 onwards, Ye Xiu swept through the individual competition without losing a single match.

Such a strong player not competing in the group arena and instead competing in the individual rounds from start to finish did draw some criticism from people, but such a trivial matter had no way of diminishing his real battle records. Ye Xiu's individual record was very domineering, Team Happy's record under Ye Xiu's leadership was also very domineering, and this fact caused his All-Star votes to continually climb upwards. Both veterans and rookies were watching this already legendary figure. This time around, was he getting ready to create yet another legend? Currently, he had already cemented his name for the number of consecutive individual matches won. And this was a constantly updating record, as he broke his own record again and again…

Even until Round 17, Ye Xiu's record was unstoppable, and Happy's consecutive victories were unstoppable. Afterwards… for now, there was no afterwards. The next round of competition would have to wait until next year, and the All-Star voting for this year would end here. Team Happy, which had never participated in the Pro League before, and its players, who mostly had never had the distinction of winning a championship, would naturally have a weaker standing in the All-Star voting. Even so, the matches that Happy had participated in were significant enough, and in defeating Excellent Era, they displayed a might worthy of a playoff-level team. On top of that, in defeating Excellent Era, Happy had created a miracle, and the effects of that miracle were tremendous. Ye Xiu originally had a firm standing in the Glory circle, and even though he had left for a year and a half, his powerful return meant that it was completely unsurprising for him to have a place in the All-Stars.

With his valiant return, and the strength he displayed after his return, his rise in the All-Star rankings was unstoppable. It was now coming to the end of the voting period, and it looked like there was little hope of him catching up to Zhou Zekai, but it also looked like his position as number two was very stable. Because just behind him was Team Thunderclap's captain, Xiao Shiqin, who was relying on the astonishing results that Thunderclap produced under his leadership this season. After his failure at Excellent Era in the first half of the year, he had returned in full force, surprisingly crushing many top teams.

Originally, the number of votes that the two of them had was really too close to call, but on the 20th of December in the 16th round of the regular season, the two teams faced directly, and Team Thunderclap was defeated 9 to 1 by Team Happy, indirectly proving an answer to this question. To many of the indecisive fans, their votes depended on the player's performance. Happy defeating Thunderclap indicated that Ye Xiu was stronger than Xiao Shiqin, and so after that day, the results of the struggle gradually became clear. The two player's vote count now had a clear difference between them, and this tussle between second and third place was resolved in this way.

Fourth place in the polls went to Tiny Herb's captain, Wang Jiexi, fifth place belonged to Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian, but sixth place was once again taken by a player from Samsara, the new addition to their roster, Sun Xiang.

People had long become numb to Team Samsara's strength, but this numbness didn't mean that people had overlooked their abilities. Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf, this new duo had attracted explosive amounts of attention from the very beginning. This was a duo between two Gods at the peak of Glory, one old and one new. Just this topic alone was enough to be discussed for days on end. On top of that, there was Samsara's undefeated winning streak… that's right, undefeated.

Seventeen rounds of competition, and Samsara had won seventeen rounds without even a single draw.

Victory belonged to every single player in Samsara, but within these people, there would always be those who would shine brighter.

The first of them was Zhou Zekai, the second of them was Sun Xiang… afterwards, the value of Jiang Botao, the vice-captain of Samsara had long been recognized, and he was in ninth place.

In the top ten ranks of the All-Stars, Samsara had already monopolized three of the places, and their Grappler, Lu Boyuan was also ranked at twentieth. After transferring to Team 301, the previous All-Star Grappler, Li Yihui, had gradually lost his former fame, and didn't make it into this year's list of All-Stars.

Four All-Stars! Team Samsara's lineup was truly shining with talent. What about Team Tyranny, who had four All-Stars last season? Now, they only had two. Zhang Xinjie, ranked seventh, and their captain, Han Wenqing, had fallen out of the top ten for the first time in his career, and was ranked twelfth.

In reality, Team Tyranny was currently rank number two in the regular season, but they had very quietly made their way to this position. In the All-Star voting, it was easier for everyone to notice the performances of those with strong, flashy performances. In this season, Team Tyranny had rotated their players. Even Han Wenqing's votes had seen a significant decrease, while Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan had finally been dropped from the list of All-Stars.

What about new players replacing the old?

Regrettably, it was very rare for rookies to appear amongst the ranks of All-Star players. Last season, Gao Yingjie and Lu Hanwen received an unprecedented number of votes, but after their novelty faded away, in this season, they didn't even receive as many votes as last year.

Tang Rou was originally amongst the rookies who had a great number of votes, but unfortunately, after the 1v3 incident, her votes plummeted. There was no need to consider the top 24, her name couldn't even be found within the top hundred players.

Aside from the four players, Ye Xiu, Xiao Shiqin, Sun Xiang and Su Mucheng who had returned from the Challenger's League and become All-Stars, there was one new name in the list, but it wasn't a newcomer to the Alliance.

Team Wind Howl, Liu Hao.

Chapter 1245
The Fortunate and the Regrettable

Liu Hao had entered the Glory Alliance in Season 5. He had joined Team Excellent Era just after their reign was ended by Team Tyranny.

No one had expected such a fall from grace. After all, at the time, they had only lost their streak as champions. In the Pro League, there were always ups and downs. Losing now was no issue, just aim to win next time. Team Excellent Era's Season 4 recruit, Su Mucheng, had been astonishing to see with Ye Qiu. At the time, Team Excellent Era had still been viewed favorably, with an expectation that they would quickly pull themselves back together.

Liu Hao had also carried this type of confidence for Team Excellent Era when he became a member. But who, himself included, would have expected that Excellent Era wouldn't even make it to the finals from this season onwards?

Tiny Herb, Blue Rain… team after team, new champions arose. Player after player, All-Stars appeared. But as for Liu Hao?

It seemed like Liu Hao of Excellent Era was the only vice-captain of an Alliance powerhouse to not have been selected as an All-Star?

This made Liu Hao very dejected. But what could he do about it? Excellent Era already had the ever-radiant Ye Qiu. Then appeared the outstanding beauty Su Mucheng. They became Best Partners, and there was no shortage of rumors about a kindling relationship between the two. Besides these two protagonists of the story, not even the vice-captain could escape being given a side character role.

Liu Hao didn't want to be a side character. He watched as the others who started in the same Season as him became All-Stars one by one: Zhou Zekai, Wu Yuce, Fang Rui. All-Star status meant popularity, but it also required true skill as a foundation. In the pro scene, popularity did not come without skill.

Liu Hao did not have this popularity, but he was adamant that he had the skills. The problem was just that he paled in comparison to his ever-radiant senior. Compared to

the founder of the dynasty of back-to-back-to-back championship victories, who in the Alliance wouldn't come up short in comparison? Initially, Liu Hao was proud and content that he could share in the glory, but then he realized that this glory was blinding. No one could see him. He wanted to bask in his own glory.

But… it was so difficult!

Enthusiastically showing his talents would put him off-rhythm with the rest of the team. Limit himself to the team's pace and he would get outshone by the Best Partners.

This team's structure was made for these two and they outshone those around them. Liu Hao thought about this somewhat angrily. What he conveniently failed to think about was that if you picked any random team, of course the core players would be the most prominent. If another player can overshadow the core player's existence, wouldn't they have that title instead?

If he wanted to be noticed, he had to establish his own relevance first. Liu Hao, when unable to do so, instead thought up various excuses for why he was not being noticed. This was too backwards. If he had this kind of mindset, then any ordinary arrangement would seem like a elaborate plot to undermine him.

Liu Hao really didn't want his "radiance" extinguished like this, so he continued to search for opportunities. Although Ye Xiu's ultimate departure from the team couldn't entirely be called his victory, it was at least an outcome that he was pleased to see.

His moment to shine had finally arrived, but right after, Excellent Era was promptly relegated.

This outcome was really some miles away from what Liu Hao had expected. However, Excellent Era was still Excellent Era. Even though they were relegated, their influence was still strong, and they even managed to grab the All-Star Xiao Shiqin from Thunderclap.

Sun Xiang filled the gap left by Ye Xiu's departure, but the gap he filled was only the position of One Autumn Leaf's controller; the role played by Ye Xiu in Excellent Era was much greater than that. After all, he was one of the four Master Tacticians. The arrival of Xiao Shiqin was evidence of Excellent Era's prestige as a powerhouse. However, the hidden motive behind these actions was not noticed by many.

Sun Xiang was not Ye Xiu's successor.

The role of successor fell to Sun Xiang plus Xiao Shiqin.

Two people to replace one. Excellent Era definitely could not reveal this intention.

Following this addition, Liu Hao found himself heartlessly abandoned. It was at that moment when he realized that he would forever be a side character in Excellent Era. When Ye Xiu left, Excellent Era spared no expense to find a replacement and to quash certain rumors. They even started preparing far in advance. But for Liu Hao?

Player trade, you're going to Thunderclap.

All Liu Hao received was this phone call.

Yes, breaking the news to him with a phone call. How much more disrespectful could they get? Forget about a send-off for him, Excellent Era was too busy with welcoming Xiao Shiqin!

Liu Hao left with resentment in his heart. He had thought about exposing how Excellent Era had been unhappy with Ye Xiu, and how they had schemed to pressure Ye Xiu into retirement, while at the same time being afraid of having Ye Xiu become an enemy that they would need to face; Excellent Era had been forced into some very careful maneuvering with regards to the issue. But Liu Hao didn't dare. Speaking of reasons for Ye Xiu's departure, plenty of rumors were floating around the competitive scene, some more accurate than others. However, those were still simply guesswork from outside observers. How much influence would their words have? The worst a comment here and a remark there could do was to give people something interesting to gossip about.

Of course, Liu Hao was not an outside observer. If he decided to blow the whistle, the media would be all over the story. But if he did this, it would not bode well for his future. In the Pro League, which team didn't have some skeletons in their closet? A brave Warrior of Justice may be loved by the media or the masses, but which team would dare let him join?

Liu Hao didn't want to get himself into this lose-lose situation. He still wanted to shine! He should wait until he retired before he exposed the Excellent Era scandal.

Liu Hao buried his bitterness towards Excellent Era who had abandoned him. Who would have guessed that Ye Xiu would be the one to avenge him, by eliminating Excellent Era with a grassroots team?

Life is… just absurd…

Liu Hao absentmindedly thought this at the time. I didn't do anything at all, but the person I hate and the team I hate are locked in a battle to the death. What kind of luck is this?

Liu Hao reflected upon his good luck, but then that year he still didn't make it into the All-Stars, what he'd dreamed about for so long.

It's because my team is too shit.

Liu Hao thought this helplessly.

His performance in Thunderclap that season wasn't bad at all. The team performed reasonably well too, but still did not manage to make it to the playoffs. That meant he, Liu Hao, was still no match for Xiao Shiqin. So in that season, everyone in Thunderclap, from top to bottom, missed their former Captain Xiao Shiqin. Liu Hao felt repulsed being confined in this atmosphere. Even a person long gone still outshone him! Thunderclap was even worse than Excellent Era!

Liu Hao originally did not want to stay long at Thunderclap. Add on his disgust for the atmosphere in the team, and he directly turned down Thunderclap's request for him to stay for the next season. He moved to Team Wind Howl of his own accord. It looked like standing out in this team wasn't going to be an easy task. Just as he was beginning to more carefully consider his situation, issues arose within Wind Howl and vice-captain Fang Rui left the team.

Liu Hao got his foot in the door.

In terms of skill, he was never a weak player; in terms of seniority, he had five years in the Pro League; in terms of experience, he had been both vice-captain and captain. His only weakness was that he was still a newcomer and may not have too much influence in the team yet. However, Wind Howl didn't really have anyone better, so those three advantages were enough for Liu Hao to stand out.

Liu Hao lived up to expectations. He performed well both on and off the field, and everyone could see his worth to Wind Howl. With the highest priced transfer in the summer transfer window but never a spot out among the 24 All-Stars, he seemed to have taken a decisive step forward during the season. Coincidentally, his current All-Stars ranking was at number 17, the same as Fang Rui's last year. Liu Hao was

replacing Fang Rui's position both on the All-Star rankings and in Wind Howl.

Unfortunately for Fang Rui, he didn't make the All-Stars. Changing classes was damaging to a player's reputation, regardless of their skill level. However, Fang Rui's performance could still be considered satisfactory. In his very first few matches where he was getting used to the class, he could only rely on a few tricks. Following this, he had incorporated his own playstyle into the Qi Master class, resulting in improvements match after match.

But he still didn't make the All-Stars.

"Qi Masters don't understand love!" Fang Rui noted indignantly.

No one could really tell whether this indignation was real or tongue-in-cheek. Fang Rui didn't seem the type to get hung up on being an All-Star. As one whose style was to play dirty, Fang Rui should have expected divided opinions, leading to a smaller portion of this love. It was rare to witness the situation where Fang Rui would flip this reasoning on its head and say that those who didn't appreciate dirty play were the ones who didn't understand love.

The All-Stars polls closed as the New Year ticked over. With no matches, the votes did not change very unexpectedly. Most did not care about any changes in ranking within the top 24; they only cared if any at the bottom of the poll were changed.

Yes, there still were some changes.

The names on the last two All-Star spots, 23rd and 24th, frequently switched. This time, as the voting closed, two names squeezed in: Zou Yuan and Yang Cong.

After years of loyalty and diligence, Yang Cong finally made it onto the All-Stars. On the other hand, Zou Yuan made it twice previously when he shouldn't have. This time, his performance had really stood out from the rest of the pack, and he had secured a spot in the All-Stars. This time, his true value was demonstrated, and his votes were not from fans who were hung up on a character or who wanted to be spiteful towards a certain other player.

Seeing the names now at rank 25 and 26, everyone felt that it was a shame. Those two were definitely qualified to be All-Stars.

Zhang Jiale, a player in the Alliance since Season 2. Aside from his retirement during

Season 8, this was the first year he had failed to make it into the All-Stars.

Liu Xiaobie. This was the second time he had missed out on a spot by an inch.

Lin Jingyan and Fang Rui, the former Criminal Duo, were now neither a combination nor teammates. However, they stood together outside the All-Star rankings.

Finally, Tian Sen and the former God-level character Peaceful Hermit could not defend their last shred of glory and were also out of the All-Stars. What might be going through Tian Sen's head right now?

The All-Star Weekend drew near!

Chapter 1246
The One and Only

The clocks chimed to signal the beginning of the New Year, and players of the Alliance gathered in City Q, where the All-Star Weekend was being held this year. Tyranny's once-outstanding old generals' days were numbered. The Alliance seemed to have taken this into account and decided to give hosting rights to Tyranny's home city. However, it looked like fans voting for the All-Stars did not share the sentiment. It was quite unfortunate that Tyranny's Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan were both unable to make it into the All-Stars.

On the night of January the 3rd, City Q, in Tyranny's home stadium, Glory Alliance's Season 10 All-Star Weekend finally began. The 24 All-Stars' characters were introduced by projecting them in the stadium with hologram technology, along with New Year's greetings.

Ever since the introduction of the hologram technology, the presentation of Glory's players and characters reached new, astonishingly heights. These heights were paralleled by the characters, representing the very apex of Glory. For these events, the hosting team would go all out to make everything as spectacular as possible.

Usually, they arranged the characters to appear one by one and perform some actions, such as training moves or a choreographed fight with another character. This time, under the direction of Tyranny's hosting, a new theme was introduced: duos.

Samsara's Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf;

Blue Rain's Troubling Rain and Swoksaar;

Tiny Herb's master and apprentice Witches;

Void's Ghost Duo;

Hundred Blossoms' Blood and Blossoms;

Happy's Lord Grim and Dancing Rain;

As the duos appeared pair by pair, the other theme was introduced: Memories!

The screens within the stadium began to play the classic moments created by each of these duos. Many Glory veterans could recognize familiar scenes from just fleeting snapshots.

In the ten years of Glory, players and characters were constantly being passed on. Likewise, within each and every team, duos were constantly being created.

However…

A pause appeared in the on-screen action, and a question cropped up.

Was there a duo that had survived since Season 1 of Glory for the entire decade, and had fought side by side until today?

Everyone gave a start, and considered each duo that had flashed up on the screen.

Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf? They only started fighting alongside each other this season.

Troubling Rain and Swoksaar? Swoksaar was a legend passed down ever since the beginnings of Team Blue Rain, but Troubling Rain made his debut in Season 4, the same time when the Golden Generation's Huang Shaotian began his professional Glory career.

Tiny Herb's Witch duo only existed after Gao Yingjie made the main roster starting from last season.

Void's Ghostblade duo formed after Wu Yuce joined the team in Season 5 and insisted on playing the Ghostblade class.

Hundred Blossom's Blood and Blossoms were formed in Season 2. However, they were separated after Sun Zheping had to retire due to injury. It was reformed after Yu Feng was transferred to Hundred Blossoms.

As for Happy… you couldn't get any newer if you wanted to.

None of those duos had endured the test of time, so who had?

Loud shouts rang out across the stadium before many were able to work it out. This was Team Tyranny's home stadium, and of course had more local Tyranny fans than anyone else. These fans were also the only ones capable of causing such a loud ruckus.

Thus, the answer was revealed amidst the clamoring.

Desert Dust and Immovable Rock.

Since the birth of the Glory Alliance, the Striker Desert Dust and the Cleric Immovable Rock, from Team Tyranny, were the two All-Star characters that had fought side by side until today.

The hosting team's duo was the epic climax afterall.

After countless calls from the crowd, the King of Fighting Desert Dust, who had not once known retreat in ten years, appeared on stage with the ever-present Immovable Rock by his side.

Ten years…

The clips of this duo played for longer than any other. From the birth of the Alliance until today, these two characters had become a symbol of Team Tyranny. No other team had a duo that always stood at the peak. Not even the former Excellent Era with their unrivalled accomplishments!

Many of Tyranny's old fans that had followed their team for ten years could no longer control their emotions.

Fuck, you're trying to tug at our heartstrings? This isn't Tyranny's style, why are you trying make us cry? Tyranny's manly men do not cry. How embarrassing is it to have tear-streaked cheeks?

"A partnership that has lasted ten years. Unwavering. Steadfast. The character may be timeless, but the player eventually departs. However, only one player, from our Team Tyranny, has brought Desert Dust with him onto the stage. He has lead Team Tyranny into battle from day one and continues to do so. Season 1, Season 2, Season 3, all the way until today in Season 10! He has stood here eternally, at the summit. This player, the one and only. WHO IS HE???"

"HAN WENQING!!!" The whole stadium erupted into a thunderous roar. Han Wenqing

was the only player in all of the Glory Alliance who deserved this portrayal. Originally, his arch-rival Ye Xiu would be his equal for this, but unfortunately Ye Xiu took a year and half break starting in Season 8. Therefore…

There stood Han Wenqing. The one and only.

Not only had he lasted ten years, he had lasted ten years while being the best of the best. While his age might have slowly robbed him of his mechanical speed and reactions, his spirit and indomitable will never swayed. This was Han Wenqing, the player behind Desert Dust, the captain of Team Tyranny, for ten years straight.

Han Wenqing quietly stepped onto the stage. Desert Dust's projection stood beside him. The stadium gradually quieted down, expecting this warrior who has fought ten years' worth of battles to give a speech.

But he didn't!

Han Wenqing refused the microphone that was handed to him by the MC. He said nothing, while glancing at the projection of Desert Dust that was beside him.

Seeing the character that he has controlled for ten years standing next to him was a rare experience for Han Wenqing. As he glanced sideways, he stretched out his right hand and actually gave the hologram a pat on the shoulder. Then, he lifted his outstretched right hand and clenched it into a fist. Towards the entire audience, the players, he waved his fist once. Although it was not forceful, it carried a distinctive air of conviction.

He didn't need to say anything.

I'm still standing. I can still clench my fists. That is enough!

Han Wenqing's gesture set off another passionate round of cheering. At the same time, Zhang Xinjie also walked onto the stage, his meticulously calculated footsteps landing him precisely next to Han Wenqing.

Zhang Xinjie was not the first owner of Immovable Rock; however, he had fought by Han Wenqing's side for almost seven years. Players were not like characters and could not fight on endlessly. From this, each player could be considered an inheritor. From the bygone past, to now, to the distant future, through their characters they passed on their spirit and willpower forevermore.

The two players clasped hands tightly and embraced each other under the gaze of tens of thousands of spectators.

The whole stadium erupted into applause.

No one felt that Tyranny was being biased in showing their own team's players in this All-Star Weekend. Han Wenqing was the most befitting as the main character of the Glory Alliance's tenth anniversary. He was the only one to have experienced the full ten year history of the Alliance, and at this moment, it did not matter whether he was on Team Tyranny or not.

The applause did not dwindle. Even though Tyranny did not actually plan to only show off Han Wenqing, all the others who appeared on stage next naturally didn't get the same kind of resounding welcome. The other 22 All-Stars joined the stage while clapping along with the crowd. They stood on either side of Han Wenqing and Zhang Xinjie, placing them in the very middle, in a gesture that gave more than enough face to Tyranny's hosting arrangements.

The lively opening had finally come to a end. Each player left the stage and joined their own teams in the players' stands. The All-Star Weekend was a festive occasion, so everyone was being very casual. Many players mischievously snuck off to other teams' areas and found their more familiar colleagues, greeting each other and chatting about who-knows-what. On stage, the preparations were being made for what was always the first event of the All-Star Weekend: the Rookie Challenge Competition.

The first onto the stage was a rookie from Team Parade.

Many audience members let out a yawn. Compared to the excitement brought about by the dramatic appearance of Han Wenqing earlier, this was too much of a slump.

Li Jiu?

Who was that?

Small- to medium-sized teams already only received a limited amount of attention, let alone a rookie who did not get a chance to appear on stage very often. Li Jiu really was an unfamiliar name to fans. This kind of Rookie Challenge was no fun! The viewers felt that not having an exciting rookie might impact the turnout for Day 1 of the All-Star Weekend. It honestly was not interesting to follow or discuss a rookie who had no reputation. This was in contrast with last year, which had very exciting Rookie

Challenge matches where many rising stars stole the stage. The viewers racked their brains and thought: of all ten years of professional Glory, it seemed like there was no good crop this year! There didn't seem to be any strong rookies?

Tang Rou?

When everyone considered this question, this name was the one that popped up in the minds.

Peh peh peh!

Many people spat. This woman doesn't know heaven from earth, and she even went back on her own word! Where do you think this is? Did you expect everyone to easily forgive you? Don't feel so privileged just because you have good looks! Fuck off!

This was the opinion of many towards Tang Rou. Even within Happy's fanbase, many people felt unbelievably upset when they remembered that there was such a person on the team; their hearts were very conflicted…

Everyone came to the conclusion that there really were no rookies this season who were especially notable. How about second-year rookies? They also qualified for the Rookie Challenge. They thought of Lu Hanwen, but since he already participated last year, it didn't seem like they would support him going up again?

Poor Li Jiu was already completely forgotten by the masses, who were all pondering whether there was anyone after him worth watching. Meanwhile, Li Jiu's voice rang out: "I would like to challenge Senior Ye Xiu from Team Happy.".

Chapter 1247
Asking the Senior to Advise

"The one I want to challenge is Happy's Senior Ye Xiu." Li Jiu's voice echoed throughout the stadium.

Everyone was stunned, and then suddenly exploded into a large clamor.

"This kid is so daring!!" Tyranny's crowd was always wild, and quite a few people cried out. Although they hated Ye Xiu, their shameless rival, they would never deny his strength. And this newcomer actually challenged Ye Xiu! Interesting, really interesting! If Ye Xiu really lost, then it'd be interesting to the limit!

At the thought of this possibility, the audience suddenly grew excited.

In this season so far, Ye Xiu had won the individual competition 16 consecutive times. At the thought, Tyranny's fans were furious. This arrogant fellow! Can no one stop him?

The success of the All-Stars match didn't include the statistics, but Tyranny fans didn't care about that. As long as this guy admitted defeat, then they would be ecstatic!

The player that walked out was a rookie, but this was the All-Stars stage. Anything was possible. Perhaps in a less serious atmosphere, there would be mistakes he could take advantage of? The disparity between a God and rookie was not so large!

"Oh! Li Jiu wants to challenge Happy's Ye Xiu! Alright, let us welcome Ye Xiu to the stage!" The host took the lead to applaud, but the audience booed in response.

"You really are unpopular! How did you even become an All-Star? And second place too! You secretly found people to vote for you, didn't you? " Fang Rui lamented.

"Why is power of hatred so strong?" Ye Xiu deeply contemplated on this thought. He had already left the professional circle for a year and a half, but Tyranny's "welcome" was still as before!

"Stop being so disgusting! Hurry up and get on stage!" Wei Chen scolded.

Ye Xiu helplessly stood up amidst the sea of boos and bitterly smiled as he entered the stage.

This was the second-place All-Star player, plus he was someone who had never made a public appearance like this before. The host was obviously excited as well. Even before Ye Xiu got onstage, the host had already appeared before him.

"Senior Ye Xiu, hello. I suppose it's been a while since you've been here?" The host also referred to Ye Xiu as a senior.

"Yes," Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Tyranny's home stadium? After he retired in Season 8, he hadn't come back here. Although he had fought against Tyranny this season, that had been Happy's home game. If he were to try and recall, Ye Xiu couldn't really remember how long it was since he'd last been here.

"Do you have any feelings about returning to this stage?" The host asked with a smile, obviously also very attentive to the enmity between Ye Xiu and Tyranny. Thus, he purposefully asked such a question.

"Haha, it's still just as noisy," Ye Xiu said.

The audience immediately booed in protest, as if they had specially coordinated with him to create such a scene.

"What are your thoughts on being the first one named for a challenge?" the host asked again.

"Fame follows merit," Ye Xiu answered simply.

"Ah? What does that mean?" The host was baffled.

"Number one!" Ye Xiu said.

The host was stunned. What was this troublemaker trying to do? The host resisted the urge to boo alongside the audience.

"Alright, let's ask Li Jiu a question. Why did you choose to challenge Senior Ye Xiu?" The host turned his attention to Li Jiu, paying no heed to Ye Xiu.

"Because Ye Xiu's record this season has been very good. I want to try and challenge him." Li Jiu merely replied.

"Oh, so to say, you want to end Senior Ye Xiu's winning streak?" the host asked.

"No, I don't dare!" Li Jiu immediately responded, but his gaze still revealed a faint anticipation.

So, the host turned to Ye Xiu with a smile. "Senior Ye Xiu, would you accept that if you lose this match, you break your winning streak?"

Ye Xiu grinned. "So if I win, will that count toward my winning streak?"

"Haha, sincere fans will surely remember." Quick witted as he was, he responded to Ye Xiu's question very quickly, and then seamlessly changed the topic. "Is there anything the two of you would like to say to each other?"

"Better work hard, kid. On the battlefield, I'm very serious and very ferocious," Ye Xiu said.

The audience's jeers grew in volume and the host was overcome with emotion. Ye Xiu and Tyranny's enmity really had an undeserved reputation. Ye Xiu had only been on stage for only a few minutes, but the deafening boos reverberated for what must have been the fourth time.

"Please advise me, Senior." Li Jiu's response was very ordinary, but the thunderous applause from the audience surprised him. Confused, he asked himself, had he actually said something brilliant?

His words were certainly not brilliant. Tyranny's fans simply wanted to make Ye Xiu lose face, so they purposely supported the rookie.

Both players entered their respective booths and logged into their characters. The host then walked offstage. With such an easy-going atmosphere, he stood at the side of the stage and trash talked like a fan.

"Good! The match started! Let us see how serious and cruel God Ye Xiu is!"

"Both sides meet! They're starting!"

"Oh!"

"Oh no…"

"Oh my god!"

"This… Li Jiu totally cannot counter God Ye Xiu's seriousness and cruelty!"

"Alright, it's over…"

A little over a minute. That was how long it took for the match to conclude. Li Jiu's loss hadn't been too unsightly, but when he came out, his face was completely flushed red to the tips of his ears. The match had been totally one-sided. He could say that he was completely defenseless against the formidable Unspecialized. He, like many others before him, only knew after having experienced it, that all his prior preparations and plans could not be put forth in the match at all. He could only subconsciously respond and follow the unspecialized's fighting rhythm. What was more, he couldn't even fully grasp the rhythm, much less try to win.

"Many thanks for your guidance." Li Jiu had lost thoroughly, and that wistful hope of victory made him feel extremely ashamed.

"Keep trying harder," Ye Xiu chuckled. Then he waved at the audience and walked off amidst the jeers.

"He went too far! Towards a rookie, that was so cruel!"

"Yeah! He doesn't have any human feelings!"

"Any other player would have gone easier on him!"

The various discussions weaving through the audience weren't whispers. Everyone hoped these words would make it to Ye Xiu's ears. They wanted to make him feel ashamed.

But it was a shame. In the midst of the discussions, Ye Xiu had taken it in stride and was cheerfully chatting with his fellow Happy players.

"What a shame! Li Jiu couldn't stop God Ye Xiu's winning streak!" Onstage, the host joked, and then looked at the card in his hand. "Then next up, let's invite Miracle's rookie, Guo Shao!"

"Oh, Guo Shao! I've paid attention to this player before! He's pretty good!"

Compared to their reaction to the previous player, Li Jiu, the audience was more spirited this time. Team Miracle. This team had just joined the Alliance, and after 17 rounds, they sat at 14th place with 58 points. For new teams, this was considered quite good. Although this team were mainly made up of Excellent Era's ex-team members, Guo Shao originally came from Miracle and had caught the attention of many parties. Based on many of the individual statistics, Guo Shao was a strong contender for the title of Best Newcomer this season. Even if Miracle's overall placing was relatively weak, there was no reason for a rookie to bear responsibility for the team's results… This was an important difference between the awards for Best Newcomer and MVP.

For Best Newcomer, the main topic of consideration was the rookie player's performance and statistics.

But for the MVP, the team's performance as a whole was an extremely important consideration. Otherwise, where else could the three words "Most Valuable Player" come from?

Guo Shao received booming applause, but very quickly, the jeers filled the stadium once more.

"Yes, the one I would like to challenge is also Senior Ye Xiu…" Guo Shao said.

Ye Xiu was in a daze. His butt hadn't even warmed the seat yet! But he had to go onstage again?

"Go, go. Keep up your win streak!" Fang Rui relished in Ye Xiu's misfortunes.

Ye Xiu had no choice but to stand up with another bitter smile and return onstage amidst the jeers.

The host chuckled, delightfully greeting Ye Xiu. "I didn't think we'd meet so soon again."

"You're too kind," Ye Xiu responded.

"Then, Guo Shao? Why did you choose to challenge God Ye Xiu?" the host asked Guo Shao.

"Ever since we met last time in an Alliance battle, I've been looking forward to having another match with Senior!" Guo Shao didn't hide his excitement.

"Sounds like you've come prepared?" the host asked with a smile.

"Of course," Guo Shao nodded.

"Really? Then show me what you've got!" Ye Xiu said.

"Okay Senior, let's start then!" Guo Shao rushed to his competitor booth.

After several minutes…

"You prepared quite well," Ye Xiu said.

"But I still lost." Guo Shao was upset.

"Winning isn't so simple." Ye Xiu said.

"Being able to quickly chain together so many low-level skills really allows the Unspecialized to have incredible movement ability!" Guo Shao lamented.

"Yeah, Launchers need to fight at a distance, so it's especially difficult," Ye Xiu said.

"Yeah, I thought of some solutions, but after this, it looks like they still weren't enough!" Guo Shao said.

"Hey hey, like I said, it's not so simple."

"But I felt there was a tiny short lag when you tried connecting the Slide Kick with Shining Cut."

"Oh? You noticed?"

"I tried to take advantage of that opportunity, but it was still very difficult," Guo Shao scratched his head.

"Do you need me to repeat for the third time that it's not that simple?" Ye Xiu sighed with emotion.

"I'll continue to work hard!" Guo Shao gave Ye Xiu a thumbs up.

"Alright, I look forward to meeting you the next time!" Ye Xiu nodded.

"Thank you to the two players for the splendid match," the host said, a helpless expression on his face. "But the two of you, next time can you not just talk amongst yourselves? Say some words to the audience too," he complained weakly as he eyed the retreating backs of the two players that conversed until they returned to their teams.

Chapter 1248
There's No End

Ye Xiu and Guo Shao chatted as they walked back, and soon enough Guo Shao arrived at where his teammates were sitting.

Ye Xiu's gaze swept over them, and he saw He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze sitting together, these three former players from Excellent Era, or in other words Ye Xiu's former team. The players to the left were chatting with each other, the players to the right were chatting with each other, so these players in the middle were suddenly left with no one to talk to. They lowered their heads, and refused to look at Ye Xiu and Guo Shao, who had just stopped right beside their seats.

"Next time, if there's the chance, I would like to learn from senior some more." Guo Shao reluctantly bid Ye Xiu farewell.

"Good to hear! Go and rest now, I'm heading back." As Ye Xiu said this, he suddenly heard a distant shout.

Ye Xiu?

Are they calling me?

Who's calling me?

"It looks like there's no rest for senior!" Guo Shao said.

Ye Xiu turned back. The host onstage, whom he and Guo Shao had left hanging, was staring in his direction, clearly struggling to conceal his glee at Ye Xiu's misfortune.

"Ah, I'm so jealous! I'd love to go onstage again to challenge senior," said Guo Shao longingly.

"Don't." Ye Xiu quickly waved his hand. Onstage, the host was repeating what he had just said.

Yes, that was correct. Another rookie had come onstage, and the player he wanted to challenge was once again Ye Xiu.

"God Ye Xiu, I know you're working hard! We'll have to trouble you to once again come onstage!" the host said.

The helpless Ye Xiu could only retrace his steps.

This third challenger was a player with whom Ye Xiu was somewhat familiar.

Wen Kebei.

Wen Kebei of Team Heavenly Swords.

Heavenly Swords joined the Alliance last season. Lou Guanning and the other four were considered second-year players, so they were still eligible to issue challenges in the Rookie Challenge. Last season, Lou Guanning challenged Yu Feng, and this time, Wen Kebei jumped up to participate, and the opponent he named turned out to be Ye Xiu as well.

"Is there a point to this? It's not like we've never fought before." This was the first thing Ye Xiu said to Wen Kebei upon returning to the stage.

"Ah… We've never played in an official setting, have we?" said Wen Kebei.

"This is hardly an official setting!" Ye Xiu said.

"Ahem!" The host coughed emphatically. True, the All-Star Weekend can't be considered any official setting, but God Ye can you not use such a contemptuous tone! Of course you've had enough of this place, but this is a rare chance for rookies to show themselves under the eyes of such a large audience!

"Haha, after hearing Wen Kebei's words just now, we can pretty much know the reason for his challenge." The host worked hard to keep up appearances.

"I hope that Senior may teach me," said Wen Kebei.

"Haven't I taught you enough times by now?" Ye Xiu smiled bitterly. Wen Kebei played Battle Mage. Among the Heavenly Swords players, Wen Kebei had definitely received the most lessons.

"It's never too much!" Wen Kebei's manner was quite shameless.

"Alright, come on!" Ye Xiu was helpless and could only accept the challenge.

A few moments later…

"Keep practicing!" Ye Xiu said to Wen Kebei.

"Yeah…" Wen Kebei sighed. He had lost quite miserably. How come the difference between him and the God was still so large?

The two people left the stage together, but this time they hadn't even left the stadium floor when Ye Xiu once again heard his name being called.

"Ah!" Wen Kebei was shocked. This was the fourth now, right? When he came back to his senses, he saw that Ye Xiu didn't seem to have heard, and was still leaving the stadium floor.

"God Ye!" Wen Kebei quickly caught up to Ye Xiu to remind him.

"Shut up! Let's go!" Ye Xiu said, his steps not stopping.

Wen Kebei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Can you really pretend not to hear something like this? But Ye Xiu was acting like this anyway. As the host called his name louder and louder, Ye Xiu walked faster and faster.

It looked like shouts weren't enough, so the host could only take direct action. With the speed of a hundred-meter sprinter, he reached Ye Xiu's side and grabbed his arm.

"Let go of me, what are you doing!" Ye Xiu fumed.

"God Ye, the fourth rookie still wants to challenge you." The host's face was sympathetic, but his stomach was hurting from stifled laughter. He of course knew that Ye Xiu was just pretending to be ignorant. How childish! The host's thoughts were quite similar to Wen Kebei's.

"Be honest now," Ye Xiu said, glaring at the host. "Did Tyranny purposefully plan this out to mess with me?"

"Of course not!" the host immediately said. "Don't you know? The rookies are free to

choose anyone they want once they're onstage! The fact that so many rookies wish to challenge you is a sign of your position in their eyes!"

"You think I'd believe something like that?" Ye Xiu said.

The host began coughing again. Just as the host had said, for the Rookie Challenge, the participating rookies had completely free will to choose any of the players to challenge. But how were these participating rookies selected? The All-Star Weekend was designed to be an exciting event, so the organizers wanted to try and deliberately create many exciting situations that the audience would enjoy.

And so, was it a coincidence that all of these rookies wanted to challenge Ye Xiu? Ye Xiu didn't think so. He had a strong suspicion that this was the Alliance's doing, that they wanted to have him face this string of challengers. The best evidence for this was that from Happy, both Tang Rou and Steamed Bun had applied for the Rookie Challenge, but neither of them had been selected. The official response was that there were many applicants this year, and that they wanted to give more opportunities to the second-year players for whom this was their last chance at participating.

This reasoning seemed sincere enough, but now Ye Xiu had defeated three players, and aside from Wen Kebei, weren't the other two first-year rookies? From this, barring Happy's players from participating seemed like an intentional move. After all, Happy's players were most likely to disrupt this situation.

"It really is a coincidence, God Ye Xiu just please try and cooperate!" The host was still maintaining what he said, but it was clear that he knew very well that it wasn't that easy to fool this experienced God. His plea of "try and cooperate" could be considered his attempt at making peace.

"Alright…" Helpless, Ye Xiu shook his head. The host was delighted on the surface and snickering in his heart, but then he heard Ye Xiu say, "Then I'll take this a bit more seriously. I won't use my main to bully the rookies anymore, give me an unspecialized account."

The host instantly spat blood. The God wouldn't just casually compromise, he'd already begun his counterattack. Like this, for example, he was deliberately making things difficult! Everyone knew that the unspecialized Lord Grim only worked because of that Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, and the core of this weapon wasn't its stats, but its ability to shift forms. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was unique; Lord

Grim was unique. Unspecialized? Lord Grim was no traditional unspecialized. For this unique character, even the Alliance had no way of supplying an alternate account.

"God Ye! If you used an alt, the rookie would have no way of appreciating your true style!" implored the battered host.

"Aren't the alts supplied by the game company? Let them make a copy of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, and after this is over I'll keep it," Ye Xiu said.

"Ahahaha, God Ye you have such a sense of humor! But this is so last minute, it's a bit late now, isn't it?" said the host.

"You didn't prepare beforehand? This was very poorly organized," Ye Xiu criticized.

"Before this we didn't expect so many people to challenge you!" The host was also becoming a bit shameless. Ye Xiu had even pulled out a "after this is over I'll keep it," so the host certainly wasn't going to fall behind.

This sentence managed to shut Ye Xiu up, finally. He glanced at the rookie standing to the side, pitiful and innocent and not knowing what he had done wrong. Ye Xiu sighed and headed back to the stage.

"Thank you senior for your teachings."

"Keep working hard."

A few minutes later, the battle was over. The rookie walked offstage, satisfied, but God Ye Xiu didn't move. He stood alone on the stage, staring at that host.

"Er, is God Ye Xiu not going offstage to rest?" the host said timidly.

"Don't give me that. I want to see if you guys are done yet," Ye Xiu said.

"We have no say in it either!" Helplessness was written all over the host's face. He then announced the next challenger to come onstage: Team Void's second-year rookie, Ge Caijie.

Ge Caijie walked onstage as Ye Xiu watched him all the while. This was already the fifth person, but Ge Caijie, this second-year rookie with the commanding presence of a veteran, didn't waver because of any of this. When the host asked him, he announced

the player he wished to challenge without any hesitation: "Ye Xiu."

The host didn't make a sound, and he put on a face of helplessness as he looked at Ye Xiu. His gleeful laughter was concealed in his stomach.

"There's really no end, huh? I'm going to throw this match!" Ye Xiu said.

"How could you do that!" The host laughed.

"Let's go!" Ye Xiu didn't say anything else as he walked toward the competitor booth. Ge Caijie didn't say anything either, and as he walked, he was already adjusting his emotions for the upcoming battle. Although this was only the All-Star Weekend, he took this very seriously, for he didn't want to lose. In Ye Xiu's individual match win streak this season, Ge Caijie was one of the ones he had crushed, but in that battle, Ge Caijie felt that he had still had a bit of a chance. If he had better handled a few details, if he were able to more thoroughly address a few problems…

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, there was no way he'd brought two copies of it this time, right?

This is what Ge Caijie thought. Battling with two Myriad Manifestations Umbrellas had clearly been specifically guarding against the Exorcist's Seal Talisman. There was no reason for him to bring them with him everywhere?

And even if he had brought both, Ge Caijie didn't need to worry too much.

The Seal Talisman was a form of suppression, used to give Ye Xiu pressure, forcing him to change his techniques. If he didn't use the Seal Talisman, that might even be more useful than the effects of his using it.

Ge Caijie mentally organized the data he had from their last battle. He took a deep breath, stretched his fingers, and his character loaded in.

"Alright, next we have the fifth round of the Rookie Challenge, with Void's rookie Ge Caijie challenging Happy's Ye Xiu. These two players met in Round 14 this season. Does Ge Caijie plan on using this opportunity to wash away his previous loss? Okay, the battle officially begins, the two characters appear on the two ends of the map, this map is…"

"Huh?"

The host was stunned, the entire crowd was stunned. After a beat of silence, booing. Even though Ye Xiu had been constantly booed by the Tyranny fans from the very start, this time was undoubtedly the loudest.

Because this match had already ended, after only one second.

The only trace left was the message that Ye Xiu had sent in the chat: "GG."

Ye Xiu really did throw the match!

Chapter 1249
Everyone Come at Once

GG!

He actually just typed GG!

In the next moment, Lord Grim very naturally logged out from the game, and the system announced that Blue Exorcist had won.

It ended just like this?

BOOOO! The sound was so loud that even with the aid of the host's audio equipment, his voice was completely drowned out by the surging boos of displeasure from the crowd. In this moment, that booing sound could only be described by one word: deafening.

That's right, it was deafening.

During the festive atmosphere of the All-Star Weekend Tournament, someone was actually greeted by such a loud, angry boo.

"He truly deserves to be called God Ye Xiu…" the host thought, with a face full of tears. Even though it was just an All-Star match, there was still a referee, and now that referee was sitting there, completely dumbstruck.

Ye Xiu walked out from the player booth, but he didn't leave the stage, instead directly walking back to the side of the host.

"God Ye Xiu, you're really…" the host didn't even know what to say. Who had experience dealing with this kind of unprecedented situation?

"I kept my promise, aren't I amazing?" Ye Xiu said.

"…"

At the other side, Ye Xiu's opponent Ge Caijie also walked out of the player booth and headed back to the center of the stage with a face full of regret. He was obviously extremely disappointed that he couldn't fight against Ye Xiu but could only helplessly and silently leave the stage.

Ye Xiu and the host watched Ge Caijie's lonely figure leaving. They watched for a long time before the host suddenly asked, "God Ye Xiu, how could you have the heart to disappoint the cute rookies like this?"

"Sigh…" Ye Xiu let out a deep breath. Ge Caijie's disappointment was something he could also see clearly, and for a moment, he felt a little bad about it. The Alliance and Team Tyranny could at most pick out those rookies who wanted to challenge Ye Xiu and group them together. To these rookies, challenging Ye Xiu was something that they were very sincere about. But when they went onstage, filled with anticipation, they were unable to do anything before being sent off with a "GG.". They had won nominally, yes, but in these All-Star matches, winning or losing was never the most important thing. The most important thing was how they won or lost. Just sending them off with a "GG" was very satisfying to Ye Xiu, but to these rookies who wanted to challenge him, it couldn't have been any more cruelcrueller.

Having said this, the host snuck a peek at Ye Xiu's expression and knew that Ye Xiu had been a little bit moved by his words. Obviously, he was also reluctant to disappoint the rookies in this way.

"When the next two contestants come, if they still want to challenge God Ye Xiu, will you… still GG immediately?" the host asked him.

Ye Xiu looked at him and asked, "There's still two more?"

"Yes, there are," the host confirmed.

"Then there's no need for them to fight one by one, let everyone come at once!" Ye Xiu said.

"What?" the host was at a loss for words.

"I'm saying, let them come at once!" Ye Xiu said.

"You mean… 1v2?" the host was stunned.

The boos took a great deal of effort to quieten down, but when they heard this conversation, the whole stadium was dead silent. Shortly afterwards, however, the booing began again, only this time it clearly wasn't as valiant as before. After all, sending out such vigorous boos of displeasure also required a lot of energy, and it was evident that the Team Tyranny fans were already tired, but they still persevered. They wanted to kill this shameless archenemy of theirs with their booes. GG? 1v2? Is there anything you can't do?

"This… isn't really in accordance to the rules, right?" the host said.

"What are you being so serious for? If I don't mind, then just let them come up! Who are they?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's Zeng Xinran of Team Hundred Blossoms and Song Qiying of Team Tyranny," the host replied dumbly.

"Alright!" Ye Xiu grabbed the microphone from the host's hands, raised it to his mouth and called, "Zeng Xinran of Team Hundred Blossoms and Song Qiying of Team Tyranny, the two of you kids can both come at once!"

"This this this……" the host hurriedly wrestled the microphone back. Momentarily, he had no idea how to deal with the situation, and could only desperately communicate with the backstage team for ideas. Team Hundred Blossoms' Zeng Xinran and Team Tyranny's Song Qiying also had no idea what to do. Rookies were the ones who took the rules most seriously, but Ye Xiu was doing something that clearly didn't follow the rules and wanted them to join in, leaving them at a loss.

"Then… the two rookies, do you mind this arrangement? If you don't mind, then please come onstage!" After the host's rapid communication with the people backstage, they eventually decided not to stop Ye Xiu. After all, it was All-Stars, where they were looking to make things more lively. If Ye Xiu was so brave as to want to 1v2, then let him do it. At the end of the day, if he lost, the only person who would lose face is him, and to Team Tyranny, they absolutely wouldn't mind.

Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying were both in the player seats looking at each other, waiting to see how the other would respond before deciding what to do, but after taking a look, the other person's response was to wait for them to react. With no ideas left, the two of them went to consult their team captains for advice.

"Just go!" the two captains said. After receiving their orders, the two players went onstage.

"Ah… the two rookies have already arrived. Then let me check first, is the player that the two of you want to challenge God Ye Xiu?" the host asked.

The two rookies were still a little out of it, so one of them just said yes while the other nodded his head.

"Oh… then next will be a 1v2 battle, the two of you will face God Ye Xiu together, are there any problems?" the host asked.

The two rookies glanced at each other. They were already on stage, what problems could there be? The two of them nodded.

"Great, then let's hurry up and start!" Ye Xiu waved his hands and headed towards the stage.

"Then, do the two of you want to say anything before you begin your challenge?" the host asked as he interviewed the two rookies.

"Uh… I… I have nothing that I want to say." Zeng Xinran was clearly quite nervous.

"Then what about you?" the host asked the other player, Song Qiying.

"This is against the rules…" Song Qiying said with a conflicted expression. It appeared that this arrangement was very difficult for him to stomach.

Having reached this point, the host didn't want to get side-tracked anymore and applauded the two rookies before directing them to their booth.

The competition was no longer an individual round and was instead set as a team battle. Ye Xiu alone made up one team, while Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying made up the other team.

"Little Song, teach this guy a lesson!!" the shouts in the stadium resounded. This was Team Tyranny's stadium after all, and Song Qiying could be the future successor of Desert Dust, so he naturally received a lot of attention. On top of that, he was about to face Team Tyranny's bitter rival of many years, Ye Xiu, so the fans were extremely excited, not caring about whether or not it was 1v2, deciding to cheer first and think

about it later.

"Alright, then rookie challengers 6 and 7 will fight against Ye Xiu together, which is what Ye Xiu requested himself. The match is about to begin," the host announced. As the map loaded, the host suddenly felt flustered. This guy… he wouldn't pile these two together and then just send the two of them off with a "GG", right?

Having suddenly thought of this terrifying possibility, the host felt extremely restless. As the map finished loading and the players entered the game, the host could barely watch any longer. Has he said "GG" already?

The crowd was still quiet, so… he shouldn't have, right?

The host looked at the screen and finally let out a deep breath. There was no GG. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was charging out directly, was he getting ready to take the competition seriously?

But if it's a 1v2, even against two rookies, Ye Xiu should have a hard time, right?

Team Tyranny's successor for Han Wenqing, Song Qiying, now had a soaring reputation within the pro circle. Because of Team Tyranny rotating their player roster this season, he had very consistent opportunities to appear onstage, and iwas a strong contender for the Best Rookie award. In contrast, Team Hundred Blossom's Zeng Xinran looked inferior. The character he used was Tang Hao's character during his time at Team Hundred Blossom's, the Brawler Delillo. In Season 8 of the All-Star Tournament, Tang Hao used this very Delillo to defeat Lin Jingyan's Demon Subduer, convincingly winning the title of Number One Brawler. But now, Tang Hao's character was Demon Subduer, leaving Delillo in the hands of Zeng Xinran. Number One Brawler? Zeng Xinran was still extremely far away from this title.

In his first match, he encountered Ye Xiu. During that match, he could hardly play at all because he was too nervous; every joint in his hands was stiff. Luckily, the team didn't abandon him because of his first poor performance. Gradually, he adapted to the atmosphere of the competitive scene and became less and less tense. But that nightmare of a first match had still left a shadow in his heart.

This was really too awful of a memory for him. Zeng Xinran desperately wanted to find a way to cleanse himself of this memory, so he signed up for the All-Stars's Rookie Challenge. From the very start, he wanted to challenge Ye Xiu, letting himself rise from

the same place where he had once fallen.

Today, I will not be nervous again!

From the start of the match, Zeng Xinran was very active.

"Hey, make sure you don't drag me down!" he told Song Qiying. Song Qiying was a first-year rookie just like himself, but his fame and reputation had far surpassed his own. Zeng Xinran couldn't complain. Who asked his very first performance to be so awful? Even so, he could still feel a sense of inferiority, so at this very moment, he wanted to prove himself where he had previously failed.

"Since we have two people, let's cooperate a bit more!" Song Qiying said.

"Cooperate? The two of us? How can we cooperate?" Zeng Xinran said. The two of them weren't familiar with each other at all, but inexplicably ended up fighting side-by-side. Cooperation? With this person? Zeng Xinran had no idea how to do so.

"You're a Brawler, I'm a Striker, from a class perspective, we can at least coordinate our low-level skills. What low-level skills did you add skill points into?" Song Qiying asked.

"Reinforced Iron Bones, Back Throw and Fling," Zeng Xinran replied.

"Oh, you really like grab skills! I've learnt Fling and Dismantling Throw, maybe we can make use of these." Song Qiying said.

"How do we make use of it?" Zeng Xinran asked.

"Have you not paid attention to the strategies used when two characters with the same class play together? It's in fashion now!" Song Qiying said.

"Ah…" Zeng Xinran started to recall. Strategies involving two characters with the same class were indeed being used by many teams nowadays. Team Blue Rain's Dual Blade Masters, Team Tiny Herb's Dual Witches, Team Misty Rain's Dual Sharpshooters, and even less needed to be said about Team Void's Dual Ghostblades.

How did they fight together?

Chapter 1250
Rookies' Partnership

The players who frequented the All-Stars list would not make a big deal out of the matches here, but most rookies did not share this sentiment. This was especially true for many first-year rookies. They had very few opportunities to get on stage, and all had a thirst to prove themselves. The All-Star matches received plenty of attention, and the rookies could face strong opponents, which made it quite a good opportunity to show off their skills. It didn't really matter if the matches were not played very seriously. Anyone would brag if they defeated the Battle God, the Great Gunner or the Sword Saint.

For this reason, the rookies were quite enthusiastic for the All-Stars Weekend. Enthusiasm translated to diligence. If they came on stage and faced a God, they would deep down be hoping to win, regardless of how courteous they appeared to be. Right now, Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying were about to play in a two on one. Even though Song Qiying felt apprehensive since it was against the rules, his mind was still focused on winning as soon as the match began. Two on one meant employing tactics for a two on one; Song Qiying did not entertain the thought of deliberately creating a one on one scenario in this situation. Thus, as soon as they entered battle, he actively communicated with his partner. The two weren't too familiar with each other, and it was probably a bad idea to rely on pure observation and skill to reach a tacit understanding. Therefore, Song Qiying hoped to communicate a basic battle plan first.

A battle plan that involved two characters of the same class.

Technically, they were not the same sub-class. They only shared some low-level skills, but approaching the current problem from this angle was undoubtedly the quickest way for them to find common ground. Song Qiying's judgement here was quite spot-on.

Same class duo tactics?

Zeng Xinran was also a reasonably diligent rookie. When he heard Song Qiying mention this, he immediately thought of some same-class duos in strong teams. The double-act of a same class duo could be said to be the most prevalent type of

cooperative play in the pro scene. His Brawler and Song Qiying's Striker could qualify for a bit of a double-act as well.

Except…

Song Qiying was admittedly apprehensive about a two on one at first, but still managed to focus when the match started. But Zeng Xinran had other plans. What he wanted the most was just to defeat Ye Xiu, displaying his own talent in the process. A two on one? He didn't really think that far. When he heard Song Qiying's suggestion for cooperating, he didn't dismiss it entirely, but did he put too much thought into it either.

"Yeah… I guess as a Striker and a Brawler we could…"

"It can wait! The opponent is already closing in!" Zeng Xinran interrupted Song Qiying, and had his Brawler Delillo rush forward to meet Lord Grim.

"Don't be too hasty!" Song Qiying called out quickly. He had quite a few ideas for a Striker and Brawler duo. Don't forget that his team Tyranny currently had the same duo, made up of the most experienced Striker and Brawler in Glory history! But right now, it didn't seem like his partner was patient enough or very interested in cooperating…

"I'll test the waters. Follow up appropriately!" Zeng Xinran didn't refuse Song Qiying entirely; he was well aware of his own limits. Defeating God Ye Xiu, who had a sixteen win-streak in the individual competition? Of course Zeng Xinran had this desire, but he didn't dare have that much confidence in himself. But at least within the partnership between him and Song Qiying, he was happy to give himself the main role. It didn't matter that right now, Song Qiying was slightly more reputable than him. Since they were both rookies, Zeng Xinran had some confidence that he could steal the spotlight from Song Qiying.

"How do you plan to test the waters?" Song Qiying asked, while quickly following close behind with his character River Sunset. The two rookies could keep communicating because the voice channels were open. The All-Stars matches were slightly more lax on the rules and had never forbidden voice chat. However, with the recent lively debate about voice chat in the Pro League, the arrangement at the All-Stars matches also doubled as a trial of sorts.

"We'll look for an opportunity," Zeng Xinran answered.

"At least have some semblance of a plan!" Song Qiying was alarmed by how casual Zeng Xinran was being.

"Okay, I'll go first, you follow up." Zeng Xinran revealed his plan.

"…" Song Qiying was looking for something to say but became lost for words.

"Dodge!" Zeng Xinran suddenly shouted.

Boom!

Lord Grim's raised his Myriad Manifestation Umbrella. It blazed with gunfire and attacked the rookie duo from afar.

"He has a significant range advantage over us, I'm sure he won't let us get close too easily. We need to flank him," Song Qiying called out.

"What's your plan then?" Zeng Xinran said, while having Delillo continuously roll. Lord Grim unleashed a never-ending stream of skills from gunner, mage or whatever classes; his selection criterion simply being that the attack range was enough to reach the enemy. Even though Zeng Xinran's brawler had some mid-range skills, he was still forcibly zoned out.

"Split up and flank!" Song Qiying said.

"Fuck, and here I thought you had some master plan!" Zeng Xinran said.

"Flanking isn't just charging from two different directions! We need to watch the opponent's attack rhythm and skill rotations, and find the optimal angle of approach," Song Qiying explained.

"Blah blah blah, just tell me which angle!" Zeng Xinran yelled.

"I'll take the left. You go right," Song Qiying said.

"Could you be any more vague?" Zeng Xinran said.

"Split up first, we'll look for opportunities," Song Qiying called out.

"Isn't that what I said in the first place?" Zeng Xinran muttered. The two rookies' characters, Striker River Sunset and Brawler Delillo, took the left and right respectively, and began to close their distance.

"Spread further! Further! Okay, line it up!" Song Qiying called, while observing Lord Grim and dodging his attacks. The two characters ran up and managed to form a straight line with Lord Grim in the middle.

"Sweet, that reduced his damage output by a lot. Cover me while I try to get into attack range!" Zeng Xinran yelled.

"How am I meant to cover you?" Song Qiying felt gloomy. Strikers had the shortest effective attack range out of all 24 classes in Glory. Since when did this class provide cover fire?

"Be forceful and charge, attract as much of his attention as you can!" Zeng Xinran said

"That's nice of you, letting me be the cannon fodder," Song Qiying complained, but still had River Sunset charge forward. He believed that Zeng Xinran's suggestion was still the best way forward.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

River Sunset quickly activated this skill which gave Super Armor and increased defence, then followed up with Cloud Body and charged in forcibly.

As expected after seeing such a forceful charge, Lord Grim focused more of his attacks in the direction of River Sunset. He also started retreating to widen the distance between the two.

"Good job!" Zeng Xinran praised; he felt the pressure towards his own side lessen noticeably. Delillo seized the opportunity and charged forward madly.

Should I focus on my left or right?

Ye Xiu seemed to have been put in an awkward spot. Song Qiying's River Sunset seemingly aimed to draw his attention, but the threat of his every step was very real. If Lord Grim toned down his attacks towards River Sunset, Song Qiying would waltz right up to Lord Grim without hesitation. Strikers would not be able to demonstrate full potential in battle unless they were really up close.

What will he do?

Song Qiying carefully watched Lord Grim's every move.

"Don't forget to maintain the angle!" Song Qiying yelled. He noticed that after Lord Grim retreated perpendicularly to their two characters, the angle between them was shrinking. This would allow Lord Grim to switch fire more freely; they definitely shouldn't make this so easy for Lord Grim.

"You maintain it!" Zeng Xinran answered firmly.

Song Qiying was speechless. Although keeping the angle by one person was achievable, it was more flexible if both contributed! Zeng Xinran really wanted to be the primary attacker no matter what!

There was no time to argue in the midst of battle. Song Qiying felt helpless and could only do all the dirty work that the other guy didn't want a part of. He moved sideways to maintain the Lord Grim sandwich, while trying his best to close the distance and exert some pressure.

Lord Grim concentrated even more gunfire towards River Sunset.

"Chance!" Song Qiying called out.

"You don't say!" Under Zeng Xinran's control, Delillo sent out a Powerful Knee Strike. It wasn't aimed at dealing damage but rather to close the distance, and Delillo managed to forcibly propel himself into attack range.

"Here I come!" Zeng Xinran shouted loudly.

"Don't rush in!" Song Qiying saw this and shouted in return, but Delillo already used the Powerful Knee Strike. It was too late to cancel the skill; in any case, it wasn't like Zeng Xinran would care about anything Song Qiying said in this situation.

This is bad!

A flank attack didn't seem complicated, but it actually required balance and precision between the two partners. Delillo's advance was too hasty and brought about an imbalance; this was especially disadvantageous for Song Qiying's Striker, as they needed to be up close and personal before they could attack at all. This gave a very

good chance for the opponent to launch a fierce counter-attack.

Song Qiying analyzed this correctly, but he knew he had no way to stop Zeng Xinran. He could only have River Sunset charge forward recklessly, but…

"Behind you!" Song Qiying shouted. Lord Grim used Shadow Clone Technique and teleported behind Delillo. Zeng Xinran threw a brick towards Lord Grim; he was so excited he got within attack range that he thought he was invincible. After hearing Song Qiying's warning, he realized something was wrong; but it was far too late to react. A spurt of blood bloomed out from Delillo's neck. Ye Xiu mercilessly had Lord Grim use Cut-Throat.

Exactly! This imbalance!

Delillo rushed in too quickly and disrupted the coordination with River Sunset. From the current distance, River Sunset could not throw out any attacks. Zeng Xinran was currently one on one against Ye Xiu, and after being ambushed from behind, lost all initiative. Song Qiying could only watch from afar. He had no way to intervene so he urged River Sunset to quickly close the distance.

But… would Ye Xiu have Lord Grim wait for River Sunset to arrive?

Of course not.

A Falling Flower Pam sent Delillo crashing into River Sunset. Lord Grim took this opportunity to retreat and increase the distance, once again starting to kite the two characters.

Chapter 1251
Do as Promised

As expected…

The situation did not stray from Song Qiying's expectations. Ever since Zeng Xinran took a risk in using Powerful Knee Strike to break the stability of the situation, Song Qiying had been expecting such a circumstance. Ye Xiu had given Delillo a beating, taking advantage of the fact that Song Qiying's Striker would still need a while to arrive, and had then beat a hasty retreat.

Zeng Xinran was flushed with anger and embarrassment. Even though he might've been facing a God, getting tricked so easily by a Shadow Clone was unacceptable. He had gotten too excited; calm down! Zeng Xinran took a deep breath.

Zeng Xinran immediately calmed down, but his partner, Song Qiying, who was always telling him to not rush, seemed to lose control. River Sunset charged recklessly at Lord Grim.

"Hey, slow down!" This time, it was Zeng Xinran who warned Song Qiying.

Song Qiying didn't know if he should cry or laugh. These things depended on the situation! Speeding up or slowing down, that was all about the appropriate pacing at the time. There was no such thing as always going slow and steady or fast and hard. His Striker had gotten this rare chance to close in on Lord Grim, one he hadn't had yet in this match. If he slowed down now, then wasn't that letting this opportunity escape? How could he slow down now? On the contrary, you should pull yourself together and go on the offensive. Your Brawler is still in attack range!

It was just unfortunate that Zeng Xinran was calming himself down. He calmly watched Lord Grim run away, calmly watched River Sunset charge, and calmly told Song Qiying to calm down.

"This is an opportunity!!" Song Qiying really didn't know what to say anymore. It wasn't like he could give this guy a lecture on how, precisely, to act in such a situation.

God! He was a pro player. Why was his Glory IQ so low? Wasn't his ability to read the situation just a little too low?

At Song Qiying's shout, Zeng Xinran finally reacted. This really wasn't a time to stop attacking! River Sunset had gotten this golden opportunity to finally close in. This was the closest they had gotten to Lord Grim. Why did he… stop?

Delillo hurriedly readjusted himself. Though he was now behind River Sunset, he had quite a few mid-ranged attacks. A brick was already flying out with deadly precision, but Ye Xiu wasn't dead. Lord Grim turned his body, dodging.

Soaring Tiger!

Song Qiying was glad that Zeng Xinran finally cleared his head. This attack was a little late, but it finally arrived, at least. As Lord Grim moved to dodge, River Sunset flew forwards with Soaring Tiger. This level 60 ultimate activated swiftly. River Sunset shot forwards feet first towards Lord Grim, arriving in front of the other in the blink of an eye.

This was an ultimate, an ultimate which Lord Grim's low leveled skills would have trouble facing off against. This attack came suddenly, furiously, right as Lord Grim moved to dodge the Brick. Song Qiying's timing was extremely precise.

It was just unfortunate that this skill was, in the end, a little too late. Zeng Xinran's self-calming had cost them the opportune moment. Their attempt at making up for it wasn't good enough. Lord Grim finished dodging the Brick and then sidestepped again, avoiding the Soaring Tiger, too.

However, River Sunset had finally come in front of Lord Grim. Yet this wasn't an alleyway with only two ways to run. If you spun 360 degrees, which way wasn't forwards? Lord Grim swerved away from River Sunset's direction and continued to run.

Still want to run?

River Sunset's Soaring Tiger hadn't ended, but he had finally managed to close in on Lord Grim. Lord Grim was finally within attack range, and how could Song Qiying let Lord Grim pull away again?

Fling!

River Sunset reached out towards Lord Grim with both his hands. Lord Grim hurriedly jumped backwards and River Sunset missed. However, he then bent his elbow, stepping forwards, fist flung out.

Straight Punch!

The punch following the Fling was headed towards Lord Grim's chest, but…

Sword Draw!

Lord Grim didn't dodge, but unsheathed his sword and countered.

Which was faster, Sword Draw or Straight Punch? No one could see clearly. All they knew was that River Sunset's fist hit Lord Grim's chest while a splash of blood was flicked into the air as the blade swept past.

River Sunset stumbled backwards. Sword Draw's momentum wasn't completely negligible. But Lord Grim? His sword had already been retracted and the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella was set in front of his chest. Utilizing the momentum from the Straight Punch, Lord Grim would be able to fly back a significant distance if he followed with an Aerial Cannon. Did Song Qiying miscalculate? Should he not have used Straight Punch?

No, that wasn't so.

If it was one versus one, then his choice of attack would simply be pushing away a target he had worked hard to close in on. However, this wasn't a one on one. Lord Grim, having pushed away, wanted to use this chance to run, but Zeng Xinran's Delillo had already arrived. He wasn't so stupid that he didn't know what he should do. Delillo had rushed forwards to block Lord Grim's escape route. His hands stretched out, throwing a Fling out at Lord Grim.

Falling Light Blade.

Ye Xiu suddenly activate this skill, forcing Lord Grim, who was still airborne, to turn. Delillo hit air, hurrying to follow up with another attack. Yet, Lord Grim had already turned around and knocked Delillo into bending over with a Knee Strike.

This was a Brawler skill, yet it was now used on the Brawler Delillo. Zeng Xinran was angered, but he wasn't given a chance to counterattack. After the Knee Strike, Lord

Grim used Fling and picked him up, tossing him at River Sunset.

Zeng Xinran seemed like he had been bullied again, but his task was complete. He had successfully hindered Lord Grim, who had planned on fleeing with Aerial Cannon. River Sunset was already charging forth, dodging the tossed over Delillo and swinging his fists.

Ferocious Tiger Flurry!

Shockingly, Song Qiying activated this powerful skill. River Sunset punched and kicked, leaving afterimages in his wake, fiercely charging towards Lord Grim

But that was when the figure in his line of sight blurred and Lord Grim somehow vanished.

What?

Song Qiying was shocked. In the next moment, River Sunset's waist had been grabbed. He was raised up then thrown backwards, smashed onto the ground upside down. Ferocious Tiger Flurry's powerful strikes were immediately brought to as halt.

Song Qiying was befuddled. How did Lord Grim suddenly get behind him?

Shadow Clone Technique? There was no clone though!

Teleportation? It didn't seem like it. Lord Grim had blurred away as if he had used some sort of movement technique to get behind. However, there wasn't a single skill in any of the 24 classes that would let a character immediately get behind another character!

Yes, there was no such skill, which was why Lord Grim had actually used two skills in that moment.

Charge, Shining Cut.

These two low level skills, a Knight skill and an Assassin skill, were often used as movement skills despite being offensive skills. However, many people only realized this when the screen showed a slow motion playback.

This was because it had all happened too fast. These two skills had been used by Ye

Xiu to move Lord Grim, but he had only moved two steps.

One step to River Sunset's side, then another behind.

Using two skills to achieve this movement in such a small area… What precise mechanics, what swift hand speed!

The entire audience was stunned, even the pro player stands were filled with shocked faces.

How high had his APM gone in that moment?

Many people had wandered to this thought. However, the screen didn't show the calculations for this burst of speed like it usually would. Could it be that he was so fast that the system couldn't process it anymore?

Even more shocked faces appeared. As for Lord Grim's retreat, no one cared about that anymore. Everyone still had their heads raised towards the screen, watching the continuous replay of Lord Grim completing the two steps with Charge and Shining Cut.

This was practically supernatural…

The entire venue sunk into silence. Even the Tyranny fans, who never liked Ye Xiu, were unable to offer any boos in that moment.

"What is this?" Discussion soon erupted amongst the pro players from Rookies to Gods, everyone was exchanging opinions.

"In reality, it's just a Z-Shake," Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian said.

"Just?" Yu Wenzhou smiled.

Huang Shaotian stopped speaking.

Of course he couldn't use "just". Managing to execute these two skills in two steps. If it was him…

"Don't forget, it isn't just unleashing the two skills and moving his character for him." Yu Wenzhou seemed to know that Huang Shaotian was comparing this to himself and reminded him. "There's also the mechanics required to switch the Myriad

Manifestation Umbrella's form."

Yes, one was a Knight's Charge, Priest class; one was an Assassin's Shining Cut, Nightwalker class. If the weapon wasn't switched, there was no way to execute the two skills.

Huang Shaotian's complexion went a little off. Could he do it? He suddenly didn't feel like pursuing such an answer.

"Z-Shake, hm…" Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi had also figured out the foundation of this technique.

"In the end, he really does still use the crudest style!" Wang Jiexi exclaimed. The Tiny Herb members around him were all looking at each other.

Z-Shake, a basic movement technique, but in such a space, using these two skills to accomplish it was… This was skill beyond supernatural talent.

The pro players were all wondering in their hearts if they could accomplish this or not.

As for the match?

Who would pursue the results of a match that not many people cared about in the first place? What everyone was interested in was if Ye Xiu would do any more shocking maneuvers.

The only ones who would care about the results were probably just those Tyranny fans who hated Ye Xiu. They hoped that Ye Xiu, who had said he'd fight one on two, would lose the match and lose face.

In the end, it really was as they had hoped for. Song Qiying and Zeng Xinran really did end up winning in this two on one.

Booing sounded, but it was very weak. This was because many people could tell that Ye Xiu was clearly not giving it his all in the latter half of the match. This allowed Song Qiying and Zeng Xinran to grasp the advantage and claim victory.

Yes, they had gasped the advantage later. That meant, in the first half, Ye Xiu had the advantage despite fighting one against two.

If he continued that way, then what would be the result? Everyone knew, including Song Qiying and Zeng Xinran.

This kind of victory was nothing to be proud of.

"Senior really did go easy on us." Song Qiying pointed this out directly, seeming to have a problem with it.

"Pro players should always do as promised. I said I'd throw the match, so I had to!" Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 1252
Hot-Blooded Dodgeball

Do as promised? He said he'd throw the match, so he threw the match?

As expected, the crowd once again erupted with boos, but Song Qiying's expression right now was a bit subtle. He reacted very quickly - his eyes swiveled to the player area just offstage, where Happy's players were gathered.

If talking about doing as promised, wasn't there a player from Happy that was the biggest joke in history?

Happy's Tang Rou, after failing to complete her promise of a 1v3, didn't follow through and quit Glory!

But when Ye Xiu said "do as promised," he promised to throw the match, and then threw the match…

Throwing a match truly wasn't anything pretty. Even on the All-Star stage when most people weren't putting in their full effort, it was rare for anyone to throw a match as obviously and bluntly as Ye Xiu had. He'd even used a "GG."

Do as promised, but he'd promised to throw a match. Ye Xiu's words, were they supposed to be ironic?

Aside from Song Qiying, it seemed that most people for now hadn't thought of Tang Rou. Right now, the Tyranny fans' aggro toward Ye Xiu was very stable. Even though the Rookie Challenge had entirely ended now, they were still targeting their fire to send Ye Xiu off the stage. This Day 1 of the All-Star Weekend, no matter how you looked at it, seemed to be designed for Tyranny fans. First was that strong commemoration of Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing weathering ten years of Glory, which let the Tyranny fans shed a tear. And then, it became focused on the primary target of Tyranny fans' hatred, Ye Xiu, as all of the rookies lined up to challenge him.

Even though Ye Xiu had pulled off the unprecedented circumstances of "GG" and "1v2," it had to be said that this year's All-Star Weekend Day 1 was still quite exciting.

Typically, there were no formal press conferences planned for the All-Star Weekend. The reporters stationed by various media organizations had their own designated seating area, but only the media groups with partnerships had the chance to enter and directly interact with players. This included the Esports Channel that was in charge of the television broadcast, as well as the most authoritative Esports Home. But most of their time in the stadium was just spent watching. Only when there was a suitable opportunity would they search for players to exchange a few words. No one anticipated a formal interview at a setting like this, and no one would try to get one.

Today? The reporters were of course gathering the opinions of the players of the various teams, their opinions of the ten-year Han Wenqing, their opinions of the rookies lining up for their challenge, and their opinions of Ye Xiu, who was so fed up that he used a "GG."

The topics wouldn't be very serious. It was the All-Star Weekend, it was all in good fun. Even things like GG or throwing matches, only someone with a waterlogged brain would use that as ammunition for an attack. To be honest, the reporters quite welcomed these unexpected situations that Ye Xiu caused. They were a bit tired of writing the same thing about the respecting the old and loving the young when it came to the Rookie Challenge.

After a few performance events planned by the organizers, Day 1 of the All-Star Weekend officially came to a close. The pair of death rivals, Han Wenqing and Ye Xiu, became the stars of this day. Han Wenqing's ten years of persistence left behind strong emotions; Ye Xiu's seven consecutive rookie challenges left behind chaos.

Some older Glory players couldn't help but reminisce, this wasn't even the first time Ye Xiu had experienced all seven rookies wanting to challenge him.

But that time, Ye Xiu had honestly and straightforwardly played seven matches with those rookies. It had been nothing like the ridiculous scene today.

The older the ginger, the spicier it was. Ye Xiu alone demonstrated this point most vividly.

"You're really something…" As the pro players mingled after the conclusion of the event, a number of players came to jokingly complain to Ye Xiu in the backstage passageways.

Thrown among this crowd, Chen Guo really felt like a dazzled fan. Once upon a time, these figures were all high and mighty, but now, they were all gathered right beside her, and everyone was really very ordinary. Just from this setting, it was impossible to tell how fierce were the characters that these players controlled in the world of Glory.

Li Xun, the Void Assassin who loved one-hit kills, was currently complaining to Royal Style's Tian Sen about his toothache. It looked like Tian Sen gave him a phone number, recommending some dentist.

Chu Yunxiu, Misty Rain's captain and the idol of female players, was accusing Zhang Xinjie, originally from City X, of giving her a bad recommendation. The hot and sour rice noodles from a food street he had recommended to her didn't taste good at all.

"Too sour!" Chu Yunxiu said, baring her teeth as though she could still taste them.

"You probably put in too much vinegar!" said Zhang Xinjie, very serious.

"How much are you supposed to put in?" Chu Yunxiu asked.

"Seven-tenths of a spoon. Just use the little plastic spoon that comes with it," Zhang Xinjie said.

Spoon? Who used a spoon to add vinegar? And seven-tenths?

Chu Yunxiu bore her teeth again and directly abandoned Zhang Xinjie to look for her close friend Su Mucheng.

Miracle's Guo Shao and Tyranny's Song Qiying, those two youths somehow ended up together. Amidst the crowd of seniors, the two were holding a quiet discussion, occasionally shooting glances toward Happy's players, stopping at Ye Xiu. It looked like these two were currently studying how to knock over the mountain that was Ye Xiu.

Chen Guo discovered that only the discussions among rookies tended to revolve around Glory. The older players tended to talk about much more mundane topics.

301's Yang Cong and Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi were talking about recent housing prices.

Jiang Botao and Xu Bin were talking about European soccer.

Tang Hao was complaining to Zou Yuan about the weather in City N. He was originally in Hundred Blossoms, and City K was his home; only after transferring to Wind Howl did he have to move to the city they were in, City N. It had now been almost two years, but it looked like he still didn't much like his new city.

Such ordinary topics allowed Chen Guo to truly feel that these… were all very much real, living, breathing creatures.

In the long passageway, the players didn't rest. They directly walked outside of the stadium, and then naturally said their goodbyes to each other, all going to their own team vehicles to head to the hotels where they were staying. Some teams were staying at the same hotels, and so the players instantly started mixing together and hitching rides randomly, continuing the topics they hadn't finished chatting about.

Compared to normal matchdays, the atmosphere was much more relaxed between all of the players. Chen Guo could feel this clearly.

The All-Star Weekend was really a good event! Amidst it all, Chen Guo smiled.

The second day of the All-Star Weekend soon arrived. Compared to Day 1, Day 2's events were bit more enriching, and there was some interaction with the live audience. They would choose some audience members to participate in the events alongside the pro players.

The first event would involve pitting Glory characters against each other in mini-games. In these past years, the All-Star Weekend would use MODs specially developed by the Glory creators. It was common that afterwards, they would become available within the normal Glory game, enhancing and diversifying the content of the game.

And what was this year's mini-game? The All-Star Weekend had already made a public preview. First up was Hot-Blooded Dodgeball!

It was called dodgeball, but in reality, it didn't strictly follow the typical rules of dodgeball. From the information that had been officially released, this game was more like the folk game sandbag toss.

The rules were as follows: the participating teams would send three players onstage, and two teams would be pitted against each other at a time. Each team would take one turn defending and one turn attacking. The final victory was determined by how long the turn lasted. For this event, there would be eight participating teams, five of them

professional, and the other three made from randomly-selected audience members.

The players from the five participating pro teams quickly gathered onstage. The audience saw that they were players from Samsara, Thunderclap, Tiny Herb, Miracle, and Happy.

These five teams were selected with some care. Samsara was the team with the vast lead, Thunderclap had demonstrated unexpectedly strong team performances, Tiny Herb hadn't lost a single group arena yet, and Happy and Miracle were the two new teams in the Alliance that were doing unexpectedly well. These five teams were all attention-grabbing teams.

There were only players from these five teams…

From Samsara was Vice-captain Jiang Botao leading Assassin Wu Qi and Blade Master Du Ming.

Thunderclap had Captain Xiao Shiqin himself on the roster, leading Elementalist Dai Yanqi and the Sharpshooter that transferred from Misty Rain, Lu Yining.

Tiny Herb had Gao Yingjie, Liu Xiaobie, and Zhou Yebai.

Miracle had Shen Jian, Guo Shao, and Battle Mage Jia Xing.

As for Happy, there was Wei Chen, Steamed Bun, and… the player who had yet to appear onstage this season, someone whose first appearance would be in the fun atmosphere of All-Stars: Luo Ji.

It was his first time on such a large stage, and Luo Ji was clearly a bit terrified. Even though he knew that this was just a game, but he couldn't help but be nervous. As he stood onstage, he had no idea what to do with his hands and feet.

"Pull yourself together, you have me here!" Steamed Bun said to him, patting his own chest.

Having teammates beside him did allow some of Luo Ji's nervousness to dissipate. For the first time ever, Luo Ji thought that having Steamed Bun next to him was pretty nice.

There weren't a lot of All-Star level players participating in this event. This was also a way of purposefully making this more lowkey. For one, it gave other pro players a

chance to participate in the excitement, and for another, it saved the highest-level show of the All-Star Weekend for Day 3, with the All-Star Competition.

The pro players went onstage, and then it was time to select audience members, one two three four five six seven eight nine, nine lucky audience members were chosen. Each was asked which team they supported, which players they liked and so on, which took up a bit of time. Fortunately, all of them had at least some understanding of Glory.

Next, the lucky audience members were randomly sorted into three teams, and the system began to randomly assign teams against each other.

Even though it was a never-before-seen playing mechanism in Glory, the pro players had their base level of skill, so it was very unlikely that they would be defeated by some ordinary players. For a pro vs ordinary team matchup, the outcome was basically set. But there was one extra pro team, plus since the matchups were randomized, it wasn't guaranteed that three pro teams would face the audience teams.

Indeed, in the end two audience teams were paired against each other, and Tiny Herb was matched against the third. The other four pro teams were matched against each other, two and two.

"Hehe, looks like Samsara's win streak ends here." When interviewed by the host, Happy's Wei Chen saw their upcoming opponent and spoke with full confidence.

Happy's opponent: Team Samsara.

Chapter 1253
The Decider

Happy. Samsara.

One was a new team that had made their way through the Challenger League, the other was the two-time defending champion. At the start of the season, no one would have imagined that these two teams would become rivals - the opening match seemed to prove this point. Team Happy had lost to Team Samsara 0-10, a score that couldn't get any worse, and started their season with a stumble.

Afterwards, Happy became more and more terrifying. Starting from Round 9, they stopped losing, slaughtering their opponents with a record matching Samsara's.

Six 10-0s.

Even though the total point difference between the two teams was a large 34 points, if one only looked at Round 9 through Round 17, Happy had won even more points than Samsara.

Happy was completely in form now!

Everyone believed this. After all, Happy was a new team. New teams always needed an adjustment period. A rocky start was actually very logical. After getting past this difficult period of adaptation, Happy finally soared into the skies.

The problems that the outside world had helped analyze for Happy were now cleanly resolved.

For the issue of Fang Rui's class change, after finding his own path, his dirty Qi Master style was becoming more and more mature.

For the issue of the team's unfamiliarity with an unspecialized, Happy's players had adapted very well, far faster than people had expected. From the very start, people seemed to have disregarded how good Happy was at adapting to this new class.

The rookies Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and Luo Ji, didn't need to be mentioned. When they first came into contact with Glory, Lord Grim quickly appeared by their side. Perhaps in their minds, Glory originally had 25 classes, not 24. And among these 25 was the unspecialized. From the very start, the unspecialized problem didn't exist for them.

As for Su Mucheng, as a pro player, an unspecialized hadn't been seen in many years, and she needed time to get familiar with this class. However, Su Mucheng was a player who understood Ye Xiu well, so compared to anyone else, she had an advantage in adapting to Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

As for Fang Rui, he didn't have the same level of connection as Su Mucheng did with Ye Xiu, but Fang Rui just happened to be undergoing a class change. He coincidentally was also getting used to a new class. During his process of destruction into construction, he brought Lord Grim into his new system without any extra trouble, so he was able to fit in with Lord Grim much faster than the average pro player.

For the same reason, when Qiao Yifan got into contact with Lord Grim, he happened to be changing classes too, so his story was the same as Fang Rui's.

Wei Chen had ten years of Glory experience and An Wenyi was a healer, who had more of an observant role. As a result, getting familiar with Lord Grim was fast for them as well. Mo Fan was someone who had never coordinated with anyone before, so for him, he became familiar in another form of a destruction into construction process.

Everyone in Team Happy coincidentally had this and that advantage in familiarizing themselves with an unspecialized, so after practicing hard and accumulating experience in matches, the team took form very quickly. The more Happy played, the smoother everything became.

There was one point that could not be overlooked either. Happy's schedule at the start of the season had been quite the devil. Samsara, Tyranny, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, these four powerhouses had matched against Happy in the first eight rounds. Happy's poor win record was partly because of this reason.

In any case, the current Happy was the most prominent team since the past nine rounds. Their current ranking was fifth… a strong contender for the playoffs.

Yes, a strong contender…

A team with three All-Stars.

A team placed fifth on the point rankings.

Saying they were a strong team wasn't unreasonable. No one felt like it was a notion difficult to accept.

If they were a strong team, then they had the qualifications to challenge Samsara.

However… on the All-Stars stage? In this fun competition? Happy wanted to end Samsara's win streak?

This had to be a joke!

How could anything here count?

The crowd started laughing. They regarded Wei Chen's serious words as a joke.

Thinking of how Ye Xiu was in Happy, the home crowd obviously didn't bear much good will towards Happy. Amidst the laughter, there were quite a few boos thrown towards Wei Chen as well.

"Haha, it looks like the crowd's already feeling pressured in place of Samsara," Wei Chen laughed.

The boos became even louder.

"It looks like they're really nervous!" Steamed Bun said in confusion. "Isn't this Tyranny's home stadium though? Why are they feeling afraid for Samsara?"

Afraid?

Tyranny's fans went into a frenzy. Sure enough, no one by Ye Xiu's side was a good person. Is he actually challenging us?

The boos even drowned out the host's voice.

"DESTROY THEM!!" Someone even yelled out.

"Thanks!" Steamed Bun waved in the direction of that voice. "Relax, we'll definitely do

it!"

"FUCK, I WAS SAYING DESTROY GUYS!!" Tyranny's fans were going crazy, but they looked at one another. How could they get these words through to them?

The host wasn't planning on just letting them continue playing around and started interviewing the next person.

"You plan on deciding it here?" Samsara's Jiang Botao moved towards Happy's three players and started chatting with them.

"Are you scared?" Wei Chen looked at him disdainfully.

"Hahaha," Jiang Botao laughed but didn't say anything. Next to him, Wu Qi and Du Ming walked up without any intentions of retreating. Even though this was All-Stars, a fun competition, if someone wanted to play for real, then they wouldn't back down. Samsara was the defending champions. Their title wasn't going to be snatched so easily with just a few words. Wei Chen's attitude made the two feel very displeased.

"There's no hurry." Wei Chen looked at those two. "We'll know the answer soon."

Wei Chen exuded extraordinary confidence. Samsara's three saw this confidence and felt a little doubtful. The fun mini-games were newly-created things that had never been revealed prior to the All-Stars Weekend. No one knew what they were, so where did the other side's unwavering confidence come from?

Could there be something in the game similar to this competition, and this guy happened to be a master at it?

The three guessed. Pro players were becoming more and more detached from the online game. To them, Glory was becoming more and more like a pure fighting game. Did the online game have something like this? The three weren't sure.

Sparks had started flying between Happy and Samsara, which was undoubtedly exciting for the viewers. One could never have too much drama. After the host interviewed each side, Hot-Blooded Dodgeball began. First up was Tiny Herb and the lucky audience team. The commentator on the broadcast took the information he had and introduced the mini-game in detail so that the viewers would have a better time watching. As for the host, he also had to explain the responsibilities of the players participating in this mini-game.

The rules were practically the same as normal dodgeball. In a confined area, one side would use a sandbag to attack, while the other side would defend. If a sandbag hit a character, the character would be knocked out of the field. But if the defender caught the sandbag, the defender would need to be hit an extra time to be knocked out. If an ally was already knocked out, the defender could also choose to revive the ally.

As for how to use a sandbag?

On stage, Tiny Herb and the lucky audience team loaded into the map and discovered that their characters had two new skills, Sandbag Toss and Sandbag Catch. After everyone tried them out, they quickly grasped how to use them.

The match officially started. Tiny Herb attacked, while the lucky audience team defended. If a sandbag hit, the target would be eliminated. It was equivalent to an instant kill. If viewed from a combat perspective, it vastly decreased the amount of time needed for a turn. As a result, after just a minute, the three lucky audience members were wiped out. The viewers could all see that Tiny Herb hadn't been too merciless and had held back.

Next, the lucky audience team attacked, while Tiny Herb defended. The three Tiny Herb players didn't catch any sandbag and only dodged. After dodging for around how long the last turn took, they let the other side hit them to end their turn. Because of the wide disparity in skill, everyone could see that in this mini-game, if the pro players played seriously, the audience team's turn to attack might never end.

With Tiny Herb's victory, the other contestants also got a better understanding of the mini-game.

The following match was between the two audience teams. Since the two teams were more evenly-matched, this confrontation was a lot more intense than the previous round. After lots of laughs, a winner was decided after the two turns.

Next was Happy versus Samsara. After drawing ballots, Samsara would be attacking first, while Happy would be defending.

After watching the first four teams fight, the on-stage players now had their own thoughts and ideas for this mini-game. The characters loaded into the map. The attacking Samsara stood at the corners of the map, forming an equilateral triangle, while Happy stood in the middle at the very center of the map. These positions were

just their starting locations. After loading into the map, they could freely move around. In the match between the two audience teams, those six players ran around crazily until it was all a huge mess. The viewers weren't familiar with their characters and in fact, the players themselves weren't familiar with their own teammates, so enemies treating each other as allies and allies treating other as enemies had happened more than once.

This sort of situation probably wouldn't happen with these two pro teams.

When the match started, there was an indicator showing who first had the sandbag. Right now, it was in the hands of Du Ming's Blade Master, Moon-Luring Frost.

However, the sandbag wasn't thrown just like that. A sword light flashed, and Du Ming had Moon-Luring Frost open a path with Triple Slash.

The All-Star mini-games would never block anything the game originally had, so every single mini-game had this element in it: killing! It was always a method to win. But the problem was that in this mini-game, if a sandbag hit, the target would be instantly knocked out. Killing required calculating both damage dealt and health remaining, so it was more trouble than it was worth.

No one thought that Du Ming was going in with intentions to kill his opponent. Triple Slash was simply a way to close the distance. With less distance between them, it would be easier to hit the target. The logic was very simple.

Chapter 1254
Airborne Sandbag

Du Ming's target was the person who had looked down on them earlier, Wei Chen. Sword light flew, and Moon-Luring Frost rapidly closed the distance between him and Windward Formation. He raised his other hand and threw a sandbag.

The sandbag's speed and distance depended entirely on the player's skill. How could a pro player lack that? The sandbag was like a shadow as it shot towards Windward Formation.

Pu!

Hit!

Du Ming felt delighted. You arrogant bastard, I got rid of you in just three seconds. But before he could laugh, he looked closer and saw that Windward Formation hadn't been hit.

A small flying dragon had flown in front of Windward Formation who knew when. His sandbag had hit this small flying dragon. It was undoubtedly Luo Ji who had summoned this small flying dragon. However, according to the mini-game's settings, the sandbag was a godly killing weapon. When the sandbag hit, the small flying dragon was instantly knocked outside of the battlefield just like a player character.

"Nice job," Wei Chen praised Luo Ji. Luo Ji didn't have time to be happy though, as his nervous heart was about to leap out of his throat. When the match started, Wei Chen immediately told him to summon a creature to block an attack. Such a heavy responsibility gave Luo Ji huge amounts of pressure. He feared that he wouldn't be able to control it properly or not accurately enough. If his block missed, wouldn't it be Wei Chen being knocked out of the field?

Fortunately, he succeeded, but he was more relieved than happy. Seeing that his small flying dragon had been knocked out, Luo Ji wanted to summon another one but when he checked his skills, he discovered that he couldn't use them. His character was Silenced.

Luo Ji immediately understood. A Summoner's creatures couldn't be used as an endless supply of shields in this mini-game. If a summon was hit by a sandbag, it would be locked and unable to be summoned again.

If I catch a sandbag, will I be able to use the summon again? Luo Ji thought to himself. But he also knew that in this mini-game, if he caught a sandbag, it didn't make sense to use it on getting the summon back.

The sandbag thrown at the small flying dragon dropped towards the ground. It wouldn't automatically return to the attacker's hands; the attacker had to pick it up himself. Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost was the closest to it. He hurried to grab it, but just before the sandbag hit the ground, a hand moved underneath the sandbag and caught it.

"Hahaha," Wei Chen laughed. Before a sandbag landed on the ground, it could be caught without question. As a result, Happy was able to pick one up, and the three players now had an extra life.

The rules stated that after catching a sandbag, within three seconds, the sandbag needed to be thrown away for an attacker to pick up. This was worthy of being exploited. Wei Chen looked at the other three's positions and found a gap, which was just behind Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost. He shouted "Catch" and Windward Formation chucked it.

Du Ming immediately had Moon-Luring Frost turn around. On the other hand, Wu Qi's Assassin, Cruel Silence, also rushed towards it to hurry and catch it. But when the two sprinted for it, they realized that there was no sandbag.

"Whoops, sorry. I dropped it on the ground." Wei Chen laughed honestly. The sandbag had slipped out of Windward Formation's hands, falling straight down onto Windward Formation's feet.

The crowd erupted into thunderous boos. The viewers lashed out at Wei Chen's shamelessness one after the other. Wei Chen didn't care though. Happy's three characters had started moving away long before the sandbag hit the ground. For them, the farther they were away from the sandbags, the better.

Du Ming coughed blood as his Moon-Luring Frost turned around to pick up the sandbag. Wu Qi furiously had his Cruel Silence chase after him.

"Stay organized and maintain good positioning. Reduce their space and deal with them one by one," Jiang Botao yelled out. This mini-game looked easy, but in reality, there was a lot of strategy involved. The triangle starting position was a balanced way of positioning. How to move afterwards depended on the situation. Keeping up a constant stream of attacks was very important, so the three had to constantly be communicating. After Du Ming threw the sandbag, not only did the opponents play a dirty trick on them, even without that, just the small flying dragon blocking the sandbag and then forcing the attackers to run to pick it up was a serious interruption towards their offense. When throwing a sandbag, the path of the throw should be such that another attacker could catch the sandbag and continue attacking. This was the key to this mini-game for the attackers. Whether it was dodgeball, throwing sandbags, or this mini-game, this was always the strategy.

Seeing Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost pick up the sandbag, Jiang Botao immediately had his Empty Waves move in an attempt to form a link with Moon-Luring Frost's position. Who would have thought that before he could take more than a few steps, he would hear Du Ming curse loudly. When he turned around to look, he saw a Hexagram Prison trapping Moon-Luring Frost.

"You youngsters have got to open your eyes wider," Wei Chen sighed.

"Senior's methods are truly brilliant," Jiang Botao praised sincerely.

"Oh? You child, you really know how to talk!" Wei Chen laughed.

Jiang Botao also laughed, but his hands hadn't stopped moving.

Ice Wave Sword!

Ice crystals spread, quickly moving towards Happy's three characters. Ice element skills with a chance of lowering movement speed could undoubtedly be effective at crucial moments.

"We were having such a good chat and then you suddenly launch a sneak attack. Kids these days are truly too shameless," Wei Chen said as his Windward Formation dodged to the side.

"Senior, good joke." Jiang Botao wasn't affected by Wei Chen's trash talk. His Ice Wave Sword didn't hit, so he swung his sword again with a Fire Wave.

Fire blazed. Jiang Botao wanted to use this attack to restrict the opponent's movement options, but he didn't expect someone to just directly run through the fire waves and charge towards him.

Powerful Knee Strike!

Steamed Bun Invasion leaped up and his knee came crashing towards Empty Waves.

Sigh, a miscalculation!

Jiang Botao instantly realized that a purely offensive skill like Fire Wave Sword might be the least useful skills in this mini-game. With the threat of a one hit kill sandbag, who could care about this sort of damage? Happy's Steamed Bun decisively chose to ignore this damage and charged straight through these fire waves. This sort of scene was simply too rare. Jiang Botao wasn't able to react in time, and Empty Wave's Powerful Knee Strike slammed into him.

Wu Qi had understood Jiang Botao's intentions, and his Cruel Silence positioned himself with Empty Waves. They were just waiting for Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost to break free from Hexagram Prison. How could he have known Empty Waves would be sent flying away. For a moment, Wu Qi didn't know what to do. Everyone was still somewhat unfamiliar with this sort of mini-game.

"Hold them!" At this moment, Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost had finally broken from from Hexagram Prison. He shouted towards Wu Qi, telling him to form a pincer together.

Happy were doing their utmost to avoid the sandbag from Moon-Luring Frost. The three characters stopped grouping up and dispersed in different directions. Not only did they have to dodge Moon-Luring Frost, they needed to evade Cruel Silence as well. Jiang Botao saw Happy's movements and knew the other side also knew the key to this game. The attackers carrying sandbags were the most threatening characters, but the defenders could not just ignore the attackers without one. Sandbags could be passed around.

"Catch!" Du Ming shouted and tossed a sandbag into the air. Wei Chen, who was in front of Du Ming, had Windward Formation dodge, but how could he have known the sandbag would be thrown so off target…

This wasn't a direct attack, but an assist!

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves remained calm and collected and went into an extremely good position. Du Ming learned from Wei Chen's cheap trick and returned the favor with a shout of his own. The sandbag was instead passed to Empty Waves. From Jiang Botao's position to Moon-Luring Frost throw, it was hard to know what Samsara was planning, but in an instant, they suddenly sped up. After Empty Waves caught the sandbag, his hands didn't stop moving. He threw the sandbag, not at the opponent directly in front of him, but towards Concealed Light to the side of him.

Luo Ji turned pale with fright. He mashed his keys in a fluster and was able to dodge it, but when he turned around, he saw that Cruel Silence had unexpectedly used Shining Cut to instantly reach his rear. Cruel Silence extended his hands, catching Empty Wave's sandbag, and threw the sandbag.

Hit!

This time, it was a hit. Samsara's sudden acceleration had caught Luo Ji off guard. This sandbag struck Concealed Light squarely.

However, at the start of the match, Wei Chen's Windward Formation was able to catch a sandbag, giving Happy an extra life. As a result, this hit didn't knock Concealed Light off the stage. Samsara's offense wasn't over yet though. The instant Cruel Silence threw this sandbag, he rushed forward ferociously ready to pick up the sandbag.

If a sandbag successfully hit a character, the defenders would not be able to pick it up. Luo Ji could only have his Concealed Light run from that sandbag. However, how could a Summoner's movement speed compare to an Assassin's? By the time Cruel Silence snatched the sandbag, Concealed Light had only taken a few steps. Wu Qi showed no mercy. His Cruel Silence raised his arm, ready to throw the sandbag, when suddenly, a figure flashed in front of him, slamming a brick into Cruel Silence's face.

Wu Qi saw his screen instantly turn dark. This brick had blocked his view, and at this distance, how could he have any time to dodge? Pu! The brick struck Cruel Silence, making Wu Qi's heart thump. He had already been in a throwing animation. There was no time to cancel it, yet he still wanted to dodge the brick. In a fluster, that sandbag ended up being thrown, gently and without any force behind it, hitting nothing but air.

"I kindly accept this offering!" Wei Chen laughed. Windward Formation stepped forward to pick it up.

"Not happening!!" Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost rushed forward, but since he was behind Windward Formation, he wouldn't be able to reach it in time. Moon-Luring Frost leaped into the air, the tip of his sword trembling.

Curving Wind Form.

Moon-Luring Frost used the new Level 75 skill. Sword qi moved in reverse, pulling in the sandbag towards Moon-Luring Frost.

"Smart kid, looks like you're quite creative!" Wei Chen's Windward Formation saw his prize flying away and continued to trash talk as his Windward Formation pointed his Death's Hand into the air.

Chapter 1255
Point Blank

Soul Slice!

A purple light flashed from Death's Hand, sending out several slashes towards the airborne sandbag.

Du Ming was startled. He didn't dare wait for the sandbag to arrive and moved his Moon-Luring Frost forward hurriedly to grab it. Even if he couldn't get it, he definitely couldn't let someone from Happy catch it.

But no matter his fast his movement speed was, it couldn't compare to a skill's. Du Ming looked at Soul Slice's trajectory and made a prediction. Moon-Luring Frost headed directly towards Soul Slice's direction, but the Soul Slice unexpectedly missed the sandbag.

It didn't hit?

The sandbag pulled by Curving Wind Form's sword energy didn't pull the sandbag back very fast. For a pro player, hitting a target at such a speed shouldn't be anything difficult. However, Windward Formation's Soul Slice actually missed. Was it a mistake, or was it… intentional?

"Ah, is this mouse broken?" Du Ming heard Wei Chen complain. He hastily had Moon-Luring Frost turn around and saw a black shadow leap up faster than he could react. The sandbag disappeared into the air along with this black shadow.

Du Ming had Moon-Luring Frost send out a slash in a fluster, but it missed. That black shadow's movements were quick and nimble. After snatching the sandbag, it ran towards Happy's Summoner, Concealed Light, who took the sandbag from the spirit cat's mouth.

From the system notification, everyone could see that this retrieval was considered effective. Happy had gained another life.

Du Ming, who had just fallen for the trick, was both furious and ashamed. Moon-Luring Frost raised his sword, ready to charge towards Windward Formation.

"Calm down! It's just a minigame," Jiang Botao shouted.

Yes, it was just a minigame. It was supposed to be a casual minigame filled with laughs. But Wei Chen's confidence after Happy picked Samsara was truly quite infuriating. Samsara's three players wanted to give this old guy a slap to his face, but from the looks of it, the old guy's skill at this game was deeper than theirs. Who said young people were easier at adapting to new things? Right now, this old guy was relying on his experience and after just two rounds of observation, he had quickly found the trick to this minigame.

"Du Ming, directly attack them. Give the sandbag to me and Wu Qi," Jiang Botao decided. It looked like beating Happy purely in a contest of their understanding of this minigame wouldn't be easy. He decided that they should display Samsara's strength, using attacks to restrict them while using sandbags to kill.

"Okay!" Du Ming welcomed this decision and replied bluntly.

On Happy's side, Luo Ji's Concealed Light held onto the sandbag for three seconds before throwing it towards a location inconvenient for Samsara. In the meantime, the three from Happy began preparing themselves for Samsara's next wave of attacks. But this time, Samsara had clearly calmed down. Jiang Botao and Du Ming positioned themselves to restrict Happy, but they didn't hastily start attacking. They waited for Wu Qi's Assassin to pick up the sandbag before calmly searching for an opportunity.

"Pretend to attack Windward Formation!" Jiang Botao commanded. As expected, Samsara's ability to carry out orders was outstanding. Before he even finished his words, Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost moved towards Windward Formation with a Triple Slash. Cruel Silence circled around to the side with a sandbag in his hands. Their teamwork was quite steady. Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost rushed forward, but he didn't attack. He simply stood there in a defensive position, stopping Windward Formation from approaching.

Restricting the opponent's movement space meant limiting the opponent's ability to dodge. Forcefully breaking through was an unwise move in this minigame. The sandbag was an instant kill weapon. It wasn't possible for a defender to win a direct fight against an attacker.

Sure enough, Wei Chen didn't make this unwise move. As soon as he saw Moon-Luring Frost block his path forward, he immediately turned. Cruel Silence had reached his side, but Wei Chen acted like he didn't see him.

Is he baiting us again? Jiang Botao observed Happy's movements. His Empty Waves was also shrinking their movement space, coordinating with Cruel Silence to continue pressuring Windward Formation.

However, these were all facades. From the very start, Jiang Botao had indicated that this was a fakeout, acting as cover for their true target. As for who this true target was, Jiang Botao still hadn't decided. Perhaps it was in fact Windward Formation. Everything depended on how Happy reacted to their pressure.

"Press forward!" Jiang Botao ordered again. Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost directly launched an attack at Windward Formation. As expected, as the defender, Wei Chen wasn't willing to get into a tangle with the attacker. Windward Formation retreated again.

"You punks, what are you doing, chasing relentlessly after this senior?" Wei Chen had Windward Formation dodge as he spouted trash talk.

"It's all because senior is too threatening!" Jiang Botao said.

"You baby, you really know how to talk! Hahaha!" Wei Chen once again praised Jiang Botao. Last time, Jiang Botao responded with a merciless attack. What about this time? This time, there was none. Jiang Botao suddenly turned diagonally. Empty Waves had originally been trying to block Windward Formation's retreat path, but this sudden turn completely changed his intent.

Ice Wave Sword!

This skill could not be ignored. An ice wave swept over murderously. Its target: Concealed Light.

"Good kid! So you were threatening the east to attack the west!" Wei Chen shouted. Windward Formation turned around to try and rescue Concealed Light, but Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost stopped him. He didn't attack. He simply cut off the path between Windward Formation and Concealed Light.

Cruel Silence suddenly sped up. He sent out a Shining Cut and activated Swift

Movement. In an instant, the distance between himself and Concealed Light closed. Then, Shadow Clone Technique!

This instant movement Ninja skill was a skill practically every Night Walker class learned. For the final stretch of Cruel Silence's dash, he used this skill to instantly appear in front of Concealed Light. This sudden acceleration had caught Luo Ji unprepared last time, and this time was no different. He had just dodged Empty Wave's Ice Wave Sword and didn't expect an Assassin to suddenly appear before him in the blink of an eye with a sandback ready. At point blank, how could this sandbag be dodged? It was impossible!

Hit!

Cruel Silence's sandbag hit Concealed Light, instantly wiping out the extra life that they had just earned not long ago. As the sandbag fell, Luo Ji wanted Concealed Light to hurry and get away, but this time, Jiang Botao had predicted his intentions. In this sandbag minigame, whether the defenders caught it or the defenders were hit, the attacker's offense would be interrupted. Thus, just thinking about striking the target wasn't enough. Apart from hitting the target, the attackers needed to consider how to reach the next step in their offense. After hitting Concealed Light, the sandbag was caught in his hands before it fell to the ground. Concealed Light tried to run, but he was blocked by Empty Waves. By the time he tried moving in a different direction, he was too late. Cruel Silence once again threw the sandbag at point blank range. Concealed Light was hit once again and was cleanly knocked off the stage this time.

Fast. Everything had happened too fast. Wei Chen and Steamed Bun didn't have time to respond before Concealed Light was eliminated. Just this minigame alone show just terrifying the champion team's explosiveness was.

However, the offense from Samsara wasn't done yet. Two point blank sandbags and Cruel Silence caught both of them before they fell to the ground. Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost ran towards Windward Formation. Wei Chen immediately realized what he wanted to do, but facing this sort of charge, the defenders seemed powerless. They couldn't stop to fight with their opponents. Their only choice was to run away and dodge.

Windward Formation sprinted back, but Moon-Luring Frost pursued him faster, closing in with a Triple Slash. Cruel Silence then passed his sandbag to Moon-Luring Frost. Shadow Steps!

Moon-Luring Frost didn't immediately throw his sandbag, instead using Shadow Steps. Five Moon-Luring Frosts instantly flickered into existence, each holding a sandbag. Without pausing, not giving Wei Chen any time to figure out which one was real, the five Moon-Luring Frosts threw their sandbags at the same time.

"That's too shameless!!" Wei Chen cried out in grief. The five sandbags flew at him, sealing off all of Windward Formation's escape options. Of the five, four were fake, but Wei Chen didn't know which one was real, so he could only pray.

Left!

Windward Formation stepped to the left. A sandbag hit him but disappeared.

Wei Chen let out a sigh of relief. However, it wasn't over yet. While he was figuring out if the sandbag that him was real or fake, Moon-Luring Frost acted again. A sword light flashed out, Sword Draw, aimed towards the previously thrown sandbag.

Du Ming obviously knew which of the sandbags was real. The Sword Draw didn't slice apart the sandbag. It carried the sandbag along with it towards Windward Formation.

"Punk… how crafty!" Wei Chen sighed. The sandbag was considered a throw too, and Windward Formation was eliminated.

The closely linked attacks knocked out two of Happy's players in the blink of an eye. The crowd was dumbstruck. Even Steamed Bun was having trouble keeping up.

"What's going on? How'd you guys suddenly disappear?" Steamed Bun was puzzled as he looked at the eliminated Windward Formation and Concealed Light.

"Chance!" Jiang Botao shouted. Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost shot forward. He picked up a sandbag and twisted his body, throwing the sandbag like a meteor towards Steamed Bun Invasion, who was looking away.

Pai!

The sandbag was stopped. A Brick had crashed into the sandbag, swatting it down. Du Ming was dumbfounded. He hadn't thought Steamed Bun would suddenly regain his senses and then throw a Brick that actually intercepted the meteor-like sandbag.

"This is no fun!" Steamed Bun said. "Why don't we have a real fight?"

Chapter 1256
A Class Composition Fit for Dodgeball

"A real fight?" Jiang Botao laughed, "1v3 us? That's going to be very difficult!"

"Bring it on!" Steamed Bun yelled.

"Vice captain, he's stalling for time!" Du Ming saw that Jiang Botao seemed to want to play along with this guy, so he hastily gave him a reminder.

"This match is just for fun. Why worry so much? Let's just play with him! Could it be you think it'll take us a long time to beat him 3v1?" Jiang Botao asked.

"Of course not!" Du Ming's spirits rose.

"Let's go!" Wu Qi called out. His Cruel Silence rushed out.

"We're coming!" Jiang Botao said.

"I've been waiting for a long time now," Steamed Bun said calmly. For a moment, the Brawler Steamed Bun Invasion had the faint aura of a great scholar around him. Facing a 1v3, he didn't back down a single step and stood his ground proudly. But in the next moment, Steamed Bun Invasion was lying flat on the ground. He had turned into a corpse that was on his way out of the stage.

Everyone's mouths were wide open.

They couldn't understand. What was going on in Bao Rongxing's mind? Why would he disgrace himself? They just couldn't understand!

Is he stupid? Everyone thought so.

"Haha, what a pity, I lost!" Steamed Bun was very upset.

"DId you actually think you could win?" Luo Ji couldn't help but ask.

"Whether I lose or win, as long as I fight bravely, I'll never have any regrets," Steamed Bun said.

"Can someone take care of him?" Luo Ji seemed to be possessed by Mo Fan, his face expressionless.

"Alright, next up, it's our turn to attack. We're gonna fight fast and end this fast." Wei Chen said to his two juniors.

"Fight!" Steamed Bun shouted.

"…" Luo Ji.

The attackers and defenders switched roles. Happy on the offense, Samsara on the defense.

The opening was the same. It was just that this time, the ones standing at the corners of the triangle were Happy's three characters. The sandbag was in Windward Formation's hand.

"If we keep catching sandbags endessly, won't this game go on forever?" Du Ming said.

"We just need to beat their time," Wu Qi siad.

"We can do it!" Jiang Botao said. Even though they didn't really care too much, it was still better to be the winner than the loser.

The match started. Jiang Botao immediately spun 360 degrees, observing Happy's movements.

The three from Happy were moving into offensive positions. Samsara also moved, while paying attention to Windward Formation's sandbag. Wei Chen was cunning. They had personally experienced it. With the sandbag in his hands, they felt like he definitely had a surprise waiting for them.

"Watch me!" Wei Chen suddenly roared and swung his arms.

Samsara immediately dodged, but the sandbag wasn't thrown towards them.

"This again!" Du Ming said. He turned around and saw the sandbag in Steamed Bun

Invasion's hands. However, Steamed Bun Invasion wasn't in a good attacking position. Was he going to pass again?

Samsara moved, wary of Happy's next pass.

But there was no pass. The sandbag fell into Steamed Bun Invasion's hands, and then Happy's three characters gathered together.

What are they doing?

Jiang Botao couldn't understand. In this minigame, the attacking side carried more threat when they split apart and formed links with each other. If all three attackers crowded together, what was the difference between three people and one?

Could they be planning on charging at us together?

Just when they were thinking this, Windward Formation and Concealed Light started casting.

Concealed Light summoned creatures, while Windward Formation cast… Death's Door!

No one had ever heard of someone casting such a slow skill out in the open like this.

However, the threat of Death's Door was truly huge. Samsara couldn't ignore it. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves rushed forward. He swung his sword, sending out an Earth Wave Sword in an attempt to interrupt Windward Formation.

But then, Steamed Bun Invasion jumped out from the side, blocking this Earth Wave Sword.

The attack obviously dealt damage, but Steamed Bun Invasion didn't seem to care. He held the sandbag in his left hand and a Brick in his right hand as he sprinted madly towards Empty Waves.

Jiang Botao could only choose to run away. Who would dare to fight against someone who possessed the ultimate killing weapon, the sandbag?

But Windward Formation's Death's Hand had to be interrupted! Jiang Botao was being chased by Steamed Bun, so he had no chance to. He could only give the task to Du Ming

and Wu Qi. However, by this time, Concealed Light had summoned quite a few creatures. His summons didn't rush out, instead providing cover for Windward Formation.

Jiang Botao suddenly realized the problem. At the same time, he also realized that in this minigame, some classes had advantages over others.

For example, Blade Masters and Assassins, two classes with powerful offensive capabilities, lost a lot of their threat in this minigame. No matter how strong your attacks were, how could they compare to an instant kill weapon?

The biggest threats in this minigame were control skills.

Warlocks were control experts, and Summoners who summoned creatures on the field were also very troublesome. His summons took up space, reducing the amount of room for the defenders to maneuver around, and this space was needed for defenders to dodge the sandbags.

A Warlock and a Summoner. Jiang Botao discovered that these two classes were most effective at exploiting the instant kill sandbags.

Not good!

Jiang Botao already had a bad feeling. Even though Du Ming's and Wu Qi's efforts forced Windward Formation to give up his Death's Door, it also lured the two into the summon's encirclement.

Kill kill kill!

Sword and dagger danced in the air. Du Ming also realized that the situation was looking very bad, so he directly used the high-level skill, Formless Phantom Blade. Sword light quickly cut down the summons in a flurry. However, Concealed Light was constantly summoning more, not caring at all about his mana or his skill cooldowns because this wasn't a normal fight. As the attackers, they had instant kill weapons. As long as they had a single opening, they could instantly kill the opponent.

Using Formless Phantom Blade in this situation?

This decision was a bit careless!

A high-level skill like Formless Phantom Blade had a long ending lag, a large opening for the attackers to take advantage of. In this minigame, an opening like this could be fatal!

But the skill had already been used, and it was too late for Jiang Botao to warn him. He could only watch as Moon-Luring Frost slaughter the area around him and then when the final slash came out, Moon-Luring Frost became stuck in ending lag.

Steamed Bun leaped out at this moment. Jiang Botao predicted this would happen, but there was nothing he could do to stop him. As for Wu Qi? Wu Qi was helpless too because Windward Formation was fighting him. A Warlock's control skills could not be ignored in this minigame.

Pai, the sandbag easily hit Moon-Luring Frost. Everyone could only watch helplessly.

Moon-Luring Frost was eliminated. Concealed Light's army of summons started swarming around Wu Qi's Cruel Silence. The sandbag that fell to the ground was also picked up by him and soon passed over to Steamed Bun Invasion.

Jiang Botoa clearly understood Happy's strategy now. A Warlock with control skills, a Summoner with summons, and a Brawler with the sandbag. All three characters were major threats, which could not be said for Samsara. He could throw out an Earth Wave Sword, but Steamed Bun could just directly take the attack. On the other hand, if a Warlock's Binding Curse or Control Curse came his way, he didn't dare eat it.

The threat that all three members of Happy possessed when attacking was something that Samsara's three couldn't achieve. If it was real fight like Steamed Bun said, Samsara might have the advantage, but in this minigame, Jiang Botao felt powerless when it was Happy's turn to attack.

Cruel Silence was trapped by the army of summons. Then, Windward Formation used a Control Curse to CC him. Jiang Botao was being chased by Steamed Bun and couldn't save him. As soon as Steamed Bun saw that a target had been CCed, Steamed Bun Invasion's sandbag was thrown. Cruel Silence was unable to move due to Windward Formation's Control Curse and the sandbag hit him square in the forehead.

Two Samsara players had been eliminated. Happy's offense wasn't as fast and nimble as Samsara's, but it made the defending side feel completely powerless.

Jiang Botao checked the time. There was already no hope of winning.

"How about a real fight?" He laughed, learning from Steamed Bun last round.

"Sure!" Steamed Bun jumped out.

"Okay, Steamed Bun hand me the sandbag. Go!" Wei Chen said.

JIang Botao's heart thumped. Why did he feel like this arrangement didn't seem safe?

"Relax!" Wei Chen said, "I'll definitely sneak attack you."

Jiang Botao was speechless. The guy wasn't even trying to hide his intentions.

Steamed Bun Invasion charged forward and started fighting with Jiang Botao's Spellblade. Sure enough, Wei Chen kept his promise. Windward Formation was on the side, constantly harassing Jiang Botao. When an opportunity arrived where the attack couldn't be dodged, he threw the sandbag along with a skill.

"Okay, go die!" Wei Chen said. The sandbag hit, and Jiang Botao was eliminated.

In the end, Happy used less time, so they won.

"Samsara's win streak has finally ended!" Wei Chen exclaimed delightedly.

"Senior, you really…" Jiang Botao forced a smile. He was an expert at talking to others, but he didn't know what to say right now.

The first round of Hot-Blooded Dodgeball finished, and the four teams once again drew ballots for their next opponent. Just like Jiang Botao realized, in this minigame, Happy's class composition held an overwhelming advantage. The other pro teams, Tiny Herb and Miracle, couldn't compete. Happy won the next two rounds easily and ended up as the winners of Hot-Blooded Dodgeball.

"Champions!" Wei Chen declared loudly.

"Do we get a trophy?" Steamed Bun asked the host excitedly.

"This… I don't think so…" the host was sweating. It was just a minigame. A trophy?

"If there's no trophy, then a medal?" Steamed Bun asked.

"I don't think so either…”

"Prize?" Steamed Bun was still asking.

"Uh, that… Thank you to our nine audience members, and thank you to the fifteen players from our five pro teams for giving us a wonderful performance. Thank you!" The host took the lead and applauded, shooing away Happy down from the stage.

Chapter 1257
Things Remain, But The People Change

The Hot-Blooded Dodgeball competition came to a close. There were a lot of participants, and the elimination was turn-by-turn, so this one minigame replaced the three minigames of previous All-Stars. However, having just this one event would have been somewhat monotonous, so afterwards there was also a three-legged race event.

It could be seen from this that Tyranny, hosting this year's All-Stars, wanted to emphasize the subject of teamwork. Whether it was Hot-Blooded Dodgeball or Three-Legged Race, they all required exceptional teamwork and cooperation.

However, the famed All-Star pairings with which everyone was familiar still didn't appear in these minigames. Everyone knew that this excitement would be left until the final day. As they watched these fun events, the anticipation for Day 3 only grew.

After the Three-Legged Race was the Player vs Pro event, in which the hosting team would send out a pro player to accept challenges from the crowd. Tyranny sent out a player that had only just appeared in their roster last season, an older rookie, Qin Muyun.

This older rookie who fought alongside Tyranny's Four Heavenly Kings used to have a very faint presence. It wasn't until the playoffs that people realized that this player also had unusual battle ability. His presence was faint only because his use on the battlefield wasn't easily captured in summary statistics. This expert at positioning used his position to contain or restrict his opponents, which couldn't be recorded in statistics.

Qin Muyun took his place, Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing went onstage to select the players. There were many Tyranny fans in the crowd, so of course this was a very exciting thing.

Qin Muyun's victories were of course guaranteed. But for the ordinary players that lost, their heads were filled with fog. During battle, they had all experienced an indescribable feeling of being bound. What was up with that? None of them understood. Qin Muyun's playstyle, which relied on positioning to launch offensives,

was so high-level that it far surpassed what ordinary players could recognize. They might know that something like this was going on, but in real battle, they couldn't detect the intentions of each movement of Qin Muyun's Negative Nine Degrees.

"Such an outstanding player, how was he discovered so late?" Blue Rain's Captain Yu Wenzhou mused. He wasn't the only pro player with such thoughts; all of the teams were discussing Qin Muyun's performance. Even when fighting ordinary players, his style was fully apparent. For the pros, once they understood where Qin Muyun's talents lay, it was easier to grasp his plans on the field. But even though that was the case, if their attention wavered just a bit, they could still overlook him.

Suppression that relied on positioning - there was the feeling of some silent drowning. Qin Muyun had already earned a lot of attention, but his presence on the battlefield was still as faint as ever.

The lucky audience members happily walked onstage, lost, walked offstage in a daze, and Day 2 of the All-Star Weekend came to a close. The audience members left in satisfaction, and began to anticipate Day 3 of All-Stars, and the event that was the highlight of the weekend: the All-Star Competition.

What would the teams be? Which players would they see fight side-by-side? Which players would they see clash?

Any kind of dream team or dream confrontation could become reality in the All-Star Weekend. Carrying their hopes, everyone welcomed the arrival of Day 3 of All-Stars.

The atmosphere was extremely raucous; everyone was swept along by the excitement. The host was clearly aware of the crowd's mood, so he didn't try to tease everyone's appetite. One by one, the 24 All-Star players were introduced and welcomed onstage.

The excited crowd gave their cheers and shouts to all of the All-Stars. Of course, the ones who earned the loudest cheers were the players of Tyranny. When Captain Han Wenqing went onstage, the cheers were like the roaring of a tsunami wave. It was difficult to believe that this player had only been ranked 12th this year for All-Stars. The power of the home stadium made it seem like Han Wenqing was the number one superstar of Glory. From this it could be seen that although Han Wenqing's total popularity had decreased greatly, in Tyranny, he was still the immovable number one.

Opposite to everyone else was Ye Xiu. When he appeared, the Tyranny fans sent him

not applause but merciless booing. This was the All-Star stage, not Tyranny's home game, so this sort of behavior was rather rude. But there was nothing that could be done. The hatred that Tyranny fans had toward Ye Xiu simply ran too deep. Last season, when there had been neither Ye Xiu nor Excellent Era, the Tyranny fans had really been a little lonely. No matter how strong Samsara was, even if they defeated Tyranny in the end, in the eyes of the fans they still weren't the biggest enemy. The archenemy was still Excellent Era, was still Ye Xiu.

Excellent Era was no longer here, but Ye Xiu had returned, so the hate was more focused. Tyranny's fans would never conceal their emotions. The setting didn't matter. If they saw Ye Xiu, they booed. This was law, iron law.

Among the 24 players, only Ye Xiu received such a brutal treatment. Although Su Mucheng was also from Excellent Era, the grudge that Tyranny had toward Excellent Era and Ye Xiu stemmed from the very beginning, with Excellent Era's three consecutive championship wins. Su Mucheng joined Excellent Era the year that Tyranny finally defeated Excellent Era, when their spirits were high. So, subtly, they didn't have much negative feeling toward Su Mucheng, since she had joined when Tyranny came to victory. All of the aggro was focused on Ye Xiu alone.

The other players all had their own feelings as they watched this person receive a completely different treatment than the rest of them.

This person had left the pro circle for a year and a half, and then he returned, and then he immediately stood on this stage that symbolized the very pinnacle of Glory players. Aside from Zhou Zekai, not a single player was more popular than him. This was indeed a powerful comeback.

Ye Xiu also looked at everyone on this stage. After leaving for a year and a half, the array of faces before him had gained some unfamiliar, and lost some familiar.

Of the opponents that had tangled with him for many years now, many of them had already left. Some were gone for good, others were currently sitting offstage.

Zhang Jiale, Lin Jingyan, Sun Zheping… And those that might be sitting in front of their televisions right now, Zhao Yang, Deng Fusheng…

Perhaps they would never stand on this most beautiful stage again. And what about himself? How much longer could he himself stand here?

Looking at Han Wenqing, Ye Xiu had mixed feelings. Standing on this stage now, there was now no longer a single player that had debuted in Season 2. But the two of them Season 1 debuts still stubbornly clung to their places here.

Him at number two. Han Wenqing at number twelve.

Not bad, Ye Xiu thought. But looking at the top ten All-Stars, the presence of the new generation was only growing stronger and stronger.

Zhou Zekai from Season 5 comfortably held the spot of number one, while Jiang Botao and Yu Feng from Season 6, along with Sun Xiang and Tang Hao from Season 7, were all in the top 10. Aside from them, there were three players from the famed Season 4 Golden Generation. Then, it was just Wang Jiexi from Season 3.

There weren't too many left from Season 3, either…

Ye Xiu counted, and realized that of the players from Season 3, aside from Wang Jiexi, there was only Yang Cong. And this time he was ranked 24th, barely catching the last train. Behind him, a crowd of newer players were eyeing this position. Perhaps as soon as next year, he would vanish from this leaderboard.

Things remain, but the people change…

Seeing all of these new young faces before him, Ye Xiu couldn't help but feel the vicissitudes of life. The onstage host was currently interviewing one by one the players that came onstage, and finally it was Ye Xiu's turn.

"God Ye Xiu made a strong comeback this year, coming onto this stage at second place. What are your current feelings?" The host was even more excited than Ye Xiu as he posed this question.

"Oh, I'm used to this," Ye Xiu said.

Don't even mention the crowd. Even some of the other All-Star players onstage booed at Ye Xiu.

The host also hesitated for a moment before continuing his questions. "Does God Ye Xiu have anyone he's looking forward to partnering with, or fighting against?"

Ye Xiu glanced at the other twenty-plus players, and continued to respond calmly. "I

don't really care."

"Hahaha, God Ye Xiu is really… extremely calm!" the host said.

"Because I'm used to this!" Ye Xiu said.

His words came back to the same point… The host could only helplessly proceed to the next player.

The one after Ye Xiu was of course Zhou Zekai. The interviews proceeded in order according to the All-Star rankings.

"Little Zhou once again was voted to number one in the All-Star rankings. What are your current feelings?" The host didn't refer to Zhou Zekai as "God," but as "Little Zhou," evoking a feeling of familiarity.

"Does he even need to say? He's also used to this!" While Zhou Zekai was still pondering how to respond, Ye Xiu already helped him answer.

Zhou Zekai looked at Ye Xiu blankly, and in the end didn't say anything.

"Uh, this…" The host felt awkward. Maybe Zhou Zekai really was used to it, but only you would say it directly with that kind of attitude!

Zhou Zekai didn't look like he was about to say anything more, so the host could only continue to the next question, still the same one that had been repeated many times already: "Little Zhou, do you have any players you're looking forward to partnering with?"

"Partner with who? Samsara's sent four players here! Are you going to split them up?" Ye Xiu said.

"God Ye… can you… stop talking?" The host nobly suppressed the urge to blow up at him.

"Oh oh, you guys chat, you guys chat," said Ye Xiu.

Chat? What chat? Who could chat with Zhou Zekai? The host held the microphone and looked at Zhou Zekai. Seeing that after a very long pause he still didn't move his mouth, the host quickly repeated the question. "Have you thought it through? Who are you

hoping to partner with?"

"Uh…" Zhou Zekai finally opened his mouth. "Our team… has four."

"Hahahaha!" Ye Xiu laughed like crazy. Gritting his teeth, the host ultimately restrained himself and didn't ask any more questions. Originally, the number two and number one should have had longer interviews, as befit their higher popularity. But now…

"Alright, now let us see the teams for this year's All-Star Competition," the host said, his face expressionless.

Chapter 1258
All-Star Team Division

The high point was finally here, and the entire stadium thrummed with excitement.

To be honest, the question of who would face off against each other wasn't especially interesting. After all, there were so many rounds of competition, and the confrontations between different teams could be seen in the normal League matches.

What was most important about All-Stars were the team rosters! Those players normally scattered among all the various teams would only have this once-a-year chance to fight alongside each other. The audience deeply loved to watch this sort of matchmaking.

Which people would be pushed together in this All-Star Competition? Everyone present lifted their heads to stare unblinking at the display screen in the stadium. The team divisions were only revealed right before the match; even the All-Stars themselves didn't know beforehand.

First, Team A.

Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang, Jiang Botao, Lu Boyuan, four names appeared on the screen, followed by their account names.

It was Team Samsara. The All-Star team divisions would never separate members of the same team.

Samsara had four All-Stars, which was currently a unique distinction. No other team could match them in number of All-Stars. Blue Rain and Tiny Herb only had three each. Which team's players would be assigned to match Samsara's four?

Everyone's gazes turned to the right half of the display screen. Team B's roster was still empty.

The screen began to flash!

Several lines of player and account names tumbled and appeared before everyone's eyes. And everyone was utterly dumbstruck.

Han Wenqing, Zhang Xinjie, Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng.

!!!!

????

Tyranny's two, and Happy's two, combined into four to match Samsara's four. But the issue wasn't the player number, the issue was, Tyranny and Happy, how come they were paired together?

No one expected that this roster reveal would, instead of proceeding step by step, reach a high point right at the beginning. The live audience was stunned, and then there was an uproar.

Han Wenqing, Ye Xiu?

These two people would be fighting next to each other?

Countless people felt that their brains were about to short-circuit. Something that they felt would absolutely never happen for all eternity became reality at this All-Stars. In previous years, in order to maintain the competitiveness of the All-Star Competition, death-enemies like Han Wenqing and Ye Xiu, Tyranny and Excellent Era, would definitely be assigned to opposing teams. But this time, with Tyranny hosting this All-Star competition, they actually pulled Ye Xiu into their roster, making him stand beside Han Wenqing as a teammate.

This… this was truly a bold move!

But to many diehard Tyranny fans, this arrangement was unacceptable, and shouts of protest actually erupted in the stadium. The hosts, that was to say Team Tyranny, certainly had a hand in this arrangement, but Tyranny fans didn't want to blindly go along with this. Ye Xiu was the archnemesis, forever the archnemesis, how could they just change that?

Those that maintained this view were a few diehard fans. But more people felt that this arrangement seemed very interesting. What kind of awkward battle would result when these two opponents of ten years were standing beside each other? It seemed

like many people were already beginning to anticipate, and the various emotions in the crowd were beginning to diffuse.

Afterwards, not many people paid attention when Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, and Lu Hanwen were assigned to Team A, while Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi, Xu Bin, and Gao Yingjie were sent to Team B. This arrangement was very ordinary; for many All-Stars now, these two teams would be split onto different teams. For one, these two teams had history between them, and for another, this allowed Team A and Team B to be relatively balanced in power. If both Blue Rain and Tiny Herb were sent to the same team, the balance would become very skewed. No matter what, A and B had to be around the same strength.

After Blue Rain and Tiny Herb, Wind Howl's Tang Hao and Liu Hao joined Team A, while Hundred Blossoms' Yu Feng and Zou Yuan joined Team B. This arrangement was again to increase the conflict. Tang Hao came from Hundred Blossoms, Liu Hao was former teammates with Ye Xiu. Their pasts now stood with Team B. And for Hundred Blossoms, Yu Feng was formerly in Blue Rain, and therefore was sent to Team B.

After seeing this arrangement, many people lamented that Happy's Fang Rui and Tyranny's Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan hadn't been voted onto All-Stars. Otherwise, this team division alone would be an even more complex mess in a boiling pot.

Zhang Jiale would be standing alongside Hundred Blossoms' revival of the Blood and Blossoms pairing. Fang Rui, newly changed to Qi Master, would reunite with his former Criminal Partner Lin Jingyan, the two of them taking their revenge against the Wind Howl that had abandoned them…

So many thrilling points to watch, but because these three players had failed to make it into All-Stars, this sight could not be witnessed. The audience could only sigh about how regrettable it was.

After the players of these two teams were assigned, Void's Ghost Duo Li Xuan and Wu Yuce were sent to Team A, while Misty Rain's Chu Yunxiu and Li Hua entered Team B.

Then, there were only two people left. Xiao Shiqin went to Team A, Yang Cong to Team B.

Looking at the final rosters of the two teams, the most exciting was still that moment at the beginning. Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing would be battling together? Even now, the

crowd was still discussing this topic, ignoring all of the rest.

After the rosters were revealed, the 24 All-Stars had already split into two separate lines.

The exciting points to watch existed only in the hearts of the viewers. For the pros, in reality, they all agreed with Ye Xiu's answer to the interview question "who are you looking forward to partnering with": don't really care.

Two teams of 12 players. Following the normal match rules, it was just enough for every player to appear once. After the rosters were decided, Teams A and B separated to their respective temporary prep areas, which were specially prepared for this event. In this moment, they were two teams.

"Alright, now the teams are in their places. After letting them make some preparations, the All-Star Competition will begin in just a moment," the host shouted passionately.

"Coach Li, what kind of lineups do you think each team will arrange?" All-Star Weekend was always broadcast on television, and for the high-level confrontation that was the All-Star Competition, commentator Pan Lin and honored guest Li Yibo were also present for the live broadcast.

"Hm… Every year, there's always one crucial point in the team division, and that is… which team has the healer," said Li Yibo.

"Very true. For a few years in a row now, there's been only one healer voted into All-Stars, Zhang Xinjie."

"Correct. Team A is facing a situation where they don't have a healer, so for the team competition, they'll want to have a lineup with strong explosive power. Only then will they have a chance at suppressing Team B's healer advantage. For Team B, as long as they have a steady team that can thoroughly take advantage of their healer, then their chances of victory will certainly be higher than Team A's. As for the individual and group rounds, it'll just be the leftover players performing." Li Yibo said a whole lot, explosive and steady, but in the end he didn't name a single name. Naming names was very dangerous! He didn't want to be faceslapped because of an inaccurate prediction, and so he had to speak in very general terms for something like predicting lineup.

Li Yibo's answer was vague and crafty, and of course Pan Lin wouldn't try to break it. He simply said a "you're right," and then the two of them looked at the display screen

together.

"Huh? Did some kind of argument break out over at Team B?" Pan Lin suddenly yelled. "Director, director."

The camera could zoom in and focus on Team B, but there were no microphones over there to pick up sound.

"Can anyone go over there to see what's going on?" Pan Lin called.

"Is it an argument between Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing?" Li Yibo studied the camera view. Seeing that the heart of the conflict appeared to be Ye Xiu, he instantly thought of this possibility. But when he looked closer, it didn't look like Han Wenqing was arguing with him, it looked like… everyone was targeting Ye Xiu.

"You want to save yourself the trouble and fight in an individual round? Too naive, stand aside," Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi was saying to Ye Xiu.

"This brother has sixteen consecutive individual wins! I'll give us a head start, get us a solid point, suppress their arrogance. This is such a logical and clever arrangement, how is this naive! Big-Eyed Wang, explain it to me!" Ye Xiu argued back.

Tiny Herb's other two players shrunk back. They of course knew their captain had this nickname, but how many people would dare to use it directly? They stole glances at their captain, wondering what his reaction would be.

Wang Jiexi didn't seem to have much of a reaction. He merely looked at everyone, and then said, "We'll vote. Those who agree with this guy playing an individual, raise your hands."

"What vote! Is your Tiny Herb governed by a voting system?" Ye Xiu said.

Everyone shrunk back again. The conflict between these two was a truly a battle between gods! Those like Xu Bin, Yu Feng, Zou Yuan, these players had all debuted much later. Although they were also All-Stars, in the face of this seniority and qualification, they instantly felt they were still shorter by a head. They didn't have the bravery to go and break up the fight. But even as everyone shrunk back, they stole glances at Han Wenqing, who did have the status to enter this battle of gods.

"What's all this fuss for!" But, surprisingly, the first one to interrupt and scold them

was actually Chu Yunxiu.

"I'll go first for individual!" Chu Yunxiu shouted.

"There are three spots, what are you rushing for? I'll go first, you go second!" Ye Xiu said.

"Alright, agreed!" Chu Yunxiu gave a strong nod.

"And then Mucheng," Ye Xiu said, making sure to pick from his own team first.

"If all three of you went to the team competition, that would really be an excellent arrangement," said Wang Jiexi.

"And then leave the individual slots to you?" Ye Xiu said.

"Our Tiny Herb… has a very good group arena record." Wang Jiexi's fox tail was finally exposed. They talked and they talked, but in the end they were all just too lazy to perform in the most tiring team competition, and so they scurried toward the shorter and simpler individual battles. Ye Xiu just very plainly tried to snatch the desirable spots for himself, while Wang Jiexi wanted to stuff the team competition spots full, and then he could just smoothly enter the individual battles.

Ye Xiu stared at him, silent for a few seconds, and then turned his head to look at everyone else. "With that, isn't the lineup set? Everyone else go in the team competition, isn't that just enough?"

"Everyone else" would be Tyranny's two, Hundred Blossoms' two, Misty Rain's Li Hua, and 301's Yang Cong.

"Let's discuss the lineups!" Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie calmly opened his mouth, as though he hadn't heard any of the heated discussion just now.

Chapter 1259
A Member of the Strongest Team

"Hey hey, you, you're just completely ignoring us!" Ye Xiu, extremely dissatisfied, said to Zhang Xinjie.

"This is Tyranny," Zhang Xinjie said.

This is Tyranny.

There was a pause, but everyone quickly understood Zhang Xinjie's meaning. Even he might not necessarily enjoy this sort of showy battle, but this was Tyranny, this year's All-Stars was hosted by Tyranny, and as Tyranny's players, Zhang Xinjie and Han Wenqing could not undermine their own stage. They would have to do what they could to make this year's All-Stars brilliant and exciting. Ye Xiu and the others made their plan just to save effort, which the Tyranny players of course would not support.

"If only I were in Team A…" Ye Xiu sighed. Everyone cast him sidelong glances. Aren't you being too honest with your feelings? Are you purposely trying to undermine Tyranny?

No one was talking anymore. With the home team's players here, they had to give them face! But Ye Xiu? Would this guy let Tyranny save face? It'd be good enough if he didn't intentionally tear down this stage!

As they were all thinking this, Ye Xiu had already opened his mouth again. "Well, since that's the case, how about we have a more… tyrannical arrangement?"

Everyone continued to look at him. After he finished speaking, they all revealed expressions of excitement.

"So you did come here to tear down the stage," said Wang Jiexi.

"It's on purpose!" said Chu Yunxiu.

"This wouldn't be too good, would it?" Yu Feng was still doubtful.

"Have some confidence! What are you scared of!" said Ye Xiu.

Scared?

Of the entire Glory circle, these people here would be the last people scared of a stage like this! Everyone again fell silent and looked at Han Wenqing, looked at Zhang Xinjie. Would they agree with this plan of Ye Xiu's?"

"So be it!" Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing slapped the table, closing the discussion.

All-Stars was just a show, so there weren't any strict time regulations. The judge came to Team A and Team B's preparation areas to confirm that both teams had made appropriate preparations. Then, with the passionate announcement of the live host, the All-Star Competition began.

"Now, we have the first battle of the individual competition. Will the first two players please come on stage?" As the host shouted, he was also looking to the left and right. The roster order of the two teams wouldn't be revealed beforehand so the suspense would last all the way to the end. Even the host could only wait for the results.

Team A, Lu Boyuan, Samsara's Grappler Lu Boyuan walked onstage. This meant that Samsara's four All-Star players would not all be working together in the team competition.

Team B? Yang Cong, 301's captain and an old general, would be taking the lead for Team B.

Lu Boyuan's account was Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, who, after Samsara obtained the character Flying Drops from Tiny Herb and taken all his equipment, was now the number one Grappler in Glory.

The original number one Grappler Flying Drops no longer existed. What about Flying Drop's original player, Li Yihui? After that summer's transfers, he had gone to the team that Yang Cong now led, 301 Degrees.

It was only after the host explained all this backstory that everyone realized that there was also this gimmick hiding in Team B. Yang Cong and Tiny Herb's Xu Bin were former teammates reunited!

In 301, Xu Bin had only been Yang Cong's assistant, but after transferring to Tiny Herb,

thanks to the team's influence, his popularity was now even higher than Yang Cong's. In the All-Star voting, Yang Cong was at 24th, barely making it in, while Xu Bin was at 16th, a very stable position.

Yang Cong was a player from Season 3 and was now growing old, entering the twilight years of his career. He wouldn't have any new upgrades, and his professional career would probably just stop at his time in 301. But Xu Bin was a player from Season 6. He'd earned some attention and then entered the powerhouse Tiny Herb; he had nothing but a bright future ahead of him.

Even as the audience compared these two players and sighed, the battle onstage had already begun.

Victory or loss didn't matter too much at All-Stars. The battle also opened voice channel, available to players from both sides, so that even opponents could communicate.

But Lu Boyuan and Yang Cong evidently didn't have much to talk about. The two simply greeted each other, and then began to fight.

Lu Boyuan was also a player from Season 6, now at the pinnacle of his professional career. Originally smothered by the shining aura of Samsara's Zhou Zekai, he was able to earn a high amount of attention for himself after Samsara's first championship victory and his performance in those finals. From then on, he walked on the road to All-Stars.

But from the way things currently were, his position didn't seem to be that stable, especially after Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf's joining Samsara this season. Lu Boyuan, an All-Star level player, could only be considered the fourth player in the team.

Former Blue Rain player Yu Feng had chosen to leave for Hundred Blossoms in hopes of obtaining a higher position in the team. But Lu Boyuan? His position seemed to be even more awkward than Yu Feng's had been. What were his thoughts?

He didn't have any thoughts.

The meaning of that was that, for this sort of thing about which Yu Feng cared greatly, he didn't care at all.

It might seem like he didn't have much of a strong heart, but perhaps this was simply

the personality of a natural-born Samsara player.

Lu Boyuan became a pro in Season 6. His teammate Zhou Zekai was only one year earlier, but at that time, the title of Great Gunner was already resounding throughout the Alliance. This player, who was silent offstage and yet performed explosively strong onstage, quickly sent Samsara from a mediocre, mid-tier team into the ranks of the strong teams.

Back then, they were already calling Samsara a one-man team. Back then, Zhou Zekai's light was already obscuring the entire team. And so Samsara's players like Lu Boyuan, from then until now, were very used to being outshone by this sort of light. Now that a Sun Xiang had appeared, pushing Lu Boyuan further down to fourth…

The fourth player, this was what the outside world said. But Lu Boyuan didn't have this thought in his heart, nor did any of the other players in Samsara. To the outside world, Samsara was Zhou Zekai and everyone else.

Correct. Aside from Zhou Zekai, the others were just "everyone else" even the newly-transferred Sun Xiang.

This sort of environment seemed like it'd invite disharmony. That unique character so easily crowded all of the others into that "everyone else."

But Samsara continued to walk along harmoniously. Because Samsara's unique person was Zhou Zekai, that quiet person. No matter how brilliantly the Great Gunner shone onstage, offstage Zhou Zekai was still such a humble, unassuming person. No matter how his position had changed in just these few years, no matter how many activities the sponsors or the team had him participate in, his personality was still just like this.

As teammates that had gotten along with each other for so many years, Lu Boyuan and the others understood Zhou Zekai's personality better than anyone else. Although he didn't speak much, he was a very easy-going person. Although he was the number one in Glory, he wasn't someone who very much liked receiving attention. Too much attention would only make him nervous and shy. Yet despite this personality, he'd become a star that thousands were watching, and even after he'd been a star for so many years, he still just had this kind of personality.

Regarding this point, Samsara's players admired him very much.

They often thought, if one day Zhou Zekai faced the camera and was able to suddenly

make a complaint or crack a joke or something, what kind of earth-shaking moment would that be?

Samsara's internal affairs were just that harmonious. Zhou Zekai as the unique number one and the others as "everyone else" was only how the outside world understood it. But to Team Samsara themselves? They understood the true Zhou Zekai, and wouldn't be fooled by that onstage Great Gunner. Zhou Zekai hadn't pulled apart from them, and so, in their eyes, Zhou Zekai was also a part of that "everyone else" and Samsara didn't have any special members.

So, the fourth player in the team?

Lu Boyuan truly did not have that feeling.

Weren't they all the same? He always had that kind of feeling. This was the feeling that Samsara brought to every team member.

So even as the outside world analyzed what problems Sun Xiang's addition would incite within the team, Samsara was all peaceful winds and calm waves. In this harmonious team environment, their tolerance was really very high. If a newcomer really had some dissatisfaction, when they saw how even Zhou Zekai was so low-profile and silent, what kind of person would feel they had the status in this team to be cocky?

Samsara was very fortunate that they had a player like Zhou Zekai. Not just because of his strength, but because of his personality. And so they ultimately constructed the strongest team in the Alliance, of which Lu Boyuan was a member.

But in this match, he ultimately lost.

On one hand, this was All-Stars, Lu Boyuan fought quite casually. But more importantly, it was because Yang Cong played too intensely!

Up until now, Yang Cong had always attacked directly. Despite being an Assassin, he was an Assassin that walked in the light, on the straight road. But this time, he used Life-Risking Strike. This skill was one his Scene Killer had learned and added points to, but it had always just been a skill held in reserve as a surprise. Yet this time, he actually used it.

Life-Risking Strike, one-hit kill!

As soon as the Assassin used this skill, that meant that if you didn't die, I would…

"Captain Yang, you were too ruthless…" When Life-Risking Strike hit Chaotic Cloudy Mountain from the side, Lu Boyuan said this in surprise.

"Hehe…" Yang Cong chuckled. This was perhaps already his final performance on this All-Star stage. Let him end on a beautiful note! For Assassins, what people enjoyed the most was this kind of one-hit kill, right?

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain fell, Scene Killer emerged victorious.

The audience was in a daze, and then erupted into cheers.

One-hit kill, the audience loved it! Even neutral parties felt that this one attack was incredibly fulfilling. Plus, most of the audience, as Tyranny fans, were biased toward the Team B player Yang Cong, as their Han Wenqing and Zhang Xinjie were also in Team B.

But Team B also had a Ye Xiu…

"One bad apple really spoils the whole bunch!" some Tyranny fans thought, indignant. Far below on the floor of the stadium, Ye Xiu was strolling about in boredom.

Chapter 1260
The One Who Wants To Win, Cannot

"A beautiful Life-Risking Strike, a thrilling one-hit kill! Even more incredible, it was done by Yang Cong! This is really too rare, thank you for Yang Cong for your thrilling performance!!" The live host was shouting, and in the television broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo were also discussing this topic.

For Yang Cong to become an All-Star, he was no ordinary player. But on this stage that was resplendent with such stars, he seemed more like a passing guest. He hadn't left much of a mark in the Alliance, and even now there wasn't too much time given to him. This one use of Life-Risking Strike at this All-Stars would perhaps become an unforgettable moment of his professional career.

"Alright, right now Team B is in the lead 1-0!" As the host announced, the display screen updated with the current score.

"Next, will the second players of the two teams please come onstage?" Everyone's eyes swiveled from left to right, waiting to see which two players would stand up.

"First is Team A, this is - oh, another player from Samsara, their vice-captain, Jiang Botao!"

Jiang Botao walked onstage. Team B's player had also stood forward, Zou Yuan from Hundred Blossoms.

"This is a clash of vice-captains!" The host tried to let these matchups have more topics of discussion. Unfortunately, after these two vice-captains went onstage they didn't discuss much as they exchanged blows back and forth. Jiang Botao, who had already expressed how he didn't care much about the All-Star stage, played relatively relaxed. Zou Yuan, on the other hand, was different. Although this was his third time voted into All-Stars, this was the first time he'd earned recognition for his own merits, and not for this or that reason. He didn't want to disappoint those who had voted for him, and so even though this was just a show of a match, he didn't want to lose!

Sadly, things were just that fickle. Zou Yuan, who didn't want to lose, ultimately lost;

Jiang Botao, who didn't care about the outcome and played very relaxed, actually won.

"Team A catches up with another point!" the host declared, and the scoreboard updated to reflect this. Zou Yuan returned to his teammates in disappointment, his mood so low that it gave Team B a shock.

"What's wrong? Do you have some grudge against Jiang Botao?" Ye Xiu asked.

"No?" Zou Yuan was caught off-guard.

"Then why do you look so unhappy?" Ye Xiu didn't understand.

"I… lost!" said Zou Yuan.

"Not like it's your first time," said Ye Xiu.

Everyone felt like they were going to be driven mad. This was supposed to be comforting? This wasn't very comforting, was it?

As Zou Yuan's teammate, Yu Feng understood him a bit better and quickly pulled Zou Yuan aside to comfort him. Everyone else shot disdainful gazes at Ye Xiu.

"Who's up next?" Ye Xiu ignored them, calling for the next player.

"It's my turn." For Team B, Misty Rain's Li Hua was playing in the next battle.

From Team A, the one who stood up was Wind Howl's vice-captain, Liu Hao.

"Haha, another confrontation between vice-captains." When the host said this, the stadium booed him for his dullness. These were all All-Stars! Practically all of them were either captain or vice-captain of their respective teams, so discussing a conflict between captains or between vice-captains or between captain and vice-captain wasn't rare at all. This host probably had nothing to say, and so he kept using this as a topic of discussion.

This thought was actually quite correct. The host truly had nothing he could say.

Liu Hao, Li Hua? This… This was another matchup where there wasn't any conflict to be discussed, not at all, not in the players' pasts, nor from the teams they were currently on, nor from any previous fights. Even in the team competitions, thanks to

reasons like rotation, these people hadn't ever met, as though they were two parallel lines never intersecting…

When things had reached this point, it had to be said that the television broadcasters Pan Lin and Li Yibo were leaders in their profession for a reason. While the live host scrambled to find a topic and was booed by the audience, these two said with shock, "Whoa, this is actually the first time these two players are meeting on the official stage!"

From this it could be seen that looking at things from a different angle instantly revealed more points of interest.

Liu Hao and Li Hua, meeting for the first time, were both unfamiliar with each other. Not only was Liu Hao unfamiliar with Li Hua, he was unfamiliar with the All-Star stage as a whole. This was the first time he had reached this stage, this was something he had anticipated for so long, only to discover now that he could only show his face very briefly in the individual round.

Liu Hao very much wanted to prove himself, but… on this star-studded stage, he truly had no way of grabbing a larger role. The team competition was undoubtedly the event that drew the most attention. Compared to Team B, where people like Ye Xiu and Wang Jiexi and Chu Yunxiu were all too lazy and wanted to scurry into the individual matches, Liu Hao was anxious to play in the team competition! Because he knew clearly, the team competition rosters represented those with the strongest battle ability, the stars among the All-Stars. How he wanted to have that identity for himself!

Unfortunately, he did not…

Even if they counted the six people who had the highest All-Star vote count, he wouldn't make it in neither Team A nor Team B.

In Team A, the six people ultimately set to appear in the team round were Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang, Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, Tang Hao, and Xiao Shiqin…

Of the six people, aside from Yu Wenzhou ranked at 11th, the others were all tenth place and higher. Liu Hao had no place to try and challenge them for the right to play in the team competition.

Helpless, he could only accept the arrangement to play in the individual round. And now, facing Li Hua, Liu Hao's mind was completely blank. What kind of coincidence

was this? Two teams would meet in at least two rounds of competition. Li Hua had entered the Alliance in Season 7, and it'd been several years now. Yet, somehow, they had never met?

Liu Hao felt that this was incredible. If he weren't standing here on this stage now, he never would have expected such a strange thing to happen to him.

He thought it was strange, Li Hua felt the same, so the two players progressed very carefully. After they met, they tested each other, tried to feel out the opponent, while mentally reviewing what research their team had done on this opponent. Afterward, Li Hua's Ninja Dark Forest vanished.

The Ninja's hidden movement began. It looked like Li Hua had already found the rhythm of the battle. Soon, when Dark Forest appeared again and launched an attack, the rhythm was extremely fast. What about Liu Hao? These few years he'd been wandering about and currying favor, and too much of his energy was spent on these things. He was also furiously thinking, but he couldn't think of any useful data. It could be summed up in one phrase: It's only when it comes time to apply knowledge that you regret not acquiring enough.

Liu Hao was filled with regret!

As a newcomer to the All-Star stage, he was like Zou Yuan, he wasn't as relaxed as everyone else. He desperately wanted to win, and he wanted to win beautifully, spectacularly, like Yang Cong in the first match. That Life-Risking Strike had been such a brilliant move!

Yet… Why did he have to meet this Li Hua?

This Ninja player who excelled at hidden movement had also been hidden to him throughout his professional career. Now he suddenly appeared in front of him, during his first All-Star appearance. Was his first show simply going to leave behind this mark of failure?

No… Not just failure, this was straight-up shameful! His Spellblade was beaten pathetically by Li Hua's Ninja, as though this wasn't a contest between evenly-matched heavyweights. At this moment, Liu Hao felt that he could already see countless audience members whispering amongst themselves, countless people staring dumbstruck, countless people thinking, Liu Hao's doing really poorly, is that all the

skill he has?

This… is just too painful! What is this Li Hua doing! This is just All-Stars, why is he playing so diligently! Liu Hao suddenly forgot how much he had initially cared about this match, and began to be dissatisfied with Li Hua's investment.

This can't happen!

Liu Hao's heart was screaming, his Spellblade swung his sword, sending out killer shockwaves, but they revealed nothing. Dark Forest's ghostly silhouette had already appeared at his side.

Flickering Pursuit!

Dark Forest's afterimages filled the area, launching consecutive attacks toward Liu Hao's Spellblade. Liu Hao still couldn't get his bearings. He wildly slashed out with two attacks, but all he shredded were the images Dark Forest left behind in the air.

"Li Hua, old brother, how come you're playing so seriously?" Liu Hao managed to squeeze out a laugh, trying to make his words sound more relaxed.

"Ah?" Li Hua paused. "I'm… not really playing that seriously?"

Liu Hao was pissed!

Not playing seriously, you can say something like that? More importantly, you're not playing seriously and yet you can still beat me down like this, are you purposely trying to devastate me!

Liu Hao's little cosmos had been burning for who knew how long now, but the problem was, even though he used up so much energy, he found that he didn't have any sure-kill method. His chaotic and random attacks would only make him feel more powerless and pathetic; he also had no way of calming himself down to make careful observations or analysis. This was the chance for which he had waited so many years, but in the end, it was just going to be destroyed by someone who was invisible to him during his entire pro career! How could he be calm? No way!

He lost!

In the end, Liu Hao lost. The more someone wanted to win, the more they couldn't

win. Last round it was Team B, this round it was Team A's turn. Liu Hao came pitifully offstage, feeling that the eyes of the entire stadium were upon him. When he returned to Team A, he didn't even lift his head. He wanted to explain something, but he also knew that those beside him were all Glory's top players. Find some technical excuse to brush it off? He should just save it!

On that note, the individual competition ended, with Team B in a 2 to 1 lead. But as soon as the two teams had tied at 1-1, everyone knew that victory would be determined in the team competition. The group arena wasn't important, this wasn't an Alliance match were points counted.

One by one, the players went onstage to play in the group arena. Team A's first player was Blue Rain's little general Lu Hanwen, while Team B sent Tiny Herb's Xu Bin. Lu Hanwen was young, energetic, and fearless, while Xu Bin had the title of Grind King, his rhythm like a slowly plodding old man. In this interesting confrontation, Xu Bin ultimately came out on top, defeating Lu Hanwen. Next from Team A was the number one Phantom Demon Li Xuan, who defeated Xu Bin. Then, Team B sent on their young player Gao Yingjie to send off Li Xuan. Team A's anchor was the other half of Void's Ghost Duo, Wu Yuce, who killed off Gao Yingjie without giving him much chance to perform.

With this, everyone could determine Team A's roster for the team competition. What about Team B? Which expert would have the responsibility of anchoring the group arena? The host looked toward Team B, the entire stadium looked toward Team B, and then they all rubbed their eyes.

Who's standing up?

That's… Zhang Xinjie?

Is he going to the bathroom? Preparing for the team competition, probably. No, wait, what's going on, he's walking toward the stage? What's going on here?

Team B's group arena anchor is the Cleric????

Chapter 1261
Forced Draw

Zhang Xinjie… playing in the group arena?

When everyone saw that Zhang Xinjie actually walked into the player booth, they had to accept this reality. But the live host? Even now, he still hadn't pulled himself together. He was still just staring blankly, completely forgetting to introduce Team B's player. To announce this person's name for the group arena, he… really wasn't used to it. It was even more unbelievable than Yang Cong's usage of Life-Risking Strike.

"Team B's third player in the group arena is… Zhang Xinjie?" Finally, the host made the announcement, but he still said it with a question mark. He still couldn't quite believe this.

Dead silence in the crowd, and then an explosion of noise. One player sitting in the diehard Tyranny fan section was staring in complete and utter shock, his mouth in the shape of an O, which only closed after a long while. His mood was slightly different from the shock of those around him. The instant he saw Zhang Xinjie come onstage, something whirred in his mind, and he thought of that winter two years ago, in Glory's tenth server. Just outside of the extremely low-level Frost Forest dungeon, that guy who controlled Lord Grim had said to this player: we don't need a Cleric.

And now, on the All-Star stage, the stage upon which the brightest stars of Glory shone, this phrase suddenly echoed in his ear again, floating back and forth nonstop: don't need a Cleric, don't need a Cleric, don't need a Cleric, don't need a Cleric…

Last time, the one who was "don't need a Cleric'd" was him. His Cleric was called Endless Night.

And this time, the one who was "don't need a Cleric'd" was Zhang Xinjie, the Cleric called Immovable Rock, the top healer in all of Glory.

Endless Night suddenly felt that he had no regrets in his life. On this All-Star stage, even Vice-captain Zhang was "don't need a Cleric'd." What the hell was he still bothered about?

His characted loaded in. Cleric Immovable Rock appeared on the group arena map, facing the half-health Ghostblade Carved Ghost.

If a Cleric really wanted to PK, they would have to rely on their powerful healing ability to maintain their health, and then use their few attacking methods to wear away the opponent.

In the Glory game, there was no shortage of Clerics who used this kind of method to PK. But in-game, both player skill and equipment quality was inferior. If Zhang Xinjie ran to the game to play in the Arena, no one would underestimate the battle ability of his Cleric.

However, if player skill and equipment quality were at the same level, a Cleric most certainly was not a bloody hurricane attacking class. This point could be seen from the Heavenly Domain challenge. Clerics and Paladins were very different from the other classes. It was clear that the Glory game had not designed these two classes to be powerful attackers. Those who stacked their points on the skill tree toward attacks were far from mainstream and hadn't earned any recognition in the pro circle. 24 teams, every team had a healer class, none of which was that kind of deviant.

Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock was even less so. This sort of strict player would never waver from the path.

How would this match be fought? The ruckus still hadn't died down, but many people were already wondering.

As for the televised broadcast, it was very quiet. Li Yibo was really depressed! His earlier predictions of the team lineups had been based on the difference of healer against no healer, but who would have thought, Team B had a healer but didn't use it, instead throwing him onto the group arena. This season, he had been truly attacked so much that he was in the perpetual mad state of "can't feel happy without being face-slapped."

Commentator Pan Lin was also silent for a long time. It wasn't until the characters onstage started moving that he said in a strained voice, "Let's watch this match, with Void's Wu Yuce, against… Zhang Xinjie…"

The characters met, and began fighting.

Those who dreamed that Zhang Xinjie had some sort of ultimate sure-kill method

were quickly disappointed. Zhang Xinjie's 1v1 Cleric just used the same little tricks that were popular in the game. Change position to maintain distance, recover health during breaks, sparse attacks to wear away the opponent.

Many high-end Clerics in-game could enrage many people to death. Could Zhang Xinjie do it?

The crowd originally had a lot of excitement and anticipation, but gradually, all of it faded away. Because judging from the content of this match, this was truly dull to an unprecedented extent, duller than any other match of previous All-Star Weekends, duller than any match in any season of the League.

Everyone suddenly had a single thought: If Glory battles were all like this, then they should just shut down the League as early as possible.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case…

They watched as Zhang Xinjie controlled Immovable Rock, recovered his health like a robot, occasionally had his rhythm torn by Wu Yuce, but then tenaciously got it back, and then repeated the above process.

The refreshing feeling was gone. The interest was gone.

The players who had more in-game experience had all seen this situation before. It was just that Zhang Xinjie's controls were more precise, and Wu Yuce's attacks were more ferocious.

In terms of attacks, the Cleric really only had so many options. Even Zhang Xinjie couldn't make many changes. He just followed the most common thought processes seen in-game, and then displayed them with a higher level of skill and technique. Faced against a more powerful opponent, the result was… this match looked like it was going to drag on endlessly.

One minute…

Two minutes…

Five minutes…

Ten minutes…

Zhang Xinjie was still very methodically controlling, wearing away. At the start of the match, Carved Ghost had 52% health remaining. Now, 11% had been whittled away, leaving 41%. And that had taken a full ten minutes.

During these ten minutes, Immovable Rock's health had also dropped. This Cleric battle style couldn't be too careless or wasteful. If he used up all his mana, then he would just be fish meat on a plate. But even under Wu Yuce's powerful offensive, Zhang Xinjie didn't ignore everything to fill up his health. He had a set rhythm to maintain the balance of the situation. After ten minutes, Immovable Rock's health had dropped 20%…

And so everyone took another look. Carved Ghost had lost 11% after starting at 52%, wasn't that also a twenty percent decrease? These two guys, they were actually playing at such a precise balance? They were actually going to have to play all the way until the end to determine victory?

To do so… Judging from their current speed, wouldn't that require… forty more minutes?

Those that realized this point instantly paled. The organizers and the television broadcasters were even more panicked. This 1v1 was going to last an hour? That was much too far above the estimated time duration. Were they even going to play the team competition afterward?

Here they panicked, there they panicked, but the two people onstage weren't panicked.

Zhang Xinjie's controls were as methodical as ever. Wu Yuce? He was always a very persistent and persevering person, someone who never gave up easily. Otherwise, the current Void Ghost Duo wouldn't exist.

These two people were actually giving it their all. But it would be many dozen minutes before victory was determined, and with just these repetitive actions. It was truly difficult for anyone to continue watching.

What to do?

A wave of people went to the background, and then the smoking area became overcrowded, and then ambient noise became louder and louder as people started chatting. Lights flashed all over the the crowd like stars in the sky, as a result of

countless people starting to play with their phones.

With the team competition finale, the audience couldn't bear to leave, but they honestly could not continue to watch this match.

"We can't let them drag on until the end!" The organizers finally made this decision, which was quickly sent to the stage. The judge entered the match through the system and forcibly declared the group arena a draw. There would be no extra time, it was just a draw! If they added extra time, then by the rules that meant that both sides would have a bit of health added and then face off. Wouldn't that just result in a confrontation between these two guys again? That absolutely could not happen.

The judge stopped the game very arbitrarily. After a pause, the live audience exploded with a surge of applause. Not to Zhang Xinjie, nor to Wu Yuce. This applause was sent to the one with an extremely weak presence in Glory matches, the judge. In this moment, he was the most lovable person in the audience's eyes.

Wu Yuce and Zhang Xinjie could only accept this reality. When the two players stepped out of the player booths, the crowd, with mixed feelings, sent applause to them as well. They could at least respect their seriousness, their perseverance, and their calm acceptance of the forced draw of the match.

After this boring period passed, it was now time for the highest point of this three-day event. And this time, Team B didn't have a healer either. Without a doubt, the two sides would be attacking each other ferociously. Looking at the players left to the team round, they were all the top attackers in the entire Alliance brought together now.

"Coach Li, could you analyze and compare the strengths of the two teams for us?" Pan Lin said.

"The two teams are both composed of the very best of the best. It wouldn't be unexpected for either side to win. However, this is a never-before-seen situation where neither side has a healer. Today's team competition will be the highest-level aggressive match in the entirety of Glory. These two teams have gathered the most powerful attackers in Glory!" Coach Li said.

"You're correct," Pan Lin agreed. The two continued to talk until the team competition finally gathered together onstage.

From Team A were Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang, Huang Shaotian, Yu Wenzhou, and Tang

Hao, with Xiao Shiqin as the sixth player.

From Team B were Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Han Wenqing, Chu Yunxiu, and Wang Jiexi, with Yu Feng as the sixth player.

The two teams were making their final preparations before the map. Team A had the two Master Tacticians Yu Wenzhou and Xiao Shiqin. Earlier, many people were uncomfortable with how Xiao Shiqin had dealt with Yu Wenzhou, but looking at their direct interactions now, there didn't seem to be any difficulties. The two were discussing nonstop, occasionally shooting glances at Team B. After several close-ups, the camera switched to Team B, and it could be seen that the two of them were likely discussing Team B's player Ye Xiu.

Team B's player Ye Xiu seemed very relaxed. This other Master Tactician didn't seem like he was making any arrangements for his team as a whole. He only said a sentence to Han Wenqing, standing beside him.

"When the battle begins, try to stay away from me. I fear that my attacks will automatically be drawn to your body," Ye Xiu said to Han Wenqing, very seriously.

Chapter 1262
Scatter

The team competition that was about to begin was the highlight of the three-day All-Stars Weekend. Everyone knew clearly that the result or the quality of this game may not be the finest, but it was definitely the most star-studded. Currently, there was no other event besides the All-Stars Weekend that allowed such a group of people to play together, whether it be alongside or against each other. This exhibition was well worth watching.'

Right now, the cheers in the crowd were directed more towards Team B, where Team Tyranny's players and characters were. However, even though this was Tyranny's home stadium, the hollering in support of Team A would not lose out much: many of the Glory Alliance's players with the most fans were all gathered on this All-Stars stage. Even though Team B had a slight home advantage, it was nowhere near enough to overwhelm Team A.

There was plenty of eye-candy prepared for this most important final match. The participating characters appeared one by one, and gave a little show for several minutes. However, no one was bored at the slightest; instead, this tease held back their energy. When the map finished loading and the match officially began, the crowd had entered a strange state of peace.

The map was specifically designed for the All-Stars match. There were mountains and rivers, trees and rocky outcrops, and street and buildings. It seemed to be an amalgamation of all the different maps used in Glory. In the very middle of the map, there was an arena made of limestone that looked thousands of years old. From an aerial view, it formed the Glory Alliance's logo as well as the number "10", to celebrate Season 10 of the Glory Alliance.

The players from both teams quickly spawned to much applause. Just seeing these famous characters form into teams was enough to get the viewers very excited.

Neither side seemed to want to beat about the bush. Since spawning, both teams charged towards the centre. Sending Zhang Xinjie to fight the group arena was a indication by team B that they wanted to fight Team A head on.

A fierce confrontation was originally the preferred strategy for Team A, who lacked a healer. But now, it was instead Team B who ditched their healer and took up this strategy. Could the players from Team A back off from a direct confrontation? Of course not! Who's afraid of who?

The match's pace was swift as soon as it commenced. Both sides rushed forward, past the scenery which became a blur in the background. Without a slow-moving healer, both sides' progress seemed very rapid. Finally, the opposition were within each other's sights.

There was no communication or command for formations, but the characters from both teams went into an arrangement that seemed to have been agreed on beforehand.

For Team A, the trio consisting of Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf, Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain and Tang Hao's Demon Subduer formed a straight line and stood in front. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer followed behind by only a few units. Yu Wenzhou's Swoksaar brought up the rear and concealed himself behind his teammates.

For Team B, Han Wenqing's Desert Dust was the spearhead in front with Ye Xiu's Lord Grim trailing a few steps behind. After them, Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain, Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria and Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain formed a horizontal line at the back.

The two teams chose reversed formations. Team A's arrangement of three characters in front seemed to allow for more aggression. However, Team B were the first ones to start attacking. Even though there were three characters at the back for team B, they were all long ranged classes and team A entered their attack ranges first.

A maelstrom of cannon fire and magical energies erupted and rolled forward. The centre of the map where the Alliance's logo was located was immediately covered by bedazzling flashes of light.

Scatter!

The three Team A characters at the front suddenly changed directions as if it was pre-arranged. It looked like they were trying to go around the suppressive fire that was being laid down by Team B. But Team B would not let them off so easy. Their attacks closely followed the change in position, and they still managed to keep Team A out of attack range.

But as the three gave way, the second layer of Team A was suddenly at the forefront: Cloud Piercer!

Accelerate!

Cloud Piercer charged forward, guns blazing. He looked like a melee class character despite being a long-ranged Gunner class. Team A astonishingly used their three Gods at the front to draw their opponents' attention, all to allow Zhou Zekai to begin a solo assault. His attacks blanketed all the characters on Team B. The Sharpshooter's high attack speed was brought to the peak at this moment. Cloud Piercer grasped his dual pistols to begin launching his attacks, unleashing a countless flurry of bullets.

Blood splattered within Team B's formation. This wave of attacks came too quickly. It was fierce and covered a lot of ground.

But because the coverage of the attacks was wide, the bullets were spread out, so the damage output was reduced significantly. However, the higher-level skills of Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain and Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria had casting time. Even though being shot did not deal much damage, their casts would be interrupted. As both their attacks were stifled, Team B's long-range zoning seemed to have been extinguished for the moment. There was no way Dancing Rain's attacks alone could suppress the three Gods, Sun Xiang, Huang Shaotian and Tang Hao, at the same time.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

One Autumn Leaf led with an ultimate skill to forcefully break into the opponents formation. In an instant, the Samsara fans went wild: this was the teamwork they were so used to seeing. After Sun Xiang joined Samsara, his duo play-style revolved around having him wreak havoc in the enemy's midst while Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer attacked from the outside. Countless teams were scattered by just this two, with their ability to bust apart an enemy team from inside and out. Even in the current situation with the best of the best as the opponents, it looked like Samsara's duo was still extremely potent…

Shattering the Lands!

After charging in with Dragon Breaks the Ranks, One Autumn Leaf followed up with another high-level skill. His body in mid-air and Evil Annihilation in his hands channeling magical battle spirit, he carried an air of invincibility about him as his

spear shot down towards the enemy, like a God descending to smite mortals.

Scatter!

Team B suddenly scattered. Unlike the three-man scatter on Team A, all five players scattered and neatly formed a circle. And right in the middle of this circle was One Autumn Leaf…

One Autumn Leaf looked like he was descending from the heavens for one moment, but in the next, after Team B scattered, he suddenly looked like he was charging directly into the abyss.

Boom!

Shattering the Lands' magic created waves in the ground. At that moment, the ground within the skill's AoE folded up. However, not a single character was caught up in it. There were only skills in the AoE - not just from Shattering the Lands…

After dodging Shattering the Lands, the three ranged characters on Team B instantly followed up with a counter-attack. Everything happened quickly and precisely. Three ranged attacks landed on One Autumn Leaf who was still in the ending animation of his skill. There was zero chance to dodge. In fact, this hasty counter-attack was even coordinated. The three attacks were not simultaneous but chained, and they landed on One Autumn Leaf one after the other.

Although the damage wouldn't be increased, the status effects' duration was prolonged by chaining the attacks. In the short time frame where One Autumn Leaf was chain-stunned by the three attacks, Desert Dust and Lord Grim approached like the wind to flank him.

Ferocious Tiger Flurry!

Han Wenqing also led with a high-level skill. Desert Dust flew forward and One Autumn Leaf was greeted by his fist. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim couldn't display this sort of momentum, because even though they could be added to the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella, they would be too low level. Thus, Ye Xiu did not choose to do so but instead charged next to One Autumn Leaf only with the intention of creating a pincer. He was also there to provide protection, since the rest of Team A wouldn't just watch and let One Autumn Leaf get surrounded and eliminated.

Zhou Zekai, the current teammate and duo partner of Sun Xiang, reacted the fastest. Cloud Piercer's attacks could also arrive the fastest. Random Firing!

Random Firing was a skill that sprayed bullets in all directions. However, under Zhou Zekai's tyrannical control, he forcefully turned the bullets into a very targeted stream. This stream of bullets flew accurately at the two characters on either side of One Autumn Leaf.

Dodge?

It was impossible to dodge this rain of bullets unless they abandoned their attack on One Autumn Leaf. However, Team B had no intentions of doing so. Han Wenqing allowed Desert Dust to continue his Ferocious Tiger Frenzy as if he didn't see the flurry of attacks from Cloud Piercer's direction. Although he and Ye Xiu were archrivals of many years, he seemed to have complete trust that Ye Xiu would deal with the current situation. Therefore, Han Wenqing simply ignored the attacks from Zhou Zekai and focused on his own attacks.

Swish!

The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella opened up and sheltered Lord Grim and Desert Dust from Cloud Piercer's hail of bullets.

"Put your back into it, get a good trade in!" Ye Xiu called.

Blocking with a shield could only negate status effects. It could not completely negate damage, which was dependant on the weight of the shield and other particular stats.

The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's weight was very light, but its attributes were still quite substantial. The Level 70 Myriad Manifestation Umbrella in shield form provided a 61% boost in defence as well as 34% damage absorption. These two abilities would take effect as soon as the shield met any attacks. But Glory's top Gunner, Cloud Piercer, obviously wouldn't stop trying to punch through Lord Grim's defences just because of these two abilities.

Lord Grim's health was still dropping. This kind of defence was just an exchange. Lord Grim's health for One Autumn Leaf's health…

The two characters who had an unbreakable bond with Ye Xiu were currently locked in such an exchange. One of the damage dealers happened to be Ye Xiu's biggest rival

of all time, Han Wenqing. This scene could only be described as somewhat ironic. Team A, however, didn't just consist of Zhou Zekai. Huang Shaotian, the biggest opportunistic player of Glory, saw a great chance. Troubling Rain quickly appeared in front of the shield form Myriad Manifestation Umbrella. Right now, the Umbrella shield was completely blocking Lord Grim's field of view. Xe Xiu couldn't do much about this. If he stuck his head out to look, Zhou Zekai's marksmanship would deliver a faceful of bullets.

Troubling Rain used the cover provided by the shield form Myriad Manifestation Umbrella to deliver some pain!

Chapter 1263
Small Details and Techniques

Troubling Rain instantly got within melee range using the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's shield form as cover.

"Careful!" Huang Shaotian heard Yu Wenzhou's voice. Yu Wenzhou's Swoksaar stood rather far away. From his point of view, he suddenly realized that Huang Shaotian being captured was an opportunity, but also a trap.

Huang Shaotian quickly controlled Troubling Rain to move sideways upon hearing Yu Wenzhou's warning. Since he had already gotten this far, he might as well continue attacking rather than retreat. He only needed to be careful of whatever was hidden behind the umbrella. After all, this was just a Blind Shield playstyle. If he took the initiative and moved first, how could he not dodge it?

He couldn't dodge it!

Troubling Rain had barely taken half a step when the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella closed up. Huang Shaotian didn't even have time to see the character behind the umbrella before his screen was filled by a blinding light. This attack couldn't get any closer. There was absolutely nothing he could do that could dodge an attack which was close enough to singe his eyebrows…

Laser Rifle!

Only the Best Partners Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu could achieve this kind of precision. Ye Xiu used the Blind Shield playstyle to hide Su Mucheng's long ranged attack rather than his own.

"You want to ambush me? How naive!" Ye Xiu laughed, as he watched Troubling Rain tumble away from the Laser Rifle.

"Just fight, stop talking so much trash!" Huang Shaotian yelled.

The whole stadium collectively shared a sweatdrop. Bro, you're the one saying this?

Are you trying to say that you're the strong and silent type?

Huang Shaotian's ambush failed. Zhou Zekai also sacrificed dealing damage to coordinate with the ambush. Even though there was no friendly fire, shots didn't just pass through allies. Zhou Zekai couldn't have Cloud Piercer move around Troubling Rain, because that might have lead Ye Xiu to turn and reveal Huang Shaotian's position…

Huang Shaotian's ambush was ultimately fruitless. This moment was over in the blink of an eye, but it contained so many small details. Right now, the guest commentator Li Yibo, conducting the live TV broadcast, wanted to share his analysis with everyone. But who could spare the effort to listen to his explanation? The match had long left this moment behind.

The players on Team B couldn't idly watch and let Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing trade health by tanking the enemy's attacks. The moment Su Mucheng foiled Huang Shaotian's ambush, Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain had already cast Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire. It engulfed Lord Grim, One Autumn Leaf, and Desert Dust together. Tang Hao attempted to interrupt her cast, but he was intercepted by Wang Jiexi. Currently, Vaccaria and Demon Subduer were locked in a skirmish.

The viewers' eyes were in a blur. They did not know where to look. Out of the ten players on the field, it looked like Yu Wenzhou was the only one who had some free time. However, his presence couldn't be ignored.

Yu Wenzhou may have trouble keeping up with the pace of this explosive battle because of his crippled hand speed. However, he obviously had his own, slower style of play which still secured him a place as a God in the Alliance. In this kind of flashy battle, Yu Wenzhou wasn't at all useless. Rather, his crowd control skills as a Warlock was indispensable to his team and extremely disruptive to his opponents. In this game with no healer, where the fight was blood for blood, one successfully landed control skill might just cripple a character entirely.

On the other hand, Team B's five on the field plus Yu Feng as a sixth were all top damage dealers. As for crowd control, they could only rely on their observation and mechanics and share the burden. They couldn't compare to Yu Wenzhou, who could focus on observing the entire battlefield and act accordingly.

Now, Team A's strategy was pretty much on the tables. From the start, they wanted to

give Yu Wenzhou plenty of space to let his Warlock control the battle. Thus, the other four characters had to handle more of the head-on fighting. However, Huang Shaotian was one of the four. This so-called expert opportunity seizer was different from a core attacker. In Blue Rain, he seldom filled the role of the spearhead attacker. It used to be Yu Feng, and now, that position was passed to the fourteen year old Lu Hanwen, not Huang Shaotian.

This didn't mean Huang Shaotian was very bad at head-on type attacks. It was just that to him, being a head-on attacker simply did not fully display his talents and capabilities. He needed a certain amount of cover and waited for an opportunity before acting

Huang Shaotian didn't manage to seize this opening. However, the match had only just begun. Being able to create this opportunity for Huang Shaotian was already remarkable. This was because he had even fiercer teammates, who could provide cover for him.

Sun Xiang, Zhou Zekai!

This duo that had only existed for half a season at Samsara could probably be called the duo with the strongest offensive capabilities within the current Glory Alliance. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf charged in and got himself surrounded. At first, this move seemed somewhat rash. However, with the ranged support from Zhou Zekai on the outside of the encirclement, Team B's flank did not have an easy time. Even though Huang Shaotian missed his chance to sneak up, the outstanding duo's skill was fully demonstrated. Team A didn't manage to get an advantage, but the battlefield was set for Yu Wenzhou's Warlock so that no one could suppress him.

Swoksaar began casting his curse. The spell would spell trouble for Team B if no one interrupted it. Su Mucheng quickly pressed forward, and Dancing Rain's cannon aimed at Swoksaar. However, Troubling Rain's silhouette quickly darted into her field of view and blocked her line of sight with Swoksaar.

An annoying screen tactic. This wouldn't stop the attack entirely, but rather bought a few moments for the ally behind him to finish his curse. This sort of tactic was what the opportunist Huang Shaotian was particularly adept at. His little obstruction stopped Dancing Rain from attacking, giving Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer time to close the distance between them. As he ran, he attacked continuously, pressing down on her with wild firepower.

The instant Zhou Zekai switched targets, a shadow flickered out from within Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire.

"Old Ye!" It was as if Huang Shaotian's mouth would itch if he stopped talking. Sword light flew out from a Sword Draw.

Miss!

His attack was aimed according to where he thought his opponent would move to. The attack missed, and it didn't even affect Ye Xiu's rhythm. He slipped beneath the sword light from Sword Draw with a Slide Kick. The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella assumed its gun form mid-slide and aimed towards Swoksaar. A gunshot rang out.

Bang!

As the bullet flied out, Yu Wenzhou sighed helplessly. His hand speed might be slow, but his judgement and observation were top notch. He immediately knew that this bullet would arrive before his casting finished.

Yu Wenzhou cancelled the skill and moved aside to dodge. When he looked again, Lord Grim was almost in front of him…

So fast!

An unspecialized's swiftness in closing short distances was now well renowned within all of Glory. Ye Xiu had already demonstrated how troublesome this technique was in many matches. Chaining together two skills would make him seem like he was almost teleporting, as shown in the Rookie Challenge matches in day one of the All-Stars weekend. It was an astonishing sight to see.

And now, Lord Grim was able to instantly close in on Swoksaar, when he was still inside the Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire just moments before. No melee class had movement skills this strong. On top of that, the unspecialized even had ranged attacking methods, allowing him to switch targets while moving. The opponent was hard-pressed to get away.

But just before Lord Grim was right next to Swoksaar, he came to a sudden halt.

Boom!

A burst of Shadow Flames danced a step in front of Lord Grim. Clearly, the sudden halt by Lord Grim was to avoid being engulfed in the Shadow Flames.

"How scary, you almost blew me up," said Ye Xiu.

"Didn't I miss though?" Smiled Yu Wenzhou. His crippled hands would definitely put him at a disadvantage if a melee character got close. And right now, the one who came marching was none other than Lord Grim, who attacked like a hurricane. Lord Grim would be able to bury him right there. But even though Yu Wenzhou was in this predicament, he did not panic in the slightest. He held an instant cast spell like Shadow Flames and cast it at the last second. This was the most dangerous option for him, but it was also the most difficult for his opponent to deal with. In the last moments of a charge, when the target was within arm's reach, anyone's guard would drop to some extent; the player would probably be thinking about what attack to use next. Yu Wenzhou's sudden attack at this moment was very tricky to guard against.

"I wouldn't be afraid even if I was hit by this skill," Ye Xiu said. Shadow Flames inflicted a status effect, whereby the target would take damage over time. Caster classes found this skills particularly troublesome, as each tick of damage would interrupt their casting. However, an unspecialized at melee range could use an array of instant cast skills. Shadow Flames' interruptions were irrelevant. The damage alone could be tolerated. However, Ye Xiu still had Lord Grim dodge, since he couldn't tell what curse Swoksaar had thrown out.

Another instant filled with countless small details.

Just a slight pause was enough to turn the tables. Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain was already behind Lord Grim. Ye Xiu obviously couldn't just attack Swoksaar with reckless abandon. However, fighting Huang Shaotian with Yu Wenzhou right there would be very dangerous. His hand speed might be slow, but he was still extremely proficient at grasping opportunities. Ye Xiu wouldn't give him a chance to stir up trouble like that.

Lord Grim, who had just managed to get right next to Swoksaar, didn't attack even once. Instead, he quickly moved away.

Lord Grim shifted horizontally to dodge Troubling Rain's lunging sword, then turned tail and ran.

"Don't run!" Huang Shaotian yelled while chasing after him closely. On the other side, Zhou Zekai saw the situation and quickly turned to form a pincer with Huang Shaotian. However, Ye Xiu had Lord Grim dodge crazily. Various movement type skills were thrown out and comboed, to the point where even Huang Shaotian and Zhou Zekai combined couldn't suppress him momentarily.

The crowd was stunned.

Right now, Teams A and B each had a character that was the main attack target, and they happened to be One Autumn Leaf and Lord Grim. It seemed like Ye Xiu really owned characters with some interesting history.

How about the current owners of these characters? Their responses were the opposite of each other. One Autumn Leaf stood steadfast under Sun Xiang's control and welcomed the attacks head on; Lord Grim assumed deft poses and dodged attack after attack under Ye Xiu's control.

Chapter 1264
Unending Choices

The two teams, A and B, had each relied on a single person to pin their opponents in some form. An unrelenting offense was definitely a better way to disrupt an opponent then hiding around and dodging attacks. After all, if you faced your opponents head on like that, it wouldn't just be a one way beat down. When engaging your opponent, you'd still be a threat. If the other wavered even slightly, there was the chance that you could counter and crush them. As for dodging around, that made you passive and it would become harder to stick to an opponent and disrupt them. Your opponents could easily switch targets and ignore a troublemaker who ran around.

But the problem was that the character who was currently executing this pin was Lord Grim.

Unspecialized Lord Grim not only had ranged attacks, but also those methods of unexpectedly increasing his movement speed. Whenever he began to move, Team A's members would always go on high alert. No other class was such a comprehensive threat, to the point where Team A was currently using two top Gods, Huang Shaotian and Zhou Zekai to suppress him.

But even the combination of these two top Gods was having trouble dealing with the special class backed by Ye Xiu's cunning.

The disruption Sun Xiang was achieving was costing him blood! But for Ye Xiu? He ran, leaving dust in his wake, luring away two of Team A's most powerful characters with not a scratch. If this continued, then what would be the point of Sun Xiang's disruption? It was practically like they were offering him up to Team B to beat up.

"Cover me!" Yu Wenzhou called out. Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain immediately sheathed his sword and returned to his position, standing guard at Swoksaar's side. Zhou Zekai also changed his pace in accordance. Cloud Piercer began to move faster. As a Sharpshooter, he didn't keep his distance from his opponent, but instead pulled closer to Lord Grim, clearly hoping to strengthen the effects of his firepower to suppress him. If needed, he'd probably pull even closer and engage with Gun Fu.

Swoksaar began to cast, and it seemed like he planned on finishing this cast no matter the cost. He was even using Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain as a meat shield.

Ye Xiu wasn't able to go and interrupt, what with Huang Shaotian lying in wait and Zhou Zekai advancing on him. If he persisted in trying to interrupt, he would definitely be completely trapped by these two.

It was just that, with three of Team A's characters focused on Lord Grim, two of Team B's characters became free to act. Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu, originally having been giving long-ranged support, turned their attacks this way upon seeing Ye Xiu stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Dancing Rain stepped forward in front of Windy Rain and whipped out a Gatling Gun, wildly spraying bullets as she covered for Windy Rain's spell.

Dancing Rain's bullets arrived, and no matter how amazing Huang Shaotian's mechanics were, he couldn't use his swordsmanship to cut down every bullet. However, if the bullets flew past him, even if just one hit, then it would interrupt Swoksaar's cast.

Thus, Troubling Rain shielded Swoksaar like a knight, taking a sturdy stance in front of the other. He dealt with what bullets he could, and if he couldn't, then he would block them with his body.

Thud thud thud!

Flowers of blood bloomed one by one on Troubling Rain's body, making him look exceptionally heroic. However… Gatling Gun was a still a low level skill. Troubling Rain did look heroic, shielding Swoksaar with his body, and there was enough blood to set the scene, but in terms of actual damage, it wasn't even worth mentioning. To make sure the cast was finished, this was completely worth it.

However, being constantly hit by bullets, Troubling Rain's movements couldn't be smoothly controlled. There was still some level of stun from being hit by a bullet. With the consecutive hits, the small stuns linked up and the victim definitely wouldn't be able to move smoothly any longer. Thus, Windy Rain's spell was purposefully released just as Troubling Rain was most difficult to control. A Piercing Lightning shot forth.

"Oh shit!" A silent stutter of the heart wasn't Huang Shaotian's style. He had to yell out directly. Windy Rain had hid behind Dancing Rain and suddenly struck with this skill,

at such a time…

How could he block it? He couldn't!

Piercing Lightning prepared to fly straight through the miniscule opening that Troubling Rain left under the effects of the consecutive attacks. Swoksaar had little choice but to cancel the cast he was executing.

Team A's plan seemed to have failed, but that was when Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf suddenly broke through his pin.

Was Han Wenqing unable to suppress Sun Xiang without support?

Of course not.

Han Wenqing's attacks weren't just thrown with reckless abandon. He would cooperate with the support he was getting to perfect his offense. However, Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu had suddenly pulled their support away just now. One Autumn Leaf, who was fighting several on his own, immediately found an opening. Sun Xiang had grasped that opportunity and broken out through that opening.

Was it a misconderation of Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu's?

Evidently not.

This was yet another choice. To interrupt the Warlock's cast or to continue their support. They didn't split up and each take one choice because they knew that they wouldn't accomplish anything then. Thus, the two decided to interrupt the Warlock's skill. After all, a Warlock's CC would be crucial to changing the tides of battle.

Thus, the Warlock's skill had been interrupted, but Sun Xiang had escaped. He didn't, as people expected, immediately begin to counterattack Desert Dust, but instead chose to retreat. When Han Wenqing pursued him, he avoided the other and charged at Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu's characters.

These two characters were definitely not good with close combat, but if the two moved, Team B's formation would be disrupted. Team A had set trap after trap, considering all the details, and managed to back all the members of Team B into a difficult place.

What should they do?

No matter how difficult, they had to choose a choice of action immediately. Decisiveness was also one of the crucial characteristics a top level player possessed.

Dancing Rain raised her cannon and began to attack!

She didn't dodge and instead launched a direct offense at One Autumn Leaf while Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain pulled away. These two female pros chose the third option out of to retreat or not to retreat. One retreated while the other didn't. It seemed like a wishy washy decision, but it would allow them to retain their positioning with one person stalling so that One Autumn Leaf would disrupt their formation too much.

It was a very clever and daring decision, and the two did well in deciding who would play what role. But they neglected to consider the players themselves. When One Autumn Leaf charged towards her and Su Mucheng hurriedly raised her cannon to attack, what lay in her heart was reluctance.

Because that was One Autumn Leaf.

Though it was just a character, it meant much more than that to Su Mucheng.

She had never considered that, one day, she would cross cannon against spear with this character. She knew that she had to maintain a professional attitude, but attitude wasn't the same as feelings…

Su Mucheng felt very conflicted, causing her mechanics to falter somewhat. One Autumn Leaf wasn't disrupted all that much, charging forth fearlessly. Chu Yunxiu startled. This was different from what they had anticipated. She wasn't ready to provide support for her yet!

A mistake!

Su Mucheng had realized her mistake just now, too, but there was no chance to make an attempt at saving the situation. One Autumn Leaf had arrived, glittering sparks of light drifting around him like broken stardust.

This was…

Su Mucheng and Sun Xiang had both noticed the abnormality in their field of view.

This definitely wasn't something either of them could produce. This was…

From the air, a broom swiftly descended.

Vaccaria, Broom Tornado activated, swung his Stardust Extermination.

Chapter 1265
The So-Called Magician

Wang Jiexi!

Don't mention the players on the field, even the audience who had the omniscient view felt that Vaccaria's sudden violent arrival was shocking and bizarre. Truly, every single confrontation on field was a dazzling blur, from the cover of Ye Xiu's Lord Grim to his charging out from a Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire. Even the slightest change could affect everything. The players of the two teams one by one entered a chaotic exchange of attacking and defending.

The nonstop changes were dizzying for the audience to watch, and in the process of this, Wang Jiexi and Tang Hao were the two players that hadn't entered the chaotic brawl. And so, the presence of these two players was overlooked to some extent. The ones more absorbed in the fight almost forgot that these two players were still fighting, until now, when Vaccaria suddenly plunged from the sky, with an arcing trajectory that seemed to trail stardust, and a Broom Tornado came down fiercely upon One Autumn Leaf's back.

Vaccaria had arrived!

Only now did everyone remember this person's existence, and they thought of the opponent he had been tangled with just earlier.

The live audience was fortunate, as the immersive projection system made a huge difference in watching the battle live versus watching the television broadcast. They had a full aerial view of the entire battle. But this time, even they had forgotten to pay attention to that area, until now.

The audience turned their views, the television broadcast cut to a different camera, the target: Demon Subduer.

And so, in the eyes of the audience, in the camera view of the broadcast, Demon Subduer, the number one Brawler of Glory, a character that had reached the peak thanks to Tang Hao's upgrade, was currently pathetically collapsed on the ground.

What in the world had happened?

Everyone was engulfed by curiosity to the extreme, and the pain of the television broadcasters was great, for the current battle was progressing quite ferociously, and there was no way for them to cut back and show a replay.

"Show it in a small screen!" one of the senior workers shouted.

Thus, those that were watching the broadcast could now see in the lower corner of their screen a smaller display, replaying the events that had just occurred for everyone to see.

No viewer objected to this, because they too were intensely curious as to what had transpired between Wang Jiexi and Tang Hao.

As for the live viewers? They couldn't see a replay with the projection system, but the display screens didn't interfere with what was currently going on as they too showed the replay for everyone.

Everyone watched… In reality, it wasn't very long, it was just from when Lord Grim helped cover Desert Dust to when Vaccaria sent One Autumn Leaf flying. This entire process hadn't taken very long.

And during that chaotic pile of fighting, what happened between Wang Jiexi and Tang Hao was actually very simple. It could be summarized in one sentence: Tang Hao was completely crushed by Wang Jiexi.

Although this sentence was short, the amount of information it contained was truly shocking.

Early on, everyone had acknowledged that Tang Hao was standing at the summit, someone who wouldn't lose to any God at the summit, past or present. But just now, in that brief period of time, he had been crushed.

Crushed meant that he had utterly no ability to defend or parry. Something like that absolutely should not occur to a top God.

The television broadcast didn't just immediately move on after replaying it once; they continued to use the small window to display it a second time. The live screens also didn't just replay it once, they even used split-screen to replay it again and again from

different angles.

This wasn't Tiny Herb's home stadium, but period of silence, the live crowd exploded with home stadium-like cheers. And this was just for a mere replay, a replay of something that had already happened.

"This is…" In the broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo had given up on their commentary of the match, and were instead searching for something to say about this past.

"This is the true Magician!" Li Yibo reached this conclusion.

Indeed, the unimaginable playstyle, the trajectories impossible to capture, the rhythms and changes like magic, these were the techniques used by Wang Jiexi in the past that earned him the title of Magician, and these were the techniques that he sacrificed for the sake of Team Tiny Herb.

Now, it could be seen that Wang Jiexi had not forgotten these techniques entirely. In this All-Star Competition, in this competition where he didn't have to take up many responsibilities at all, he very casually displayed this style. And so, Tang Hao, this Season 7 debutant, someone who had never experienced the Magician style firsthand, a young player who had only seen the style in old recordings and data, was beaten down by it until he couldn't tell which way was north anymore.

People understood this point, and everyone was very clear, this wasn't a difference in skill. Tang Hao simply met something that he had never experienced before. It was just like all those players who, upon encountering Lord Grim for the first time, were thrown into confusion. In a 1v1, quite a few people had been wiped out by Ye Xiu. As of now, Tang Hao had yet to meet Lord Grim, and if he did meet him, he probably wouldn't be as helpless as many of those at the beginning of the season, since half a season had already passed, after all. However, he met Wang Jiexi here, the Magician Wang Jiexi, and although he had seen him before, he hadn't studied this style closely, because everyone knew that Wang Jiexi didn't play like this anymore. But who would have expected that in this All-Star competition, this guy suddenly revived his Magician playstyle!

Although the audience had some understanding of Tang Hao's encounter, they felt overall that this explosion of something that had been hidden for a long time was extremely refreshing. In an instant, Wang Jiexi became the star of the stage, and everyone began to pay attention to his performance.

And Tang Hao?

Of course, he was clear on why he would be beaten to this miserable extent, but with his personality, how could such a reason be acceptable enough to stabilize his heart? The instant that Demon Subduer was ultimately knocked onto the ground in a pitiful state, Tang Hao's rage was at its peak. He furiously controlled Demon Subduer to leap to his feet, turned his camera view, and saw on the other end that One Autumn Leaf had been violently hit just like him. Sun Xiang had entered the Alliance in Season 7 just like Tang Hao. The two could be said to be the brightest stars of the new generation, and at the same time were two people who had never personally experienced the Magician playstyle. The end result was unsurprising. After Vaccaria plummeted from the sky and sent One Autumn Leaf flying with a Broom Tornado, those traces of stardust continued to swirl around One Autumn Leaf's body, and very quickly, One Autumn Leaf was also sent awkwardly tumbling along the ground.

Two of Team A's Gods being knocked over like this one after another of course had a large impact on the current situation. Zhou Zekai hurriedly controlled Cloud Piercer to turn his fire, the bullets flying crazily toward Vaccaria, but they only struck the residual traces left by Stardust Extermination.

Zhou Zekai, a player from Season 5. In Season 5, Tiny Herb won the championship. At that time, Wang Jiexi had already completely shed his old style, so even Zhou Zekai hadn't personally experienced it. But he was at least closer to that era and had seen and heard more, so when Vaccaria turned and rushed toward him, Cloud Piercer wasn't instantly wiped out like Demon Subduer and One Autumn Leaf had been. Wang Jiexi's storm-like sweeping of Team A was interrupted here.

However, Zhou Zekai's situation wasn't looking too good either, as he too lacked the experience to counter this style. He could only rely on his own instincts and skill to deal with Wang Jiexi, but he couldn't change the current situation.

"Damn, Old Wang, you could just carry this battle by yourself!" Ye Xiu exclaimed. It seemed like a very ordinary statement of mocking and surprise, but those who were paying attention suddenly realized: even the viewers who had the omniscient view had overlooked Wang Jiexi crushing Tang Hao due to the intensity of the match. Ye Xiu, this man, who was currently very busy on the battlefield, had actually managed to notice all of this?

The legend of the expert with eyes that could watch six directions at once, it was

actually true!

"Stop talking nonsense!" Wang Jiexi replied coldly.

His saying this was of course a thousand times more powerful than anything Huang Shaotian could say. Would Team B miss seizing this opportunity before them?

Tang Hao was still trying to take revenge on Wang Jiexi, but he was cut off by Han Wenqing's Desert Dust. After Vaccaria pulled away Cloud Piercer's firepower and reduced the pressure, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was using all of his varied rapid-movement skills even as he complained about Wang Jiexi. One Autumn Leaf hadn't even managed to stand up when Lord Grim had already arrived in front of him and sent ferocious attacks toward this character who currently had the lowest health on the field. At the same time, echoing Lord Grim's attacks was the one who knew Ye Xiu best, Su Mucheng. Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain was also casting spells at this moment, covering Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's offensive, sending continuous map-affecting spells toward that duo from Blue Rain.

"Countless changes in an instant," this was the only way the situation could be described. In the blink of an eye, many people had already exchanged opponents. The only change that hadn't changed was that Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf was suffering the fiercest attacks on the battlefield. And this time, it was no longer because he was forced to do this for the sake of charging forward, it was because he had become the primary target of Team B. In a situation without a healer, with the skill of these players and the strength of their characters, the damage output was truly ferocious. But Sun Xiang's luck was fairly good, as the two people who were currently attacking him happened to be the two characters who were relatively weaker according to the statistics.

Lord Grim was probably the only All-Star character whose weapon had yet to reach Level 75, and was also the one with the least Silver equipment.

Dancing Rain's weapon was Level 75, but the upgrades of her other equipment were lacking compared to the all of the other All-Stars who'd been upgrading continuously for a year now. Sun Xiang struggled, but he was still able to keep One Autumn Leaf alive.

"What a shame, your damage output's a little weak!" After Yu Wenzhou was finally able to contain Misty Rain, Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain broke through Windy

Rain's blockade. He and his noise charged to Lord Grim's side.

"So damn noisy, I'll just leave this to you!" Ye Xiu shouted.

It was very clear to whom the first part of that statement was directed. Even people who didn't know the context could probably figure it out. But the second half? Leave it to you? Who was "you"?

The audience didn't understand, the commentator and honored guest were confused. But at this moment, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim suddenly escaped from his current situation, flying like the wind toward Yu Wenzhou's Swoksaar. Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria also drew a bizarre path in the air, one that even the Great Gunner's bullets had no way of chasing, as he flew toward the target: Swoksaar.

Aside from this, Dancing Rain's cannonfire and Windy Rain's spells were also targeting Swoksaar.

There seemed to be only one option left for Team B's "you."

Han Wenqing.

Desert Dust.

Another Ferocious Tiger Flurry.

Chapter 1266
The True Assassin

Ferocious Tiger Flurry!

Fierce, fast; accurate, steady.

The first punch knocked askew Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf. The second punch forced Huang Shaotian to stop his Troubling Rain and parry instead of rescuing Swoksaar. The third punch forced Demon Subduer, chasing up from behind Desert Dust, to dodge and retreat.

Only Han Wenqing could play such a shrewd and precise Ferocious Tiger Flurry, forcing these three top Gods to instantly stop and defend, parry, dodge.

It interfered with what they had each been planning to do. Even though it was just an instant, it was enough for Team B.

Yu Wenzhou, the one with the title of "crippled hands" in this professional circle. And now, he had to face Lord Grim, the unspecialized with an incomparably rapid attack rhythm, the Magician, whose unpredictable changes were incredibly difficult to grasp, as well as the Launcher and the Elementalist, the mightiest AoE attackers…

He didn't panic, he still maintained his calm, but calm was not a panacea. Although he swiftly and clearly judged the situation on the field, this didn't necessarily mean that he had a way of solving it.

By this point, Team B's strategic planning was entirely clear. Ye Xiu was Team B's metronome. Every step he took directed Team B's attack direction and rhythm changes as a whole. And Wang Jiexi was the one who ultimately set the scene. He used his long-sealed Magician playstyle to instantly throw Team A into chaos, creating many gaps in their team coordination. At this time, Team A was full of openings to attack. If these couldn't be seized, then these people wouldn't be called the top Gods at the summit of Glory.

So at the end, the firepower transferred to Yu Wenzhou. Four attackers, two close-

range, two long-range, against a Warlock, a Warlock who in terms of hand speed had absolutely no way of keeping up with anyone on the battlefield.

"You guys are too cruel…" All Yu Wenzhou could do, perhaps, was smile bitterly and raise a slight objection to these fierce players.

Han Wenqing couldn't hold off those three people forever, but just this slight delay helped his four teammates gain the opportunity to focus on one target. What kind of fury could they unleash? Adding onto the fact that Yu Wenzhou's defensive ability was a bit weak, Swoksaar's fall would only take a matter of seconds.

Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain was the first to break free of Desert Dust's interference.

Rescue!

This was his instinctive judgment and reaction to seeing Swoksaar suffering from that powerful offensive. Troubling Rain had already stepped forward, but at this moment, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer suddenly turned fire, sending bullets toward Desert Dust.

Troubling Rain's steps suddenly stopped.

A trade!

He instantly understood Zhou Zekai's intentions. In a situation without a healer, saving Swoksaar now was already basically impossible. It would be better to focus his attacks onto Desert Dust. Whether they could besiege their opponent enough to save their own teammate, or complete the trade, both were acceptable outcomes.

Huang Shaotian immediately halted his instinctive reaction. The fact that Swoksaar was surrounded didn't cause him in the slightest to impulsively charge in. After all, he was the most brutal opportunist in Glory. From a certain standpoint, he was in reality very cold, ruthless, and tenacious, because only like someone like that could he seize the deadliest opportunities.

His sword light flashed toward Desert Dust. Team A's players instantly completed a surrounding formation toward Desert Dust. A 1v3 was impossible on this sort of beautiful stage; Han Wenqing had already performed to the best of his ability, and now, he was being counterattacked to the strongest possible degree.

But Tyranny's captain would never back down from any challenge.

One against four? So what.

Even if facing a hundred thousand enemies, he would not bend!

Desert Dust did not dodge or hide; he retaliated, he attacked.

Team B's four players didn't reveal any intent of rescuing him. This was the rhythm of completing a trade. But would this trade be successful?

A dazzling display of attacks roared forth, Swoksaar's and Desert Dust's health bars plummeted down, but which was faster? The viewers couldn't tell at first, but in an instant, the exchange was just about complete. Swoksaar's health was dropping faster!

There was nothing they could do about that.

Yu Wenzhou himself was already inferior in terms of controls, and the Warlock class had low defense and low health, as well as poor survivability against close-range attackers. This sort of situation was much more difficult for him to face. For Han Wenqing, on the other hand, the Striker class was a powerful close-range attacker, and Reinforced Iron Bones once activated could greatly increase defense. If it had to be called a little unfair, that would be the fault of Han Wenqing's stubbornness. In a situation like this, many other players would probably be a bit more flexible, more compromising.

Team B took the initiative, and their attack rhythms were faster by just that step. Team A had to be complimented for their ability to keep up so well that the speeds were difficult to distinguish. Plus, in terms of damage output, Team B had four people and had the advantage in that respect as well.

But ultimately, Swoksaar still fell first. Team A's attacks instantly became even more crazily fierce.

Fall!

The final attack landed, but a white light flashed upon Desert Dust's body. He didn't fall!

"Damn couldn't you take it a little easier do you think I'm Zhang Xinjie!!!" Ye Xiu

shouted. This flash of white light had of course come from Lord Grim's instant-healing Cure skill, but like he said, he wasn't Zhang Xinjie, Lord Grim didn't have as powerful and specialized a healing ability as Immovable Rock, and he couldn't instantly bring up Desert Dust's health very far. Preventing Desert Dust from falling with that final attack was already the limit of what he could do.

The four from Team B who had taken care of Swoksaar now came to rescue. Lord Grim healed, and Vaccaria, Dancing Rain, and Windy Rain, those three powerful characters, were already firing.

Retreat for now, or force the kill?

Team A once again faced a difficult decision. Team B had surrounded them and were attacking ferociously. If they didn't retreat, this was the rhythm of everyone falling.

And so Team A chose to retreat, as after all this was a battle with no healer. Sacrificing too much health to kill a target wasn't worth it, and the remaining attacking party at low health could be swiftly defeated. Even though Team B had Lord Grim, the unspecialized's healing ability was truly just a drop in the bucket. There was no way for him to heal Desert Dust to any significant point, and under a powerful barrage of attacks, he likely couldn't even complete another life-saving heal at a critical point.

Team A's characters retreated and scattered, but these were only three characters. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was a Sharpshooter and had been attacking from a long-ranged position. Team B had shifted targets to save Han Wenqing from the encirclement, but their attack range couldn't catch Cloud Piercer's position. It seemed that Zhou Zekai wanted to keep attacking to deal with Han Wenqing once and for all, and that was exactly what he was doing.

And just as Cloud Piercer prepared to continue his fierce shooting, Lord Grim flashed before him.

In the end, Team B didn't let Team A squeeze through this gap. Zhou Zekai didn't have the chance to fire before he was interrupted. The rest of them immediately gave Ye Xiu a helping hand, and Cloud Piercer seemed to have become Team B's next target.

But no one, including his own teammates on Team A, expected what happened next: Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain, just after escaping from Team B, immediately turned around and charged back.

Shadow Steps!

Troubling Rain instantly split into seven images, opening the path with Triple Slash, numerous silhouettes darted forward, target: Desert Dust!

The cheers of the crowd seemed to have fallen silent…

Team B killed Swoksaar and returned to save Desert Dust. One wave of high excitement had just barely passed and they were already regrouping and preparing for the next offensive. Everyone's hearts had just barely relaxed from the nervousness when, all of a sudden, Huang Shaotian shot forward like a cold arrow.

This opportunity seized was truly… too fierce…

The silhouettes flashed, Troubling Rain's sword finally pierced through Desert Dust. That tyrannical King of Fighting, who never backed down in the face of hundreds of thousands of enemies, didn't fall under the powerful encirclement of four enemies, but fell under the cold blade of an assassin.

Huang Shaotian, Troubling Rain. Even though he wasn't of the Assassin class, he was a true assassin.

"Holy fuck!"

The viewers felt their hearts go cold, and all sorts of swears came out in the live stadium. Some were from the sheer shock of this sudden attack, some were from unhappiness at Desert Dust's fall as a result of it. This, after all, was Tyranny's home stadium, and Desert Dust was the highest God in their hearts.

But no matter what, once he fell, there was no way he would be revived. In an instant, the two teams were now equal again. It looked like the players also needed time to process all that had happened just now. Eight characters carefully moved position, facing each other, but for now none of them launched a new offensive. And so Ye Xiu, with nothing else to do, gave the four characters of Team B some Heals to let them slowly recover their health.

"Damn, are you brave enough not to use healing? Even if your stupid skills help heal they can't heal that much unless you instantly use them at a key moment, do you think that's useful at all do you do you? How much damage do you think one slash of my sword can do? It can completely ignore whatever healing you try to do did you know

that? Can't you focus on attacking and not do these sort of stupid complicated cheap tricks that destroy the quality of the match and bring down the standard level of this showdown?" Huang Shaotian hollered.

In the live audience, in front of the televisions, countless people's mouths twitched.

This guy's chattiness was a huge obstacle affecting his popularity! That unexpected attack had shaken countless hearts. How many people were still engrossed in that sudden moment! The television broadcast had again split the screen for replay, and the display screens in the stadium gave the same treatment they had for Wang Jiexi's earlier performance - multi-angle replay.

But just at this moment, Huang Shaotian's own passionate voice was dubbed over, and it was all some nonsense. Everyone was thrown out of the moment okay? Everyone's moods weren't the same anymore, okay? The television broadcast will turn off your replay, okay? Can't you be cool for a bit longer, okay, okay?

No one had the strength to complain anymore. Someone like this, why did he have to have a bad habit like this? Was there truly no perfect existence in this world?

Two teams, eight people, waiting there as though they had arranged a meeting. But, in the closest player exchange area, the sixth players of the two teams had already loaded in.

Team A, Xiao Shiqin, Life Extinguisher.

Team B, Yu Feng, Blossoming Chaos.

Chapter 1267
Season 7's Two Rookies

No matter how little an unspecialized healed, health was health. Letting Lord Grim continue healing non-stop would still recover a good amount of health. As a result, if the two sides just stared at each other, Team B would hold the advantage because they were more than willing to just wait and let Lord Grim slowly heal them. But Team A? There had to be a breaking point.

However, the first to attack was still Team B. It seemed like Team B wasn't planning on drawing support from Lord Grim's healing capabilities to gain the upper hand. They only stopped because their rhythm had taken a pause. With neither side possessing a dedicated healer, the two teams strived to deal the most damage in as short of a time as possible, so when they didn't hold back their usage of skills. They wouldn't try to maintain a constant cycle of skills like in a prolonged battle. After experiencing this intense wave of attacks, the skill cooldowns on both sides became somewhat imbalanced. What seemed to be a break was, in reality, time for their skills to come off cooldown.

At this moment, the unspecialized Lord Grim, this annoying existence, once again stood out.

In terms of DPS, Lord Grim might be the weakest among everyone. His equipment wasn't great, and his skills were all low-level skills. However, the issue of an imbalanced skill cycle didn't matter for him. The vast majority of low-level skills had short cooldowns, and he had so many of them too. He didn't need to care about waiting for skills to come off cooldown.

While the others were waiting for their cooldowns, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was as lively as ever. He healed Team B, while also sending a few attacks towards Team A. He was awfully busy.

Team A all felt annoyed, especially Sun Xiang. His One Autumn Leaf currently had the lowest amount of health on the field. Previously, if Lord Grim and Dancing Rain had a higher DPS, or if Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain hadn't rescued him in time, he might have already fallen. His team didn't have a healer either. Since his character didn't have

any special equipment, the automatic health recovery could be ignored. Thus, One Autumn Leaf's health remained critically low.

As a result, Ye Xiu's harassment was mainly focused on him. Whenever Ye Xiu fired a few shots or pretended like he was going to charge in for the kill, Sun Xiang always tensed up.

It might seem like his character was still on the field, but from a certain perspective, he could be considered as dead. Anyone could see that Team B could easily end him with a single wave of attacks. If it was that obvious to even the viewers, then the competitors would obviously try to exploit it. One Autumn Leaf used to be Team A's front-line attackers, but now he had been shifted to the team's rear. Team B just had to have someone like Lord Grim, who could spam skills endlessly to harass One Autumn Leaf.

This was simply forcing Team A to hurry and act! It would obviously be advantageous for Team B to stall, no?

No one could understand. On the broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo were even more reserved and cautious. They didn't dare make any hasty conclusions.

Team A couldn't just keep bleeding. Even if One Autumn Leaf was nearly dead, he could still be used. If they let Ye Xiu's Lord Grim keep harassing him, the entire team would be dragged down trying to protect One Autumn Leaf. They might as well try and attack. In any case, Team A and Team B were in similar situations. Team B's skill cooldowns hadn't completely refreshed yet either, so it wasn't like Team B was any stronger than them right now.

Team A was just about to pick the impossibly annoying Lord Grim as their target, when Team B suddenly launched their attack.

Team B was clearly forcing Team A to hurry and act, but by the time Team A was ready to move, Team B was one step ahead of them. This this this… are they just playing around?

The viewers felt like this sort of playing was a bit ridiculous, but they didn't know the destruction that Team B had done to Team A's rhythm. Huang Shaotian's assassination on Desert Smoke had succeeded, leading to the two teams separating to readjust themselves. Team B received Lord Grim's better than nothing heals, but Team A? They

received Lord Grim's annoying harassment. Unable to wait any longer to fully carry out their goals, Team A was forced to fight again. However, it was Team B who took the initiative and attacked first.

Even though this brief fight wasn't as intense as before, it was still filled with countless details. At first glance, these details couldn't be seen, but soon the effects surged forth onto the field.

Sun Xiang couldn't play as boldly as before, so One Autumn Leaf's original role in Team A was lost. In the end, Sun Xiang's role fell to Tang Hao, the rookie in the same generation, a God whose sudden rise sharply differed from Sun Xiang's slow ascent.

When Sun Xiang joined the Alliance, he was a talented rookie who had received much attention. He had obtained numerous opportunities in Team Conquering Clouds, allowing his talent to shine. Afterwards, he joined the powerhouse Team Excellent Era and directly inherited the Battle God One Autumn Leaf after Ye Xiu's retirement. As if loved by the heavens, he didn't even hit a Rookie's Block. Everything seemed to be smooth sailing for him. But then, Team Excellent Era encountered a shocking setback and was relegated, the greatest miracle in all of Glory history. It was even more miraculous than Happy beating them in the Challenger League.

Sun Xiang had started high but left low. Fortunately, he wasn't dispirited by the setback. Excellent Era disbanded and Samsara, the champions, threw him an olive branch. From this point, Sun Xiang was also a very lucky person. When Sun Xiang came to Samsara, he seemed to have matured a lot after his setback at Excellent Era. The Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang duo became the most terrifying offensive force in the Alliance.

As for Tang Hao? His journey was the opposite of Sun Xiang's.

His first season in the Alliance was no different from ordinary rookies. He experienced all of the bitterness and hardship felt by rookies, surviving his first rookie year. Then, their captain Zhang Jiale unexpectedly retired, and the team suddenly turned into a fly without a head. All of a sudden, the other rookie of the same generation, Zou Yuan, was pushed onto the stage and directly inherited the number one character, Hundred Blossom's core, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

Zou Yuan's fate was worthy of being envied, but no one would have thought that the one to stand out from Hundred Blossoms wasn't Zou Yuan, but Tang Hao.

Th junior succeeds the senior!

This was the declaration that Tang Hao had made in that year's All-Star Weekend. It was also the true feelings in his heart. He didn't have the same luck or opportunities as Sun Xiang or Zou Yuan. Everything he obtained came from his own hard work, fist by fist.

For the junior to succeed the senior, the number one Brawler, Lin Jingyan, wasn't the only one he had to surpass. That season, Team Hundred Blossoms still had their core character, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, but who was their true core? It was Tang Hao and his Brawler Delilo, a character who had just been a substitute character in the team.

Tang Hao was proud because everything he had accomplished was worthy of being proud of. No one had doted on him, and the team hadn't provided him any resources or support, yet despite these circumstances, Tang Hao pushed his way from an unremarkable rookie to the team's core on his own. And today, he was the leader of Team Wind Howl, the number 8 most popular All-Star.

Was Tang Hao satisfied?

Of course not?

He wanted to become the MVP in the Alliance. He wanted the championship cup that everyone yearned for. Everyone standing on this stage were all potential obstacles to this goal. All of them were targets to succeed.

But just a moment ago, he had unexpectedly been crushed by Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria in an instant.

He had truly been unable to defend against Vaccaria's attacks. The so-called Magician was actually this freakish? Just a while back, from the data he had looked at, Tang Hao felt that it was a pity Wang Jiexi no longer played with this style. When Wind Howl fought against Tiny Herb, he had even provoked Wang Jiexi when they met in the group arena.

Wang Jiexi obviously ignored him. Tang Hao gradually pushed this playstyle of the past to the back of his mind. Who would have thought that in this widely-watched All-Stars stage, Wang Jiexi would suddenly use it and with a sharpened blade too. Or to be more precise, it wasn't a blade but a broom… a broom didn't sound as scary as a blade

though.

Shock, humiliation,a shred of fear, and… excitement caused him to tremble.

The junior succeeds the senior!

Tang Hao's gaze locked onto Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria. He was ready to payback the humiliation he received many folds. Magician? He had been caught off guard last time, but this time, he could definitely do it.

Come!

Tang Hao was waiting impatiently for Team B to attack. The only person in his line of sight was Vaccaria.

Vaccaria sat on his broom. Vaccaria floated in the air. Vaccaria flew at an extremely low altitude. Vaccaria was coming!

What? He's not coming at me?

"Where do you think you're going!" Tang Hao shouted and immediately had Demon Subduer move forward to intercept him.

"And where do you think you're going?" A voice rung in his ears like a clap of thunder.

That sound is too close. An enemy?

Of course it was an enemy.

Lord Grim suddenly charged towards Demon Subduer, but he was actually ignored. Demon Subduer continued to move in a different direction.

"Young people these days are too arrogant!" Ye Xiu said. Lord Grim attacked madly.

Shit!

Tang Hao messed up again. His mind had been completely preoccupied with Vaccaria and that strange Magician playstyle. He had tunneled so hard on Vaccaria that he hadn't even noticed Lord Grim calling out to him.

By the time he regained his senses, he was already up in the air. Lord Grim's skills battered him endlessly. He… was crushed again.

Tang Hao collapsed at the first blow. The players on both teams were all astonished, but since an opportunity had appeared in front of them, Team B wasn't going to let it pass.

Team A's offense had been led by Tang Hao, but Tang Hao was instantly blown away. The implications were too obvious.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

But at this moment, One Autumn Leaf, with his critically low health, charged forward bravely towards Lord Grim.

He wasn't of much use anymore. He couldn't fight too fiercely. Perhaps waiting for an one-shot opening like Huang Shaotian had done wasn't a bad choice. But right now, Tang Hao was being beaten up. Huang Shaotian and Zhou Zekai were being suppressed. The two had no choice but to go out and rescue Tang Hao like tinkermen, but before they could act, Sun Xiang made up his mind and acted first.

He couldn't do much right now. If he could sacrifice himself to save Tang Hao, that would be a worthy trade.

Chapter 1268
This Isn’t What You’re Good At

One Autumn Leaf, the character personally raised by Ye Xiu and brought into the Alliance, the character that became Excellent Era's foundation and earned the title of "Battle God”…This character suddenly and viciously cut into Ye Xiu's field of view.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks, what a familiar skill, how long has it been since I've last used it?

For the briefest of moments, Ye Xiu couldn't avoid feeling a pang of melancholy, but it was only for a moment. Right afterwards, Lord Grim dodged Dragon Breaks the Ranks, and didn't hesitate at all before attacking the character he was the most familiar with. How many times had he encountered One Autumn Leaf as an enemy after leaving Excellent Era? Ye Xiu couldn't be bothered to keep track anymore.

When Sun Xiang controlled One Autumn Leaf to charge at Lord Grim, he had hardened his heart to die while doing so. He believed that in order to swiftly deal with him, his opponent would definitely let go of Tang Hao's Demon Subduer, if only for a moment.

When Lord Grim's attacks arrived, he did his best to parry the strikes, hoping to use the opportunity to create more space. But after this valiant effort, what he met was not just the assault of Lord Grim, but instead the attacks of anyone who was in range from Team B, none of whom missed this opportunity. Dancing Rain, Windy Rain, and Vaccaria all attacked him.

Was it worth it?

Sun Xiang thought to himself, One Autumn Leaf only had so much health left. A few casual attacks would be able to finish him off, was there a need for such exaggerated fanfare? Especially Wang Jiexi, who had turned around and changed his movement just to charge at him, were they trying to KS each other or something?

Dancing Rain and Windy Rain's attacks were both long-ranged, and Sun Xiang had no way of retaliating against the two. But Vaccaria had surprisingly charged towards him, so Sun Xiang had One Autumn Leaf welcome him instead.

But Vaccaria's body suddenly dipped down and changed directions, flying towards One Autumn Leaf at a low altitude. This situation!

Sun Xiang hurriedly changed his camera angle, and saw that Vaccaria, who had just brushed past him, was actually charging towards Demon Subduer.

This guy switched targets… way too fast, right?

As he stared agape, One Autumn Leaf had already received a fatal blow, becoming the third character to fall in this team competition.

As a result, in terms of numbers, Team A was finally at a clear disadvantage. With the situation being a 3v4, and none of Team B's 4 characters being in great danger of dying, the advantage in numbers became very obvious.

To make matters worse, Sun Xiang letting One Autumn Leaf make a valiant last stand was in order to give Tang Hao an opportunity to seize the initiative, but it seemed as if the results were very debatable.

Tang Hao had really been beaten dizzy.

After facing Wang Jiexi's fierce barrage of attacks, all he could think of was the Magician's playstyle. Right afterwards, Ye Xiu's unspecialized, Lord Grim had charged up and focused another flurry of attacks on him. In order to save him, Sun Xiang sacrificed the life of One Autumn Leaf, resetting the battlefield, but as soon as that happened, the unspecialized Lord Grim was swapped out for the Magician again.

With these two opponents irregularly swapping in and out in front of him, Tang Hao felt a head-splitting migraine coming on.

Was this a 1v1?

No, in Tang Hao's eyes, this already felt like a 1v2, for the two opponents would change in the blink of an eye. At one moment, it was the unspecialized, at another moment, it was the Magician. One of them was so fast that it was dazzling, while the other had unimaginable variations in his playstyle.

Who are these people?

Tang Hao, the junior who had succeeded the senior, suddenly felt completely

perplexed.

Once again, faced against Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria, Tang Hao played very poorly. Originally, he had been psychologically prepared to go up against the Magician once more, but this preparation had been shattered beforehand by Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

"This fellow is already a mess," Huang Shaotian said to Zhou Zekai.

"Yeah…" Zhou Zekai indicated his agreement.

Tang Hao may have been somewhat helpless against Wang Jiexi's Magician playstyle, but after being beaten by it once, he shouldn't have been beaten so soundly the second time. If the Magician playstyle was so tyrannical that it could oppress God-level players, would Wang Jiexi still need to change his playstyle? He could just single-handedly slaughter his way to a championship title. Evidently, by relying on these bursts of attacks, Ye Xiu and Wang Jiexi both explosively fought Tang Hao one after the other, and eventually shattered his fighting spirit.

"Should we still save him?" Huang Shaotian asked.

"…" His question only earned Zhou Zekai's silence.

Huang Shaotian suddenly had a headache. What could he do? At the end of the day, the guy next to him just had to be this taciturn person. In terms of communication through words, it seemed as if they could only go this far!

"Let's go take down Ye Xiu!" Huang Shaotian shouted, as Troubling Rain's sword swept towards Lord Grim. He was already too lazy to waste time on Tang Hao's predicament, that would just be too passive. Their team was already at a clear disadvantage, and if they were to be lead by the nose by Team A the whole time, they would just be whittled down one-by-one till the end. At this time, they could only respond by taking daring risks and erupting with full force against the enemy.

Troubling Rain's sword was flourished, but even faster was Cloud Piercer's bullets. It seemed as if by the time his sword flashed, the sound of Cloud Piercer's bullet had also rung out.

The character that the bullet flew towards was indeed Lord Grim.

"Good kid, you thought the exact same thing as me! Let's kill him!" Huang Shaotian

shouted.

"…" Unfortunately, Zhou Zekai had never wanted to have any verbal communication with his team, but the coordination of his skills was always outstanding. Troubling Rain effortlessly dashed over to Lord Grim's side. Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu attempted to intercept him, but Zhou Zekai had Cloud Piercer's bullets arrive at the most appropriate place at the most appropriate time, causing their attacks to have no effect on Huang Shaotian.

"…"

"I really couldn't tell that you were such an expert in providing covering fire as well!" Huang Shaotian loudly praised before shouting, "Old Ye, watch my sword!"

Sword light flashed downwards, carrying a cold killing intent.

His relationship with Ye Xiu was quite good, but that was only off-stage, what about during matches? He would definitely try to kill Ye Xiu as fast as possible, with no other emotions involved. He was already irritated by Ye Xiu showing off in the individual competition, but it was uncertain whether he could take revenge by winning this team competition. The situation on Tang Hao's side was already hopeless, and Zhou Zekai… he had already successfully covered Huang Shaotian from the attacks of three characters, showing off his abilities to the maximum, could anything more be expected of him? He only hoped that the kid would be able to completely follow the tempo of his attacks next!

In the midst of a rain of bullets, a sword light shone through!

Zhou Zekai coordinated with Huang Shaotian, focusing their attacks on Lord Grim. Wang Jiexi was dealing with Tang Hao, and even though Tang Hao's condition wasn't good, in a 1v1, it was unlikely that he'd be beaten down in a matter of seconds or minutes. Even as he cut a sorry figure, Tang Hao still retained a last trace of clear-headedness, helping him continue to fight back.

Aside from them, there was Su Mucheng and Chu Yunxiu left. The two of them were long-ranged attackers, and when cooperating with Ye Xiu, it was a 3v2 scenario. Originally, the two of them had assisted Ye Xiu in counterattacking Troubling Rain, but now, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer had severely restricted them. The majority of the attacks were aimed at Lord Grim, but once in a while, some attacks would be directed

towards the two of them, causing a great amount of trouble for them each time. If it wasn't interrupting their attacks, it was disturbing their coordination. Between the two of them, Chu Yunxiu had a harder time. Most of her spells had a cast time, and under Cloud Piercer's unpredictable harassment, there was surprisingly not a single big spell that could be casted, causing her to be helplessly suppressed.

"This guy is truly terrifying…" Chu Yunxiu said to Su Mucheng.

"Yeah…" Su Mucheng had no way of disagreeing. Zhou Zekai's mechanical skills had already surpassed that of most other players.

"Not bad not bad, very well done hahaha, this is the tempo of victory!" Huang Shaotian shouted as he hacked away with his sword.

If this continued, victory or defeat would be hard to determine. If these two could be as fast as Wang Jiexi, first getting rid of Lord Grim, then turning their fire towards Vaccaria, what would the situation be like? Everyone was currently considering this possibility.

"The tempo of victory?" At this moment, Ye Xiu laughed and said, "How come I can't see it at all?"

The Myraid Manifestations Umbrella shook and a Sky Strike flew out!

Huang Shaotian didn't back down, and Troubling Rain simply used a Falling Phoenix Slash to knock down the Sky Strike.

Lord Grim's body conveniently crouched down, and when Falling Phoenix Strike's power had been expended, he straightened up and sent out a Knee Attack.

Troubling Rain had already taken a step back, and his sword flashed as he executed Headwind Strike.

Under Huang Shaotian's control, this Headwind Strike's sword arc had extended half a body unit, creating a dense cluster of sword energy.

At this moment, Zhou Zekai suddenly made a sound. "Ah!"

"What did you say "ah" for?" Huang Shaotian was very excited, surprisingly, this person actually still knew how to speak.

"Uh…" Zhou Zekai hesitated and couldn't say what he wanted to, but the Myraid Manifestations Umbrella in Lord Grim's hand had already opened up, completely blocking all the sword arcs from Headwind Strike. Once the attack was blocked, the umbrella was folded back, but it didn't fold inwards. Instead, it folded outwards, directly turning into a spear before striking out.

Hit!

The distance between them was too narrow, and this Dragon Tooth was just too fast, leaving Huang Shaotian with no opportunity to dodge.

Dragon Tooth had a stun effect, so after being hit by Dragon Tooth, the next few combo hits would be unavoidable. Zhou Zekai frantically intensified his attacks to suppress Lord Grim, but at this moment, Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain had finished the cast for a high-level spell, and together with Dancing Rain's attacks, they blotted out the sky as they attacked Troubling Rain.

Zhou Zekai managed to stop Lord Grim's attack, but he had absolutely no way of controlling the other two on the field. He wasn't Nezha, the god with three heads and six arms.

Huang Shaotian immediately figured out that when Zhou Zekai said "ah", it was possible that he had already noticed a problem, and the problem was, in all likelihood, Huang Shaotian's problem, but… he was completely unaware of the situation.

"Grasping the tempo of attacks is still something that I do best, Huang Shao!" A voice filled with laughter travelled over as a violent sword light slammed down. Within the swordsman classes, only the Berserker could possess such a reckless momentum.

Hundred Blossom's Yu Feng, Berserker Blooming Chaos, entered the field.

On the other side, the click clack sounds of machinery rang out. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, Life Extinguisher had also finally reached the battlefield.

At the same time, Huang Shaotian finally realized the subtle meaning in Yu Feng's words, because back in Blue Rain, the person who was the arrowhead of the formation and who lead the team's tempo was Yu Feng. And Huang Shaotian, the true core of Blue Rain, instead drifted away from the formation, waiting to seize an opportunity.

To put it another way, Huang Shaotian's speciality was seizing opportunities and

coordinating with others, and not having other people follow his attacking tempo. In this way, he was very different from most other core players.

So just now, it was clear that there was a slight error in his judgement. When he attacked, it could be that his timing was slightly off, or his positioning was slightly off, but in short, it interfered with Zhou Zekai, messing up their perfect attacking tempo. As a result, Huang Shaotian was immediately counterattacked by Ye Xiu, and shortly after, Zhou Zekai's suppression over the two ranged players had been broken.

"This… really something that I'm not good at. It's a shame that you're also my opponent now." Huang Shaotian said to Yu Feng.

Chapter 1269
Personal Grudge

"Haha, and you have the face to celebrate about your tempo!" That was when Ye Xiu cut in.

Huang Shaotian was enraged, immediately remembering how when he had cheered "this is the tempo of victory", that guy had spoken up with a seemly random "can't tell". It was clear that Ye Xiu understood Huang Shaotian's playstyle and predicted that his and Zhou Zekai's partnership would eventually go wrong, so he didn't rush things. In the end, Huang Shaotian had messed up the tempo practically the moment after he yelled about the tempo of victory. Even Zhou Zekai had voiced a "huh?" in response to him. It was obvious how much his judgement had failed him.

What tempo of victory? This was the tempo of slapping himself in the face!

"Everyone stop moving! It's time to settle a personal grudge, 1v1 me!!!" Huang Shaotian suddenly roared.

Everyone was stunned. The characters turned their view, like they were looking around at each other.

Then, Dancing Rain unhitched her cannon from her shoulder, Windy Rain lowered his raised staff, and Cloud Piercer sheathed his revolves back in the holsters inside his trench coat. Yu Feng, who had finally arrived, looked around for a while before stabbing his sword into the ground. Even the others in Team B had stopped. He was Huang Shaotian's old teammate too, so he had to give him face.

This time, it was the audience that had their eyes wide in shock.

What the hell was this?

This was the team competition! But everyone really did stop and let these two duel each other. This, this… they were so… not serious! This All-Stars competition was the most unorthodox ever; a Cleric had gone to the group arena, now they were having a one on one duel in the team competition… What… What kind of team competition was

this?

But… it really was interesting!

Silence enveloped the stadium for a moment before excitement erupted through the crowd. This All-Stars Competition was really something. So what if it wasn't strict and serious? There were ten of those each week, and sometimes, people just wanted to see such an unorthodox match!

All the characters had stopped over here. As for the other side, Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher had just arrived and originally wanted to go and help Tang Hao. After looking at what was happening here, he wasn't sure what to do anymore.

"What about them? Are we going to let them duel one on one as well?" Xiao Shiqin asked. Wang Jiexi and Tang Hao were still entangled in a fierce battle!

No one paid him any attention. The other characters over here had formed a circle around Lord Grim and Troubling Rain, turning into spectators.

Xiao Shiqin looked around in shock before his Life Extinguisher eventually ran over to stand in the circle with his Mechanical Box.

"You sure this is what you want? After you die, your team will be down two people," Ye Xiu warned the other.

"Bah! You're the one that's gonna die," Huang Shaotian replied.

"What? With the tempo that you're going at?" Ye Xiu struck.

"Fuck off, fuck off, fuck off!" It hit Huang Shaotian's weak point.

"Fine!" Ye Xiu had Lord Grim take a step forwards.

Huang Shaotian took a deep breath, sending a kill emoji as Troubling Rain hiked up Ice Rain, preparing to turn and charge forwards

"Wait!" Ye Xiu suddenly yelled.

"What?!" Huang Shaotian raged. He had just hyped himself up just now.

"Referee, can you hear me, referee?" Ye Xiu called out.

After a moment of silence, a system message popped up in the global channel. "What?"

The audience burst into laughter. This was a system message! They couldn't believe that the referee would send a system message filled with such emotion. How interesting.

"Can I request that the voice function be turned off temporarily?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Go die!" Huang Shaotian yelled, He didn't show any more mercy. Troubling Rain whipped forth sword-light, starting with a Sword Draw.

Ye Xiu didn't back down, using a Slide Kick to slide under the sword-light before launching an offensive.

However, Troubling Rain had already jumped up with a Falling Light Blade, stabbing down towards the sliding Lord Grim.

Lord Grim was reclined, yet the Myriad Manifestations had already changed to spear form, stabbing up at Troubling Rain with Dragon Tooth. Spears were longer than swords. No matter how you looked at it, it was Troubling Rain who would be hit first.

However, Huang Shaotian was truly worthy of being called a top expert. Faced with this situation, he sent his sword straight at the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, the two attacks becoming a parry.

Clang!

The two Silver weapons clashed and Troubling Rain landed behind from there, sword-light flickering once more with an Immortal Guides the Way.

This skill was a knockback attack, but Lord Grim was lying flat on the ground. He obviously couldn't be knocked into the ground, so under these circumstances, knockbacks would cause a small stun. Ye Xiu knew this and Lord Grim rolled to the side. Immortals Guide the Way's sword-light slashed down, sending chunks of earth flying. Lord Grim rolled to a stand, a grenade already thrown. Troubling Rain raised his returning sword-light and with a boom, the grenade exploded into light and fire between them.

Everyone watched them anxiously, not wanting to miss even a moment. Neither of them had much health left. Just once chance would be enough for either of them to claim victory. A pro player's offensive didn't just end with one attack. When one skill hit, there would be many more follow-ups to maximize damage. Currently, the two played extremely cautiously, knowing that a single hit could mean the end.

The smoke from the grenade hadn't even dispersed when Lord Grim snatched the initiative to attack. Shadow Cloak streaked out of the smoke like a ghost, but Huang Shaotian was well acquainted with Ye Xiu's antics. Naturally, he would move to counter it. The instant the Grenade exploded, he was already jumping back to make Troubling Rain dodge.

The Shadow Cloak hit thin air and Huang Shaotian couldn't help but feel triumphant for a moment. He was about to speak, when the earth beneath his feet loosened.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Lord Grim suddenly leaped out from the earth, causing many to cry out in surprise.

Huang Shaotian's amazing reaction speed was clearly reflected by this event. This strike was not at all within his expectations. But through his fast reaction speed and immense hand speed, Troubling Rain still managed a backwards jump to dodge, and even send out a slash with his sword as well. Unfortunately, activating a skill in such a short time was impossible, so this was only a normal attack. Lord Grim jumped up with the Underground Tunneling Technique, knocking the slash aside. His other hand swung up, sending a strike at Troubling Rain's face.

Sand Toss!

The blind this skill dealt was very annoying. Huang Shaotian hurriedly turned his character's head part way, but he knew that the other would try to grasp this chance while he was looking away. His sword was already slashing down, activating Triple Slash and sending his character into motion.

The Sand Toss didn't manage to blind Troubling Rain, and Triple Slash didn't move him too far. Huang Shaotian's Triple Slash was a two step movement in a small area. Under the flickering of the sword-light, Troubling Rain used it to arrive behind Lord Grim with the first two slashes and then sent out the final slash.

Lord Grim didn't bother to turn. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella already on his

shoulder. With a whoosh, the umbrella was opened and the slash landed on the shield.

However, shields wouldn't completely block the damage. With the slash colliding with the shield, Huang Shaotian felt that he had gotten a small advantage.

Was he going to go on the offensive?

That was the thought that suddenly surfaced in Huang Shaotian's mind. Lord Grim didn't have as much health as him. After all, he had been subject to Zhou Zekai and Huang Shaotian's combined offensive before, almost entirely relying on his shield to reduce damage. If he had been fiercer and had managed to bring his DPS high enough, then he and Zhou Zekai might have been able to kill him.

Just as the thought flashed by, still in the ending lag of Triple Slash, Lord Grim jumped back without even putting the umbrella away.

"You're such a crafty bastard!" Huang Shaotian cursed. With that jump, the umbrella shield was practically on top of him. Troubling Rain didn't have any space to move anymore! He had to be careful of the unspecialized quick offensive after the umbrella was closed.

Wait, something's wrong!

How come…

Huang Shaotian suddenly realized, shocked, that his Troubling Rain… was Dizzy!

What the bloody hell? Huang Shaotian abrupted came to a conclusion.

"Shield Attack, huh…" Someone in the circle of spectators said. Everyone turned to look; it was Vaccaria.

"How come you've come over?" As Xiao Shiqin asked his, he turned Life Extinguisher's view.

"I'm done with the battle," Wang Jiexi replied.

As expected, over there, Tang Hao's Demon Subduer had vanished, clearly having been killed.

As for the duel over here? The outcome was set. Huang Shaotian had only trashtalk left, his words filled with rage and dissatisfaction.

Jumping backwards with an umbrella hitched on his shoulder, was he trying to take up Troubling Rain's room to attack? Of course it wasn't that nice. This was a fucking Shield Attack, a Knight's Shield Attack that would apply a Dizzy effect!

Huang Shaotian hadn't realized at first because, one, Shield Attack wasn't a low level skill, and two, with that thing open, he had thought of it as an umbrella. He knew it had the effects of a shield, but he hadn't taken it as a proper shield. In addition, it was a backwards jump after settling the umbrella on his shoulder. Who could have expected Shield Attack to be hidden in there?

After making Troubling Rain dizzy, Lord Grim steadily poised himself to strike before giving Troubling Rain a beating. Without much health left, Troubling Rain finally fell amidst Huang Shaotian's cursing.

Now, Team A only had two people left, Zhou Zekai and Xiao Shiqin, who had only arrived and done nothing but spectated.

As for Team B? They weren't that healthy, but all five were still alive. There was little suspense to the results of the match now. After Wang Jiexi had dealt with Tang Hao, Wang Jiexi had chosen a position to spectate that Xiao Shiqin understood immediately. Wang Jiexi was in a position where he could immediately coordinate with Ye Xiu and form a pincer attack on his Mechanic.

"So, that's it then?" Xiao Shiqin looked around, saying.

"What on earth did we even come here for?" Yu Feng asked Xiao Shiqin. They had arrived, then watched the two duel and then… there wasn't any more to it.

"What about you two duel too?" The others suggested teasingly.

"Nah!" Xiao Shiqin clearly had little interest.

"Yeah, let's not." Yu Feng didn't seem willing either.

"Then let's finish this!" Wang Jiexi said as Vaccaria swung his broom towards Life Extinguisher. Xiao Shiqin responded instinctively, immediately dodging and counterattacking. Then it was a two on five and after a short battle, Team B won

without pressure.

Both the audience at the venue and those watching the broadcast were still thinking back to the All-Stars Competition after it ended. The final two on five wasn't interesting, but before that, there was so much to see.

The TV broadcast team was left in a rather awkward position though. In the end, the Team Competition, the climax of the All-Stars Competition, had lasted not even five minutes.

"Only five minutes?" The audience, who only noticed this afterhand, were amazed. These five minutes had really been filled with too much content!

Chapter 1270
The Most Experienced Player

This concluded the official events of the All-Star Weekend. Although the audience felt that it was very fulfilling, when they checked the time, they suddenly felt like they hadn't gotten enough. Wasn't it kind of a shame that the high point of the three day event ended that quickly?

But the winners had already been determined, and the players of Teams A and B had already walked out of the player booths. They didn't go offstage, but mingled amongst each other. For this sort of performative match, most people didn't care too much about victory. Otherwise, how would there be that scenario of everyone crowding around to watch two people 1v1 each other.

But only most people didn't care. There were always people who did care, very much.

Tang Hao…

When he came out of the player booth, his face was pale. In the Rookie Challenge of Season 8 All-Star Weekend, Tang Hao defeated Lin Jingyan. This battle could be considered the battle that established him as a God, cementing his position as a top player. But in this All-Star Weekend, in the team competition, he had been beaten down so pathetically.

The images of the battle flashed through his mind. In front of him, the God-level players of all the other teams were all relaxed and chatting with each other, but Tang Hao just couldn't relax.

It wasn't that he couldn't accept a loss. But how come his loss was so ugly, so pathetic? The cheers of the crowd seemed like mocking laughter to Tang Hao.

The players didn't immediately come offstage, but a reporter from the esports channels carried his camera and flew toward the stage. This team competition ended too quickly, far out of their expectations, entirely disrupting their planned program schedule. They'd purposely left an extra large block of time empty for the All-Star event, since they didn't want time restrictions to disrupt the broadcast of this once-a-

year special event. But in the end, the team competition was over in five minutes. Fortunately in the last battle of the group arena, Zhang Xinjie with that Cleric PK had used up a good deal of time, otherwise this All-Star Competition would have ended even earlier.

Sending a reporter onstage now was so that they could do some live interviews, use up a bit more of the broadcast time.

These interviews hadn't been planned in advance, but these God-level players were used to being chased by reporters for interviews. Today's competition hadn't posed much of a burden, anyway, so most of them weren't in any low spirits. The reporter that rushed onstage immediately saw Zhang Xinjie and Wu Yuce discussing something together, and he headed toward them first.

"Hello, vice-captains!" the reporter greeted.

These two paused in their conversation and looked at him.

"Are you discussing that group arena battle from just earlier?" the reporter asked.

"Yes," Zhang Xinjie nodded.

"What do you two think?"

"If it hadn't been stopped, I should have had a slight health advantage at the end and I should have won," said Zhang Xinjie.

"That's only in your planned, ideal conditions," Wu Yuce immediately retorted. It looked like the two of them had been discussing the question of who would have won that battle.

"The plans would have become reality," Zhang Xinjie said.

"You never know what will happen in a battle," said Wu Yuce.

"I'd try my hardest to minimize the unexpected," said Zhang Xinjie.

"Hard to say." Wu Yuce shook his head.

"Perhaps we should give it another try," Zhang Xinjie said.

"Forget it… I'm not too interested in that kind of battle," Wu Yuce said. He'd already avoided having to play out such a dull battle, of course he didn't want to repeat it. After all, it would never happen again.

Zhang Xinjie didn't press either. He only shook his head in regret, seeming quite unsatisfied with his inability to verify the result.

To the side, the reporter didn't interject. He simply recorded all of this to the camera as is. Let everyone experience the unaltered interactions of the Gods after a match. Seeing that these two didn't have any more to say, the reporter began to search for a new target. Those who had had strong performances in the match would of course attract him more easily.

Wang Jiexi!

The reporter's eyes brightened. Wang Jiexi seemed to be giving a lesson to Tiny Herb player Gao Yingjie, and the reporter immediately rushed forward.

"Use your best, most comfortable, most familiar method to perform, that's enough," said Wang Jiexi.

"But Captain, what you've been using all this time, is that your best, most comfortable, most familiar method?" Gao Yingjie suddenly asked.

Wang Jiexi was silent for a while, and then he shook his head. "That is why I hope that you can. Have more confidence, don't be easily shaken. You're more suited to this team than I am. Believe in yourself!"

Seeing Gao Yingjie nod, the reporter took this chance to interject.

"Hello, both of you," he greeted.

"Captain Wang's performance in this team battle really gave us quite a shock! We never would have expected you to suddenly revive your old style. Are you planning to go back to your style again?" the reporter asked.

"Of course not," Wang Jiexi smiled, and then looked at the stage and player booths behind him. "It's good enough to be able to relax here."

"Maybe if Tiny Herb had the Magician, they could earn even better results?" the

reporter said.

Wang Jiexi continued to smile, but he didn't say anything. The reporter knew that he was rejecting this view, he just didn't say so out loud. The Magician Wang Jiexi hadn't won anything for Tiny Herb, but after he changed, Tiny Herb had obtained two championships. The person in front of him knew a hundred times better than him what style suited Tiny Herb better, and his own opinion was just himself trying to be smart. As he thought about this, the reporter looked at Gao Yingjie, and asked, "Then what about Little Gao? Will we have a chance to see him become a magician?" This time, the reporter was asking with a joking tone.

"Maybe! If it's on this stage." Gao Yingjie was now better at dealing with the media, and he answered the question quite well. He hadn't rejected the possibility entirely, but he said "on this stage." Yes, on the All-Star stage, what wasn't possible?

After obtaining another conversation, the reporter turned his head, saw Ye Xiu not too far away, and quickly rushed up to him. This God's performance was also very strong, and he rarely accepted interviews. Even though he didn't reject them completely after his return, he was still very low-key. Whatever he could avoid, he would try to avoid, and it was no easy feat to obtain a live interview.

"God Ye Xiu!" The reporter saw that Ye Xiu wasn't talking to anyone right now, and charged forward.

"Hm?" Ye Xiu looked at the reporter.

"The team competition was incredibly exciting. Was it your plan to leave the Cleric out of the team competition?" the reporter asked. This is what they had guessed offstage, because earlier they'd seen that argument at Team B, with Ye Xiu apparently at the center. They didn't know that was Team B trying to pick the most energy-saving arrangement, but looking at the final line-up, they thought that it was possibly Ye Xiu's idea to put the Cleric in the group arena, causing everyone to oppose him.

"Of course not!" But Ye Xiu answered with this. "I just gave a random suggestion."

"Hahaha…" The reporter laughed dryly. When Ye Xiu said "of course not," he had actually thought there were some other hidden factors at play, but in the end, it really was just this.

"Why would you propose such a suggestion?" the reporter then asked.

"Obviously so we could have a more exciting and aggressive battle!" Ye Xiu said, very seriously.

Instantly, the nearby Team B players who heard this all looked at him.

This guy, he could really talk! When they'd made this plan, everyone liked this arrangement only because it would allow the match to finish faster!

"Haha, the battle really was very exciting. There were a lot of highlights!" the reporter said.

"Well, of course. After all, everyone here is an outstanding player," Ye Xiu said.

"And you? How would you evaluate yourself?"

"Me? I'm probably the most experienced player here in this circle, right?" Ye Xiu said.

The interview was broadcast on television, but it was also shown on the display screens in the stadium. Tyranny fans obviously had no kind feelings toward Ye Xiu, but they did have to have a reason to boo him. They couldn't find any points to complain about with his earlier, very standard answers to the reporter's questions. But with these words, Tyranny's fans were instantly upset.

You're the most experienced player? At least add a "one of the" okay! Over there is our Captain Han! A player from the first generation just like you! No, technically, he's even more experienced than you! You still have a year and half gap in the middle!

The stadium came alive with boos, which prompted the reporter. Looking at the players around him, quite a few people were looking this way after hearing this answer. The reporter immediately asked, "Then what about Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing?"

"Old Han? He can't compete with me!" Ye Xiu said, brimming with confidence.

The booing increased. Even the gathered Gods had "you jerk can't you stop bragging" expressions as they continued to watch.

"Why is that? You're both players from the first generation, and Captain Han Wenqing…"

"Has he played in the Challenger League?" Ye Xiu directly interrupted the reporter with his explanation.

Silence.

Played in the Challenger League? Fuck, you're counting that a experience? Everyone was shocked, but if they were really talking from this standpoint, then indeed, Han Wenqing's experience was slightly inferior. But everyone was glad not to have that sort of experience. Playing in the Challenger League, that absolutely wasn't a joyful experience for a top-tier God, but this guy actually made treasure out of this trash, counting this as part of his accumulated experience. Is there anyone else like you shamelessly increasing their own level like this?

BOOOO!

This time, it wasn't just the Tyranny fans. The rest of the audience, even some of the players offstage, the Gods onstage, they were all booing Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu smiled bitterly, waving his hand as he said to the reporter, "They're just jealous."

Jealous your ass! The reporter felt unwell, and even the cameraman had shaken unstably. The reporter chuckled awkwardly. He felt like his head had crashed, and he couldn't think of what direction to go next with the interview.

Fortunately, from the shock Ye Xiu had provoked, he'd picked out a target.

Han Wenqing, the captain of Team Tyranny Han Wenqing, the boss of this area, the one who "lost to" Ye Xiu in experience because he hadn't played in the Challenger League.

"Captain Han, regarding Ye Xiu's words just now… Do you object?" the reporter asked, rather directly. After all, the two of them had been death enemies for ten years.

"His accomplishments in the Challenger League are indeed worthy of pride," said Han Wenqing.

Chapter 1271
All-Star Armory

Han Wenqing's answer surprised the reporters somewhat. These bitter enemies of ten years had never yielded to each other on stage, but their relationship off-stage wasn't quite what the reporters had imagined it to be.

The mutual respect between heroes? The reporters weren't too interested in such a dry topic, but when Han Wenqing said that Ye Xiu's results in the Challenger League were worthy of pride, thinking about it a little, he was right. Leading a team full of players who had been scraped together from god-knows-where at the last minute, he had defeated Excellent Era and emerged victorious from the Challenger League. Why wouldn't such miraculous results be something to be proud of?

In that case, to say it was a fruitful experience was in fact completely correct?

The reporters thought about it and suddenly realized that Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing seemed to resonate on some kind of level, could it be because they were both practical and realistic people?

Practical and realistic?

When this phrase popped up in their minds, the reporters all shuddered. Calling Han Wenqing practical and realistic was fine, but Ye Xiu? The reporters refused to entertain this notion any further, they were completely unwilling to accept such an idea.

The All Star Weekend was hosted at Tyranny's stadium, but in the All-Star Competition on the last day, Tyranny's two players didn't have too prominent a role. Zhang Xinjie's Cleric was sent off to fight in the group arena, while Han Wenqing was the second to be eliminated from the team competition. As such, the fans of Team Tyranny, who were onsite, were a little dissatisfied. In the All-Star Weekend, most of the time, everyone would do their best to bolster the reputation of the host team's players, letting them perform more beautifully and becoming the MVP of the All-Star Competition. But this time, the title of All-Star Competition MVP was instead stolen away by Wang Jiexi. The Magician style that he showed off during the competition had defeated Tang Hao and Sun Xiang in quick succession, and he was unquestionably the most brilliant star in

the competition.

In sharp contrast to his beautiful performance was Tang Hao's miserable one. Evidently, in this All-Star Competition, it was impossible for everyone to be happy and satisfied. Even so, the curtains finally fell on this event.

The teams each regrouped and went home, and the media wantonly reported on the various magnificent scenes produced over these three days. But to the pro players, these three days were simply not worth focusing on, because this event and the true goal that they were pursuing were completely unrelated.

As everyone returned home, each team immediately started preparing for Round 18 of the regular season.

In Round 18, the intense matches of strong teams facing each other were everywhere.

The home and away teams respectively were as such; Team Tiny Herb against Team Misty Rain, Team Blue Rain against Team Void, Team Tyranny against Team Hundred Blossoms, Team Samsara against Team Thunderclap, and finally Team Happy against Team Wind Howl.

This kind of round presented a truly difficult decision for the broadcasters, and after weighing their decisions over and over again, they finally decided to show the match between Team Samsara and Team Thunderclap. Thunderclap's performance in the team competitions this season had been discussed with great enthusiasm, but Samsara? They were far too strong, making everyone somewhat numb to their formidable strength. Team Samsara had won every single one of their 17 rounds, an achievement even more exceptional than Team Thunderclap's.

Team Thunderclap's consecutive victories in the team competition were unfortunately halted in Round 16 by Team Happy. Even so, people didn't lose faith in Thunderclap because of this. When this team that relied on precise execution of their strategies met Samsara's lineup with 4 All-Stars, what kind of a battle would ensue? This match was thus selected to be the one broadcasted live, as it would evidently attract more than enough viewers.

The players were busily preparing for their upcoming matches and the television stations were busy selecting which match to broadcast, but the big team's managements were currently collating the opinions of the team members, carefully

considering whether or not any adjustments needed to be made in the winter transfer window. What about the Alliance? After this All-Star weekend, they had released a new list: the All-Star Armory.

No matter whether it was in-game or in the pro scene, of all the equipment on a character, the one that drew the most attention was without a doubt the weapon. And now, the Alliance had compiled a list of all the weapons of each character in the pro circle, letting players vote in order to decide on this "All-Star Armory".

To those in the know, this was probably in order to do a survey before making products based on these weapons, but no matter what, the players were undoubtedly excited about this. The moment the list came out, the votes poured in non-stop, and the Alliance made a new rule: the Armory rankings would reset every month, and the results would be tallied at the end of the year.

After a few days, the All-Star Armory had already seen some clear distinctions in its rankings. The weapon in first place was the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella of Team Happy's Lord Grim.

The Silver lettering showed that this was a piece of self-made equipment, but having a Level 70 weapon on the list was exceedingly irksome. Glory's update had been around for a year already, and weapons were always the number one priority of equipment research. To this date, the number of self-made weapons that hadn't reached level 75 was exceedingly small, not to mention the number one rank in the All-Star Armory.

It couldn't be helped; the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's novelty was far too eye-catching. In the All-Star voting, Ye Xiu was ranked lower than Zhou Zekai, but in this Armory, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had outranked Cloud Piercer's Wildfire and Shattered Frost by a few ranks.

This result had made many people exceptionally gloomy.

It was just as those in the know had said, this All-Star Armory could be said to be a survey of the players' interest in weapon-based merchandise, but now, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's popularity had far exceeded that of other weapons, making the merchandise manufacturers very jittery.

Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, it wouldn't be enough to just make an umbrella and

call it a day. The biggest characteristic of the weapon was its transformations, if it didn't transform, how could this weapon be popular?

This kind of thing that could transform, dismantle, and reform could be created in-game by ignoring some of the rules of science here and there. But to make it a real piece of merchandise and fully replicate its transforming ability, how much meticulous design and planning would be required? How complicated would the assembly of such a product be? How long would it take to manufacture? Finally, how much would it cost to make?

A high cost of production would mean a high price tag. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella would have a price tag far more demonic than other merchandise, and it was so demonic that those professionals who understood the market for merchandise all felt that this was too crazy.

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella could not be fully replicated, but not fully replicating it would definitely impact sales, making many people feel very regretful.

This Ye Xiu, why was he always such a pain? In the past, he hadn't allowed Excellent Era to make too much of a profit off of merchandise based on him. Now, he had easily created an extremely popular and famous weapon, but at the end of the day, it was unreplicatable. This guy, was he deliberately suffocating these businesses? All of those in the business who had known Ye Xiu in the past were now bitterly complaining inside. But no matter what, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was extremely popular. Making two or three of the forms was something worth trying out, and so the producers of this weapon merchandise took the initiative to get in touch with Happy.

These matters were all handled by Chen Guo. Over the past half a year, she had gotten familiar with managing the team, allowing Ye Xiu to single-mindedly focus on the competitive aspect, so he wouldn't have to expend too much effort on other things. At present, aside from these collaborations, the winter transfer window opening was also something that would create a lot of work for the teams.

Team Happy's line of thinking during this transfer window was very simple; don't buy and dont' sell. In effect, they wouldn't take part. But while not buying would allow them to avoid a few disturbances, not selling couldn't stop other teams from making inquiries.

With the impressive results that Happy had, their value of their members had also

seen a significant increase. On top of that, they were a grassroots team new to the Alliance. After half a year of interaction, everyone knew that Happy's financial prowess wasn't anything impressive, and that their conditions were a little more arduous. As such, in a lot of people's eyes, Happy was like a poor child holding a brick of gold. While they couldn't snatch the entire thing away, they could spend some money to take at a least a chunk of it, right?

Qiao Yifan, Steamed Bun, Mo Fan and even Ye Xiu had all been given offers by various people. But at the end of the day, the buyers all ran into a wall and had no choice but to turn back. Chen Guo didn't show the slightest intention of letting go of any of their players, making everyone unable to see a hope in negotiating a deal.

Very quickly, on the 10th of January, Round 18 would begin. In the past ten days, there were some teams that had closed some deals, but the winter transfer window was always a small event. A transfer in core players, like in season eight, where Excellent Era managed to dig out Sun Xiang, was very rare.

In this season, some teams had stable results, while others were more unstable, but seemingly no team had a big enough conflict between their core players and normal players that they needed to use the winter transfer window to resolve it. The teams with the greatest rumors of making a transfer were Team Misty Rain and Team Wind Howl. Team Misty Rain's new playstyle this season had not created any breakthroughs for them thus far, and with 86 points, they sat at tenth place in the rankings, which was their worst results in the past few years. In a situation where their playstyle had yet to bear fruit after half a season, many people guessed that Team Misty Rain would make some adjustments to their roster.

As for Team Wind Howl, they had accumulated 112 points and sat at sixth place, which was a seemingly decent result, but it fell short of their expectations. They were a team that was aiming for the championship title, but this season, they had lost most of their matches against strong teams, causing them to begin to doubt themselves somewhat.

Upon Fang Rui's departure, the position of second-in-command had fallen to Liu Hao, who had willingly transferred in, which had somewhat disrupted the structure of Wind Howl's core. The Criminal Duo of a Brawler and Thief was what they had relied on for many years, and after Fang Rui's departure, they hadn't given up on their Thief, instead spending money to invite Team Blue Rain's Thief Player, Lin Feng, giving him the All-Star character, Doubtful Demon.

But at the end of the day, Liu Hao's Spellblade had taken a higher position, even snatching a place in the All-Star rankings, making his standing in the team very clear. And Lin Feng? He held an All-Star account in his hands, but was still far from making the list of All-Stars. In comparison with Hundred Blossoms, Zou Yuan had relied purely on the fans attachment to his account, but he still managed to send himself and Dazzling Hundred Blossoms into All-Stars. It was evident that Lin Feng's performance was not particularly outstanding, although Doubful Demon's standing was far inferior to that of Dazzling Hundred Blossom's.

Would Team Wind Howl make any adjustments to their roster? Everyone was making their own conjectures, and some fans even appealed for them to ask Fang Rui to come back. But this kind of idea could only be a fanboy's wishful thinking. Fang Rui went to Team Happy, even going so far as to put in the effort to change classes. Now, when his class change had finally begun to show results, and when Happy was still a step higher than Wind Howl in rank, they wanted him to go back to Wind Howl and revert to playing a Thief? These people, they were probably counting on Fang Rui to have some kind of undying love for Wind Howl…

Would such a situation occur?

Surprisingly, there were really reporters who went online to ask Fang Rui this question.

"I will go back," Fang Rui replied.

The reporter was completely stunned, then ecstatic, this news was truly too explosive. Fang Rui, he was actually willing to return to Wind Howl?

"On the 10th of January, I will return," Fang Rui even gave a concrete timing afterwards.

When the reporter looked at it, he suddenly understood, Fang Rui would return, but as an opponent, although…

"Great Fang Rui, the 10th of January is Happy's home game!" the reporter reminded him.

"Is it? How stupid of me, what a waste of my beautiful lines! After playing at All-Stars, I can't even count now!" Fang Rui shouted.

Chapter 1272
Meeting Force With Force

January 10 finally arrived. Neither Misty Rain nor Wind Howl made any transfers before this day. Wind Howl's original team travelled to City H one day ahead of time to warm up and get used to the set-up. Wind Howl's vice-captain Liu Hao received a good welcome from City H. It could be seen that the Excellent Era fans were still supportive of this former Excellent Era player. In the pre-match interview, Liu Hao expressed his deepest condolences towards Excellent Era's disbandment and wished New Excellent Era good luck. He also talked about New Excellent Era's current situation in the Challenger League very precisely and clearly, immediately touching the feelings of many Excellent Era fans.

As for the upcoming match, Liu Hao didn't talk too much about it. Wind Howl's captain, Tang Hao, didn't accept the pre-match interview. After the All-Stars Weekend, there were rumors that Tang Hao was feeling down because of his performance at All-Stars. These rumors were rather surprising. Who would have thought that this God would actually care so much about All-Stars?

"Our captain? His condition is great. He didn't accept the interview because he wants to fully focus on this match. Wind Howl has performed well in our previous two matches. We want this momentum to continue! Happy's performance this season has already told us that they aren't a weak team, so we also need to prepare for them seriously," Liu Hao said about Tang Hao.

Wind Howl's Liu Hao and Guo Yang originated from City H, but they didn't have too much to do with Happy. When Happy beat Excellent Era in the Challenger League, the two of them had already left Excellent Era.

However, Wind Howl and Happy were only 5 points apart on the rankings. After this match, the placings might change. Fang Rui, a former Wind Howl player, was another focus point in this match. Many people wanted to see Fang Rui take revenge. After all, his departure from Wind Howl had been quite sad. Everyone saw that Wind Howl had let go of Fang Rui to construct a new team.

Tonight, Happy's home ground, the Xiaoshan Stadium, was a full-house. Happy's

outstanding record had conquered more and more City H Glory players. Just by looking at the number of seats filled, you wouldn't be able to tell that Happy was a new team in the Alliance. Skill was what mattered in competition. This logic wasn't wrong.

The match was about to begin. First up was the individual competition. Happy's home crowd immediately roared with all their strength, "SEVENTEEN!"

17!

If Ye Xiu won this individual round, his win streak would be at 17. He had always been the first to go up in the individual competition, so before the lineup even came out, Happy's fans were already cheering.

Happy's fans didn't shout for nothing. Ye Xiu stood up from his seat and waved his hands towards the crowd. Amidst the energetic cheers and applause, he went onto the stage.

Ye Xiu had always been a symbol in this city's Glory community. After his return, his overwhelming record-breaking win streak and the unmasking of his mysteriousness amassed countless fans. The majority of these fans were on the older side. Among them, quite a few had already left the Glory scene, but Ye Xiu's return aroused their former passion and nostalgia for the game. In the Glory game, many old accounts that hadn't logged in for a long time started playing again.

Ye Xiu was the symbol of that generation. That generation's players couldn't feel the same passion from chasing the new Gods like Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang, and Tang Hao. But now, their passion had been reignited on the stage.

Ye Xiu walked onto the stage. Who would Team Wind Howl send out as their first player?

The current consensus by numerous analysts was that Ye Xiu's fixed ordering in the individual competition was a way to gain the upper hand in the morale battle.

Ye Xiu always appeared first. He never hid. Then, how could the opponents respond?

Send out a strong player to fight? If that player lost, the team's morale would take a hit. If the team sent out a weak player, it would be like Tian Ji's horse race, but breaking the team's momentum right at the start of the match might not achieve such ideal effects.

As a result, Happy's move was difficult to deal with. We're going to put our strongest player up first and we'll wait for you to beat him. Do you dare? Ye Xiu's win streak seemed to be taunting them.

A weak team wouldn't dare to take up this challenge and usually just threw away this round. But some teams really would try to fight this morale battle. After all, if they really could beat Ye Xiu, it would be a huge blow to Happy's morale and a huge boost to their own team's morale. Happy's move was a double-edged sword. However, Ye Xiu was confident in waving this double-edged sword around. In the past 16 rounds, he had only injured and never been injured.

What will Wind Howl do?

This ambitions of this team were very high. The ambitions of this team's captain were very high. The ambitions of this team's rookies were very high. It was unlikely for them to throw away the first match. Who would they send up? Their captain Tang Hao? Would they send their core player to fight Ye Xiu and give up on the group arena? Speaking of which, no team had made this arrangement yet. Would Wind Howl do it?

Some looked towards Wind Howl's seats. Some stared at the screen. On Wind Howl's lineup display, the name of their first player slowly flipped into view.

Tang Hao!

They really sent out Tang Hao. Sure enough, Wind Howl was the first to take the gamble*, directly bringing out their captain and core player to fight against Ye Xiu.

Wind Howl's loyal fans, who came all this way to support their team, cheered for their team's aggressiveness and pride. However, their shouts were quickly drowned out by the boos and laughs by the home crowd.

If we aren't remembering wrong, didn't your captain Tang Hao just get destroyed by our captain at All-Stars?

Happy's fans had the lung power. Even though All-Stars was just a showmatch, who cared? Just find an example and spout it as the truth.

What could Wind Howl do? Explain patiently that All-Stars didn't count? Perhaps that might work in a forum, but in this stadium's atmosphere, words alone didn't hold enough power. They could only feign ignorance. However, Happy's taunts were quite

painful to listen to.

The one in the most pain would be Tang Hao, though. At All-Stars, even though the public didn't care, he definitely did care. Now, because of the taunts from Happy, he cared even more. His two fists were clenched tightly. These two hands had helped him win everything, taking down all those voices he didn't want to hear. This time, he had decided to use this two hands again, to silence the Happy fans.

"Victory will be Wind Howl's!"

As soon as the match began, Tang Hao immediately declared that he would win, and Demon Subduer rushed straight towards the center. At All-Stars, no one had moved strategically, so Tang Hao didn't either. What's more, when Ye Xiu chose 1v1 stages, he never picked anything complicated. His maps were always the simple and direct.

The two characters met decisively at the center of the map. Lord Grim had a longer range. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's gun form turned into a Gatling Gun and sprayed a rain of bullets. Tang Hao didn't retreat. Demon Subduer tore right through the bullet rain. It was just a Gatling Gun; it wasn't enough to hold him back.

Gatling Gun finished firing in the blink of an eye, and Demon Subduer had forcibly pulled the distance closer. Lord Grim still had plenty of skills though. His character retreated, while firing Anti-Tank Missiles. Three missiles formed a triangle, shooting out from the gun in parallel like a fan.

However, these still couldn't stop Demon Subduer's rush. Demon Subduer weaved between two missiles precisely and swiftly. This little technique was nothing in front of top Gods.

And at this moment, Lord Grim had finally entered Demon Subduer's attack range. Demon Subduer raised his hands and threw a handful of sand. You could take the hit, but you had to turn your gaze away from it. However, Lord Grim had an umbrella in his hands. With a whoosh, it opened and blocked the sand.

This response was within Tang Hao's expectations. The purpose of a direct Sand Toss was for that instant where the opponent's sight was no longer on him. Whether it was turning around or blocking with a shield, the outcome was the same. Demon Subduer threw the Paralysis Needle he had prepared. If the needle hit a target, it would paralyze the target. Brawlers were filled with these dirty little tricks.

Paralysis Needle was thrown practically the instant Lord Grim's umbrella opened. Tang Hao was banking on Ye Xiu closing his umbrella after blocking the Sand Toss. In that case, the Paralysis Needle couldn't be dodged and it would strike Lord Grim.

But after the Sand Toss was blocked, Lord Grim didn't retract his umbrella. His umbrella stayed wide open. The precisely timed Paralysis Needle stabbed the umbrella canopy and fell down without even making a sound.

Tang Hao was gloomy. Seeing that the umbrella wasn't going to be closed any time soon, he might as well use it as a cover. Demon Subduer rushed forward, holding a Brick in his hands. The Brick would be thrown as soon as he reached him.

Lord Grim didn't retract his umbrella, but he rushed forward as well.

Charge! A Knight skill. The shield was a Knight equipment, and it didn't stop this skill from being used. Using Charge with a shield would carry the same momentum, but it lacked the damage. Tang Hao didn't dare disregard it. A Shield Charge dealt no damage, but shields had Shield Attack. At All-Stars, Ye Xiu had used this trick and even Huang Shaotian fell for it. Tang Hao remembered that scene and didn't dare borrow the shield as a cover anymore. He hastily shifted diagonally and pulled the distance between them a bit. He raised his arms and threw a Brick.

But in this instant, Tang Hao clearly saw that the Lord Grim behind the umbrella was looking towards the side, staring right at him.

My opponent knows!

By the time Tang Hao realized this, the Brick had already been thrown by Demon Subduer. Then, he saw Lord Grim draw his sword from the umbrella handle with a Sword Draw. A sword light flashed out in front of him. Dodge? Demon Subduer had just stepped towards him. Which way should he dodge?

Forward? Backwards? Left? Right?

The sword light covered all of his options!

Hit!

Demon Subduer's blood sprayed into the air.

Chapter 1273
Completely Crushed

The attack landed in such a simple manner.

Splattering blood and cutting down Tang Hao's rising spirit.

Demon Subduer's Brick was easily dodged, while he himself took a hit. How could Ye Xiu only attack just once? After Sword Draw, the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's shield form retracted, and its numerous other forms were displayed as all sorts of skills struck Demon Subduer.

Unspecialized characters fight fast!

Unwittingly, the crowd had started gasping at Lord Grim's combo. Even though they had no idea what exactly Ye Xiu was doing in his combo game, they could see Demon Subduer being hit by a bunch of different low-leveled skills. From this, they knew that Lord Grim's combo had started.

So far, 16 players had lost to these swift attacks. Among these players included nervous rookies, talented rookies, matchups tactically chosen to be thrown away, and strong players who wanted to give him a try. There were also former Gods like Zhang Jiale and Sun Zheping.

However, it was the first time Ye Xiu had encountered a team's core player.

And what was the outcome?

The people carrying hopes for Tang Hao were quickly disappointed.

He… was no different from anyone else!

Victory belongs to Wind Howl?

Tang Hao's declaration before the match now just seemed like empty words. The powerlessness he was showing right now indicated that he was being completely

overwhelmed.

What's going on? This isn't All-Stars.

Quite a few people wondered. They felt like this wasn't Tang Hao's true strength.

Tang Hao also thought that this wasn't his true strength, but the problem was that he wasn't able to display it.

After Ye Xiu took first blood, Tang Hao had felt a bit defeated. His fighting spirit and willpower had taken a small blow, but they were still there. He was waiting for an opportunity to counterattack, waiting for an opening.

But… there were no openings.

It was just four words, but what level of fundamentals did that require?

No matter how haughty Tang Hao was. No matter how confident he was that he could beat anyone. He didn't dare believe that he could play on stage without exposing any openings.

No one could do it. At least that was what Tang Hao thought up until today. But right now, facing this opponent, he couldn't find even the slightest opening.

How is this possible?

Am I just not perceptive enough?

Tang Hao didn't believe a person couldn't have any openings, so he started doubting his observational abilities. His confidence had already started to waver.

Tang Hao didn't know whether this doubt had sprouted starting from today, or from that day at All-Stars. He only knew that he didn't want to lose, yet he couldn't find any ways to win.

Keep fighting like this?

Seeing Demon Subduer's health dropping, Tang Hao started to panic.

What if I really can't find any openings? Could I be taken out in one go by a near full

health Ye Xiu? In Ye Xiu's sixteen victories, no one had lost this miserably, no? Could it be that I'm worse than even them?

"Impossible!!!" Tang Hao roared. No one could hear him though. Voice communication was only enabled at All-Stars. In regular season matches, the competitive rules were back to normal.

With this roar, Tang Hao sprung forward. He ignored Lord Grim's next attack, activating Reinforce Iron Bones, and forced his way over!

Instant defeat.

Tang Hao's choice wasn't some sort of magical road out; it looked more like a trapped beast's final struggle. Ye Xiu saw a hundred different ways to deal with it. He simply chose one of them and knocked down Demon Subduer.

The crowd erupted into loud boos. Tang Hao's struggle looked like there was zero brain behind it. You want to break through an unspecialized's combo like that?

"Too naive!" Happy's fans shouted loudly.

The sound couldn't reach Tang Hao's ears, but he knew better than anyone else what he was doing.

If once isn't enough, then again!

Tang Hao rushed forward again like a brute, continue to charge at him without any thought.

You look as if you've got a hundred ways to deal with me? Fine, then I'll try them out one by one. Let's see just how many you've got.

Tang Hao continued to go for it, but the crowd's laughter was gradually dying down.

Tang Hao's playing looked pathetic, so much so that it didn't look like he deserved his God status. However, when there was no way out, being able to lower oneself and daring to try such humiliating choices showed just how pure Tang Hao's pursuit for victory was. Many people thought his All-Stars performance was disgraceful, but right now, his actions showed he didn't care about that.

He wasn't playing for honor, he was playing to win.

Unfortunately, victory wasn't as simple as just letting go of everything. No one knew just how many ways Ye Xiu had to deal with this situation, but everyone could see how Tang Hao's countless attempts ended with him being beaten back. The crowd stopped laughing. Ye Xiu didn't let up at all.

Tang Hao might have the energy to keep trying, but Demon Subduer didn't have unlimited health.

Again and again, he was unable to break through Lord Grim's offense. All he faced was an even stronger retaliation. Finally, Demon Subduer's health fell to zero.

I lost!

But he wasn't as humiliated or embarrassed as he'd been at All-Stars.

Wang Jiexi's Magician playstyle had been too abrupt and too unexpected. Tang Hao had been caught unprepared. He was probably more resentful about being cheated by this sort of surprise move. But right now, he wasn't facing anything surprising. He wasn't caught off guard. He was being completely suppressed in a real fight. It was because his opponent was better than him.

So there was someone this skilled?

When Demon Subduer fell, Tang Hao didn't feel humiliated, but rather humbled.

"I'll win next time!" He was still as stubborn as ever. He seemed to have forgotten that his declaration of victory had been shut down.

"We'll see next time," Ye Xiu replied.

The crowd let out a sigh of relief.

Sigh of relief? Why did they let out a sigh of relief? Everyone suddenly started feeling a bit strange. Tang Hao was just thrashing around without any brain. How could he win like that? Why were they worried for Ye Xiu?

When Ye Xiu came down from the stage, the crowd clapped and cheered, but there was a trace of hesitation mixed in.

As for Tang Hao? He was the loser, and one who lost miserably, but his steps were firm. Everyone looked at him with complicated feelings. They couldn't say why though.

Ye Xiu walked down from the stage and returned to his seat.

"Beautiful playing! You really taught that guy a lesson!" Chen Guo went over to Ye Xiu and praised him. She didn't like Tang Hao. Watching Tang Hao get destroyed by Ye Xiu felt amazing.

"It was well done," Fang Rui nodded. "But it wasn't easy, no?"

"What?" Chen Guo was puzzled. When she looked at Ye Xiu, she discovered that he didn't look too happy about his win. Even though Ye Xiu wasn't the type to show his emotions easily, his expression wasn't very relaxed despite winning. Chen Guo realized her perspective of the match was too shallow. She looked at Su Mucheng, and from Su Mucheng's gaze towards Ye Xiu, she could see… worry.

"It wasn't easy," Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Chen Guo asked.

"Boss… do you really think completely suppressing a player of Tang Hao's caliber is easy?" Fang Rui said.

"Ah?"

"The reason he could do it was because he was going all out the entire time! That's very exhausting," Fang Rui said.

Chen Guo now understood that Ye Xiu had used up much more energy than normal to achieve such a beautiful win. Beat Tang Hao? It wasn't just that. He had completely suppressed him.

"Why did he have to do that?" Chen Guo was feeling worried. Isn't a win just good enough? Why did he have to pay such a price to win so thoroughly? Was that necessary? Chen Guo felt distressed.

"Why? Because I didn't want to lose!" Ye Xiu said.

Not lose?

Chen Guo was stumped. Ye Xiu meant that if he hadn't completely suppressed Tang Hao, if Tang Hao had an opportunity to counterattack, he might have lost to Tang Hao?

Chen Guo looked at Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, everyone.

Everyone was quiet. No one called Ye Xiu's words into question.

Chen Guo couldn't say anything else.

"You… rest well!" She could only say these words.

The match continued. Even though she was worried about Ye Xiu, the match was going well. In the individual competition, Happy sent out Mo Fan and Su Mucheng, who won their matches, making the score 3-0.

The entire crowd had forgotten the weird feeling felt from the first individual round and started chanting 10-0. The points in the individual competition were the most scattered, so these points were often the biggest barriers to a 10-0. However, Happy had swept the individual competition and were on their way to 10-0! So far, whenever Happy won every round in the individual competition, they had always gotten a 10-0!

Hearing the crowd's cheers, Chen Guo unexpectedly didn't share the same excitement as the crowd. She didn't forget the exhaustion Ye Xiu felt after the first round and suddenly felt a bad premonition.

The group arena began. Happy's first player was Fang Rui and his Qi Master, Boundless Sea.

The entire crowd applauded.

Even though Fang Rui had switched to a Qi Master, he was as dirty as ever. His playstyle might not be well-liked and might be spurned by the Qi Master community, but among Happy's supporters, a lot of people still admired him. For a newly joined team, everyone cared more about winning. As for a good win record and beautiful playing, those goals could be left for those powerhouses who were consistently solid! Happy's fan base was more practical. Victory was greater than anything else.

A dirty win was still a win, no?

Amidst the cheers, Fang Rui went onto the stage and into the player booth. His

opponent was Team Wind Howl's Zhao Yuzhe.

"Senior, it seems like you're doing well at Happy!" At the start of the match, Zhao Yuzhe took the initiative to message Fang Rui.

Chapter 1274
Familiar People

"hehehehehehehe"

The response that Zhao Yuzhe received was seven consecutive "hes." Coming from the master of playing dirty, this sent a chill down everyone's spines. They instantly felt that not only would Zhao Yuzhe lose, he would lose miserably.

"What is senior laughing about?" After Fang Rui's seven "hes," Zhao Yuzhe's reaction was fairly calm. He wouldn't feel any chill from Fang Rui's dirty playing. From the very start, he had never thought highly of this senior. But for a Thief to play dirty, that was excusable, as this class relied on playing dirty to reach full potential. But now that he had switched to Qi Master, yet he was still this dirty, that wasn't because of the class, that was because of the person himself. This person was dirty, so whatever class he played was dirty.

"I'm laughing at you!" Fang Rui answered.

"Laughing at me about what?" Zhao Yuzhe asked.

"Laughing that you still have the time to chat. I'm already behind you right now, don't you know?" said Fang Rui.

"Haha, senior is as funny as always." Zhao Yuzhe of course wouldn't be tricked by something like this. Although he was chatting with Fang Rui in the channel, he was very careful with his character's controls. He was rotating his camera often, doing his best not to leave any blind spots.

As long as you closely watched the opponent's movements, then there was nothing to fear from dirty playing. That was what Zhao Yuzhe believed. Back when they were teammates, during practice matches within the team, his win rate against Fang Rui had been relatively high.

The group arena map was Forest Corridor, a relatively complex map for 1v1 matches, suitable for the dirty playstyle. But for an Elementalist, a class that required casting to

launch attacks, extra cover wasn't a bad thing.

Neither character charged directly towards the center. Both were steadily approaching using all sorts of cover. The crowd was also gradually affected by this kind of atmosphere. The shouts became quieter, quieter, until it was almost completely silent, and then, the two characters met!

Boom!

Zhao Yuzhe was the first to attack. Elementalist Beautiful Light waved his staff and launched a Fireball. This sort of low-level spell could be cast almost instantaneously for a pro character. For an Elementalist's equipment, cast speed was one of the most important attributes to boost.

Boundless Sea, who had been trying to take a roundabout path to flank him, had actually been directly seen through by Zhao Yuzhe. The stadium was filled with sighs of regret. Boundless Sea rolled and dodged, and with a flip of his palm, he pushed out a Qi Bullet.

He sure has a few tricks, huh?

The light of the Qi Bullet directly covered Zhao Yuzhe's view. He laughed coldly and cleanly used a Teleport.

Using this sort of skill to dodge a Qi Bullet was indeed a bit wasteful, but Zhao Yuzhe was clear that Fang Rui only used the Qi Bullet as a cover. The true attack would come after. A Teleport would allow him to avoid both the interference of the Qi Bullet and the follow-up attack, wasn't that convenient?

Beautiful Light raised his staff, preparing to fire another spell, but he suddenly saw the air around him rippling in an unusual pattern.

Qi Blade!

Pu!

Zhao Yuzhe had no time to react, and Beautiful Light's cast was brutally cut short by this attack. But what really shocked Zhao Yuzhe was the sheer accuracy of this attack. Had the opponent predicted early on that he would come to this position? And if that was the case… how could a Qi Blade be the only attack?

Of course it wasn't!

With that Thief posture that looked particularly ugly on a Qi Master, Boundless Sea flew toward him. In the midst of his leaping, he slapped his palms against the ground, using a Landmine Quake after that Qi Blade.

The Qi spread rapidly along the ground. Beautiful Light, having just been hit by that Qi Blade, didn't have the chance to escape the range. He was shaken by the Qi, and sent staggering and falling over. Boundless Sea activated Qi Flowing Cloud, instantly arriving in front of Beautiful Light, Pulse Break: Break Intelligence, Flash Burst, then a Qigong Blast, and at the very end there was even a Sky Piercing Strike!

The Qi Master's fierce attacks surged toward him, instantly landing on Beautiful Light's body. The rippling Qi energy lifted his robe, and Beautiful Light looked like a giant balloon as he floated upward. No blood spilled, but his slipping health let everyone know that even if these weren't bloody attacks, the damage they brought was no inferior to any hacking and slashing attack.

"How about it? A pleasant surprise?" Fang Rui began his trash talk attack in the channel.

Surprise, sure. But pleasant? Zhao Yuzhe of course didn't feel that at all.

"Don't just think that you understand me well! Teammates are mutual, I'm no stranger to your fighting either. The only difference is that, as your senior, I was kinder," Fang Rui said.

As your senior I was kinder?

What did that mean? That in their previous practice fights, he hadn't been using his full strength?

No! How was that possible!!

Zhao Yuzhe didn't believe it. He instantly adjusted Beautiful Light's condition, prepared to launch a counterattack, but… where was Boundless Sea?

The target had vanished.

Zhao Yuzhe was shaken. He immediately used an Electric Ring, creating a coil of

lightning around him. No matter from which angle the opponent wanted to approach, he would first be zapped by this lightning. Even though this low-level skill didn't cause much damage, it could serve as some protection.

"Electric Ring? Aren't you forgetting something?" Boundless Sea had vanished from Zhao Yuzhe's sight, but Fang Rui's messages were still constantly appearing in the match channel before his eyes.

"I'm… not a Thief anymore!" Fang Rui said. Boundless Sea suddenly appeared, but he was… above Beautiful Light.

Thieves had the most fearsome tool at their disposal for launching close-range sneak attacks: Stealth. Electric Ring? It was undoubtedly a useful countermeasure towards Stealth. When Zhao Yuzhe couldn't find Boundless Sea, he instantly activated Electric Ring, because… he thought that Boundless Sea would use Stealth to quietly get in close range? Had he subconsciously treated Fang Rui as the King of Thieves like when he had been in Wind Howl?

But he was no longer a Thief. He could no longer use Stealth or such techniques to sneakily come into close range.

Where was Boundless Sea?

Zhao Yuzhe spun around in a full 360-degree circle several times, finally stopping at that fallen willow tree in the 2 o'clock direction.

He'd overlooked something?

Zhao Yuzhe suddenly raised his camera view and saw above his head the near-invisible, silent glittering.

Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

The level 55 Qi Master Awakening skill. Qi was pushed through the whole body, and what was blasted out was no longer just Qi, but the Qi Master himself as well.

Boundless Sea, like a heavy bomb, fell from the sky. Qi collected around his whole body, thick and radiant, slicing through the air like a rainbow, falling straight down and crashing into Beautiful Light.

Boom!

The Qi around Boundless Sea exploded when he hit Beautiful Light. It wasn't as bright as the surging fireworks of a Launcher's cannonfire, nor was it as elegant as the light of an Elementalist's spells. Even the light of the rainbow around his body faded in that instant of impact. But because this was the case, the damage caused by this attack was incredibly apparent.

The surrounding plants, the rocks, the mud, were all bent out of shape from the pressure of the Qi, some directly breaking. As for Beautiful Light, the direct target of this attack, even less needed to be said. Spirit Rainbow Blast was an attack that could be charged up, and while Fang Rui was chattering away at Fang Rui, the audience could see clearly that Boundless Sea had gotten into position early and begun charging.

"I'm not done yet!" Fang Rui yelled. Spirit Rainbow Blast was only a starting attack; more would follow. But compared to most combos, which would save the powerful attack for the end, Fang Rui used a powerful attack to blast the opponent first. Afterward, if there was an opening he'd continue, otherwise even just one powerful attack was worth it.

Zhao Yuzhe had clearly been thrown off by the powerful attack. This was a good chance for Fang Rui to seize the opening, and he didn't hesitate as he blasted another series of Qi Master attacks, which appeared gentle, but hit so hard that Zhao Yuzhe even felt pain on his real body.

How did things end up like this?

Zhao Yuzhe didn't understand. He hadn't dared to say his victory was guaranteed, but he had originally had a lot of confidence. But why? Why was he battered so harshly that he had no way of parrying? He couldn't predict the opponent's movements, but his own choice of position, his reactions, all seemed to be within Fang Rui's calculations.

Was it really like Fang Rui had said? Fang Rui understood him extremely well, but he had never taken advantage of this point before?

How could that be possible?

Zhao Yuzhe didn't believe it. He wasn't convinced. Beautiful Light stood up again, rushed forward… and in the end, lost the match brutally.

"You actually hid your strength even from your teammates?" In the last moment before he fell, Zhao Yuzhe shouted, full of venom.

"Hehe, dirty, no?" This was Fang Rui's answer.

In the first battle of the group arena, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea used only ten percent of his health to defeat Zhao Yuzhe's Beautiful Light. The crowd was filled with joking and laughter, and they threw all sorts of ridicule at Zhao Yuzhe as he walked out of the competitor booth.

"Is Fang Rui really so evil to actually hide his true strength even from his teammates?" But some people were still wondering about this question, including Chen Guo.

"Of course not. That kid just doesn't understand," said Ye Xiu.

"What doesn't he understand?" Chen Guo said.

"He doesn't understand that understanding your teammate and understanding your opponent are two different things. Before, Fang Rui treated him as a teammate, and now, he treated him as an opponent. As for him… he probably only knows how to understand people from the position of an opponent!" Ye Xiu said.

"Oh…" Chen Guo nodded, beginning to understand.

At this time, Wind Howl's second player of the group arena stood up.

Lin Feng.

Lin Feng, a transfer from Blue Rain to Wind Howl. Immediately upon his arrival, he obtained the top Thief character, Doubtful Demon. Lin Feng's luck was quite good. But he hadn't grasped this opportunity very well, and on the final All-Star rankings this year, there was no Thief representative.

And now, Lin Feng was challenging Doubtful Demon's old owner. He, who hadn't completed the inheritance of this character very well, what kind of answer would he give in this battle?

"Hahaha, my luck today is really good! First it's my familiar old teammate, and now it's my familiar old character. I can already hear the cheers of victory." When the battle started, Fang Rui was already beginning his trash talk. But, his old teammate, and the

character he'd fought with for so many years, for them to suddenly become opponents, this… was this really good luck that could make the heart happy? No one would believe this.

Chapter 1275
The Battle Thief

The second battle of the group arena began, and neither character took the conventional path. Fang Rui's Qi Master continued to play dirty, while Lin Feng's Thief directly charged forward. Indeed, a Thief charged forward. In most people's eyes, this was not the conventional thing to do. However, this was the speciality of Lin Feng's thief. His playstyle was the less commonly seen style for Thieves, the so-called Battle Thief playstyle.

Wind Howl's style, after taking in Tang Hao and discovering the potential of rookie Zhao Yuzhe, had changed greatly. Under the powerful push of these two players, the dirty playstyle that had existed in this team for a long time suddenly became more and more unsuitable. Because of this, even the one called the master of playing dirty, Fang Rui, had been forced to leave.

Wind Howl hadn't given up on their All-Star Thief character Doubtful Demon because of this, but clearly they weren't going to find another dirty-playing Thief player here, otherwise what was the point in having Fang Rui leave? If talking about playing dirty, Fang Rui was already called the master.

And so they took in Lin Feng from Blue Rain, a rare Battle Thief player in the pro circle. Wind Howl hoped to change the Thief's style to let this All-Star character continue to demonstrate its power. But after half a season, Doubtful Demon vanished from the ranks of the All-Stars, proving that his ability hadn't been displayed as effectively as they'd hoped. When the winter transfer window opened, Lin Feng and Doubtful Demon were surrounded by many rumors. At this time, if he still wanted to stay in the team, he had to prove himself. If he could defeat the opponent in front of him now, Doubtful Demon's former owner, who was expelled for not fitting with Wind Howl's new style, that would be the best proof that Wind Howl's choice was worth it.

And Wind Howl chose Lin Feng exactly because his Thief style wasn't like others. So, when facing Fang Rui, he charged forward even more determined than usual. He wanted to more clearly display the new Battle Thief style of Doubtful Demon under his hand.

The so-called Battle Thief involved a focus on the Thief's direct attacking skills, supplemented by the trapping skills, resulting in instantaneous explosions of high damage output. As of now, it was a rare playstyle in both the professional circle and in-game. And Lin Feng could already be considered the leader of this style. In Blue Rain, although he wasn't a first-string player, he still had stable chances to appear onstage, and his performances deserved praise. But when he arrived at Wind Howl and obtained the number one Thief, when he had to bear higher hopes from the team, he seemed to have lost himself a bit.

I have to prove myself!

Lin Feng controlled Doubtful Demon to move toward the center of the map. When he found no trace of Boundless Sea, he knew that the opponent was playing dirty again, and would appear from who-knows-where. After watching the previous battle, Lin Feng's camera observed not just the four directions around him but also the high points from which attacks could be fired. He carefully controlled Doubtful Demon to move around, searching for a position where he wouldn't have to defend from too many directions.

"A Doubtful Demon that's instantly discovered, what an eyesore!" In the match channel, a message from Fang Rui suddenly popped up.

Is he here?

Lin Feng hurriedly turned his view, left and right, in front and behind, above, but he didn't discover anything.

"Your Shadow Trap at position 124, 119, thought I wouldn't see it?" Fang Rui said.

Lin Feng's heart grew cold. When he'd had Doubtful Demon place down that trap, he'd been especially careful to observe his surroundings. But this Boundless Sea had still been hiding somewhere and managed to discover it? A trap that had been discovered had no purpose anymore…

But the audience was even more shocked.

Because they, with the omniscient view, knew clearly that Boundless Sea right now was already quietly watching Doubtful Demon. But, when Doubtful Demon had placed that Shadow Trap, Boundless Sea was still taking the roundabout path. He hadn't seen it at all.

This was a guess! But he'd guessed so accurately.

Fang Rui understood the map, understood the Thief class, and it looked like he understood Lin Feng as well…

If the trap had been seen by the opponent, then the intention was also seen through, thought Lin Feng. He could only make adjustments. But more importantly, where was Boundless Sea right now? He still hadn't discovered him, but to have seen Doubtful Demon planting that trap…

Over there!

The slight rustling of the grass didn't escape Lin Feng's notice. Doubtful Demon used an Assassin's Shining Cut to fly forward through the grass, but when the character arrived, he didn't see Boundless Sea.

"Too gullible! Battle Thieves are just that simple-minded!" As Fang Rui mocked him with a somewhat personal attack, Boundless Sea shot an attack from the side of the road and Sky Piercing Strike instantly enveloped Doubtful Demon.

But, nothing happened!

He hadn't suffered damage, nor had he been jostled by the rippling Qi energy. Doubtful Demon turned and charged toward Boundless Sea, as though the Sky Piercing Strike simply didn't exist.

"Maxed out Escape?" Fang Rui commented.

Escape, a Thief skill. It granted a certain probability to completely nullify the effects of the opponent's next attack, and at max level this probability reached 100%. For professional players, if this skill was to be leveled up, it would be leveled up to the maximum, because only then could it be reliably used in a match. A probability under 100% was an opening.

In Fang Rui's hands, Doubtful Demon hadn't learned this skill. But now that Lin Feng had changed Doubtful Demon to a Battle Thief, he had clearly added the points to this skill to max it out.

Before the Sky Piercing Strike landed, Doubtful Demon had already activated Escape, so this attack was forcibly negated, and now Lin Feng cleanly rushed to attack.

"An expected choice!" Fang Rui was still nagging, but Boundless Sea had already easily avoided Doubtful Demon. He'd expected Doubtful Demon's skill choice, and so he'd had ample preparation for this current situation.

Boundless Sea, who'd activated Qi Flowing Cloud to easily avoid Doubtful Demon's attack, pushed out his palm to send the Qi that had gathered flying toward Doubtful Demon.

Flash Burst!

Directly using such a powerful attack was a common technique of Fang Rui's dirty playing Qi Master, very different from the classical Qi Master style. Most Qi Masters played in a very standard way, using small attacks for a bit of damage and containment, and once they'd grasped the rhythm, they'd unleash a powerful attack.

And for Fang Rui, he used his dirty playing to create the opportunity to use such a powerful attack.

Dirty tactics, dirty movement, dirty attack timing.

This Flash Burst was the result of combining all of the previous dirty playing methods. Under countless exclamations from the crowd of "too dirty," this palm hit Doubtful Demon.

The Qi spread around Doubtful Demon damaged him like crazy. Evidently, Fang Rui didn't hold back even as he attacked this character that had been with him for five years. One brutal blow after another landed, and it seemed that the dirty Boundless Sea wasn't dirty at all right now, as he used standard Qi Master attacks and techniques to teach Doubtful Demon a direct and harsh lesson. But the instant that this flurry of attacks ended, Boundless Sea immediately scurried away again, in his usual dirty playing fashion.

After adjusting himself, Lin Feng once again lost all trace of Boundless Sea, but this time he wasn't as calm as he was before. Doubtful Demon moved around quickly, changing his position often. As he searched for Boundless Sea, he ensured that he wouldn't be exposed in one position for too long.

And so he quickly found Boundless Sea. Or, more accurately, Fang Rui voluntarily made Boundless Sea appear in front of him.

A sudden, completely unexpected appearance, it would stun anyone. But coming from Fang Rui, the stadium was once again filled with shouts of "too dirty!"

Yes, a very dirty appearance, so dirty that Lin Feng was completely unprepared.

Countercurrent!

Boundless Sea used the lowest level knock-up attack, the most long-ranged knock-up skill among all classes.

Doubtful Demon was unwillingly sent into the air by the Qi waves that Boundless Sea sent out, and naturally he became a perfect target for midair attacks. The skills to escape these attacks wouldn't have very short cooldowns, and they hadn't restored yet, so Lin Feng could only himself search for ways to escape the opponent's attacks… But Fang Rui was truly too familiar with Thieves, even if this was a Battle Thief.

Lin Feng struggled to steady his heart as he carefully observed, and finally, he discovered that Boundless Sea had already completely finished his series of attacks.

Lin Feng's heart sank into helplessness.

Fang Rui was the previous user of Doubtful Demon, the one whom he had replaced in Wind Howl. If he could win this match, then for Lin Feng it would be a powerful way to cement his place in the team. But who knew that Lin Feng suffered so much psychological pressure from Fang Rui? Lin Feng wasn't Tang Hao, nor was he Zhao Yuzhe. The person he was facing now was, to him, the king amongst them Thieves!

Lin Feng was a player from Season 7. He'd ultimately chosen to become an unusual type of Thief, a Battle Thief.

He had never explained to anyone his reason for choosing Battle Thief.

In reality, he chose to play as a Battle Thief only because he felt that he needed to open a different path. He felt that, in the standard Thief style, Fang Rui had already achieved the ultimate level, and he himself had no way of surpassing that. But even though he had taken an uncommon path with his Thief, he still hadn't been able to reach a position to rival Fang Rui.

And now, Fang Rui changed classes to Qi Master. He was no longer that King amongst Thieves, and because of this Lin Feng could relax significantly. But after being

completely smothered by Fang Rui twice now, Lin Feng had no way of relaxing. He discovered that even though Fang Rui was no longer the King of Thieves, he could still deal with any Thief player with ease, no matter whether it was a dirty-playing, trap-laying Thief, or a Battle Thief like him…

There was no way to win. After recognizing this point, Lin Feng lost all his fighting spirit. This wasn't an on-the-spot realization, but a conclusion he'd reached years before when comparing himself to this King of Thieves. And now, even if Fang Rui had changed classes, this conclusion hadn't changed.

"Doubtful Demon turned into this because of you, it's really too ugly." As Fang Rui sent a final message, Boundless Sea sent a final attack. Lin Feng, this Battle Thief player, couldn't reach the height of a king, but Wind Howl didn't need a dirty playing Thief. And thus this king character among Thieves finally fell.

Chapter 1276
Behind You

Happy progressed one level further in the group arena. It seemed that Fang Rui had achieved these two victories very easily, so easily that it was almost scary. After two battles, Boundless Sea had only lost 17% of his health!

This… was the pace to a 1v3!

The crowd took a while to process this, but when Wind Howl's Lin Feng exited the player booth and left the stage with his head lowered, the crowd finally recovered and suddenly exploded with cheers.

He still had 83% health left, and Wind Howl's core God Tang Hao had already appeared in the individual competition. There was a big chance for a 1v3 in this group arena today!

The crowd looked toward Wind Howl's player area. Who would be Wind Howl's group arena anchor?

After several moments, the shouting in the stadium seemed to quiet down a bit, as Wind Howl's anchor stood up: Liu Hao.

Liu Hao had entered the All-Stars this season, meaning that his popularity wasn't bad. More importantly, this was City H, and one year prior this was still Liu Hao's home stadium. Much of the crowd today had come here in the past and watched his matches in person. Seeing Liu Hao come onstage, everyone hesitated. Yesterday's teammate becoming today's opponent, this was what players had to face. Yesterday's idol becoming today's obstacle, this was what fans had to face.

At this sort of time, the crowd's mood would become very complex, and the hopes for a 1v3 were pulled back. This was the cruelty of the professional league, occasionally leaping out to bite.

Liu Hao's steps were firm as he walked toward the stage, and he even paid tribute to the crowd, waving his hand toward them. As an away team player, this was practically

asking for contempt, but Liu Hao evidently knew that his relationship with this crowd was different. His attitude actually won over quite a bit of the crowd. Toward this away team player, the home crowd actually gave him some applause.

But Liu Hao was nowhere near as confident as he appeared.

They'd already lost two players, and they'd only taken down 17% of the opponent's health. If Wind Howl wanted to win, he would have to accomplish a 1v3…

Liu Hao didn't have such dreams. In his view, this was already a group arena that Wind Howl had no way of winning. To him, what he absolutely needed to do was defeat Fang Rui, at least prevent the other side from completing a 1v3. Otherwise, it would simply be far too embarrassing for both him and Wind Howl as a whole.

But this opponent still had 83% health…

Liu Hao's mood was a bit heavy. As soon as he entered the player booth, that air of confidence and elegance he'd projected for the crowd instantly vanished. He carefully examined the state of the keyboard, mouse, and other such things, before finally logging on.

The third battle of the group arena began. Happy still had Fang Rui, but Wind Howl was already on their third and final player.

"Now that I'm here, if I don't 1v3, everyone will be so disappointed!" When the battle began, Fang Rui already boldly expressed this.

"Haha, what a nice imagination!" Liu Hao replied.

"But you're even more screwed. You'll have to 1v3 if you want to win this group arena, right?" Fang Rui said.

Liu Hao couldn't say anything. Just now, he had wanted to use his words to draw the crowd's attention to the question of whether or not Fang Rui could 1v3. With this, if he won and blocked Fang Rui's 1v3, he could be put in the role of a victor. Wind Howl would still lose the group arena, but everyone would put the blame on the first two players for not doing well, and he, who stopped Fang Rui's 1v3, would still have a bit of the air of a hero.

But who would've expected Fang Rui to be so quick with his words? With one

sentence, he exposed the truth of the difficult situation he was in.

Just defeat Fang Rui? That was far from enough. Right now, he was the one who actually bore the heavy responsibility of completing a 1v3. Liu Hao's plan of diverting the crowd's attention hadn't even been implemented before Fang Rui shattered it.

"How about it? 1v3, have any confidence? I can say that I sure do!" Fang Rui was still chatting away. Not only had Liu Hao's goal of redirection failed, Fang Rui was forcing everyone's attention onto this issue of 1v3 like crazy. He had confidence? Of course he did, 83% challenging 100%, any player in this position would be extremely motivated. But Liu Hao? 100% against 283%? His heart was broken.

"1v3? In your dreams!" Liu Hao was helpless. He could only continue to present himself as someone who would stop a 1v3, and not someone who had to carry out a 1v3.

"Hehe, I should say in YOUR dreams! Or is it that you don't even have these dreams? If that's the case, I say, stop wasting time and just GG!" Fang Rui said.

Now that their conversation had reached this point, it was practically grinding away Liu Hao's spine. This was Happy's home stadium, but there were a number of diehard Wind Howl fans following along with the team. They couldn't bear to see such mockery anymore. In such a situation, they could understand if Liu Hao lost the match, but ultimately everyone still had a sliver of hope for a miracle. Seeing Fang Rui's attack now, Wind Howl's fans instantly exploded. They hoped that their vice-captain Liu Hao, upon whom the team had heavily relied this season, would fight back back for them, initiate a powerful counterattack 1v3 in this Happy stadium, and humiliate the opponents.

"1v3!!!" Wind Howl's diehard fans became fired up, cheering and yelling encouragement for their vice-captain. But instantly, their shouts overlapped with the "1v3" shouts from the Happy fans. Wind Howl's shouts were a bit more vigorous and exuberant, as they wished so desperately to see this humiliation. But with their shouts, Happy's fans couldn't sit still. The battle was already at this point and they still wanted to see a 1v3? Ridiculous! And so, Happy's shouts of "1v3" reached a new peak, attacking the Wind Howl fans. There were more of them, and so they quickly smothered the away team fans. But Wind Howl refused to yield. Even if their sound was drowned out, it wouldn't stop them from continuing to shout.

This was their trust and hope in Liu Hao and Wind Howl!

Liu Hao, sitting in the player booth, had no idea. If he did know, he probably wouldn't be moved, he would probably start crying from the the motivation of these fans.

1v3? Can't everyone be logical here? How was he supposed to 1v3 under these conditions? The opponent's first player still had 83% health!

Liu Hao didn't know, and so he didn't think that much right now. He only prepared to defeat Fang Rui, at least stop Happy from 1v3ing, and then he would definitely be understood by the fans. He had no idea that, because of Fang Rui's trash talk, Wind Howl's fans had already expressed even higher expectations for him.

As the two of them bickered through the chat, they were already approaching. Fang Rui continued to play dirty, and there was no sign of Boundless Sea. After watching two matches, Liu Hao had already grasped a few key points of Fang Rui's usage of this map. Right now, he paid close attention as he moved his character, choosing positions carefully. For now, he hadn't found Boundless Sea, but Fang Rui also couldn't find a good chance to attack. The two were at a stalemate.

"What's wrong, still not attacking? Can't find an opportunity? If you continue to hide like this, watch out for a yellow card!" Liu Hao also began a trash talk offensive.

"I'm right behind you!" Fang Rui said.

"Haha." Liu Hao wasn't that naive.

"I really am right behind you!" Fang Rui still said.

"…"

"Behind you!"

"Behind you!"

Fang Rui suddenly channeled Huang Shaotian and actually continued to spam these two words nonstop in the chat. Liu Hao was irritated, but the more irritated he was, the more he didn't dare to turn his character around. The more Fang Rui yelled this, the more he felt that the danger would come from anywhere but behind him. Liu Hao carefully controlled his character to move, looking left and right. But there was no sign

of Boundless Sea, only Boundless Sea's spam.

"Behind you!"

"Behind you!"

Liu Hao suddenly felt nervous.

This guy, with his nonstop spamming, was he actually going to launch a sneak attack from behind, but using reverse psychology to make him too scared to look behind him?

I'll take a look! Just one glance, fast, nothing will happen!

Liu Hao once again carefully checked in front of him and to the left and right, and then with a sudden flick of his mouse, his camera view quickly spun around, scanning the surroundings behind him. No Boundless Sea. Liu Hao let out a breath, and his view quickly returned to the original position.

Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

At this moment, Boundless Sea attacked. His position had indeed been right behind Liu Hao's character. How could such a fast glance be enough to check behind all the possible spots of cover? Fang Rui, as soon as Liu Hao finished glancing around and let himself relax, launched his charged Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

Qi energy was silent, but the charged Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow carried the character with it. The sound of the air colliding and splitting around him instantly resounded.

Liu Hao instantly smelled that something was wrong. He didn't even bothering turning around again, he just directly had his character roll and dodge. With his fluctuating mood, going from tense to relax to suddenly tense again, his controls would naturally be unsteady. Fang Rui seized this one moment. The Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow carried the qi and the character blasting forward. The rolling Spellblade, Liu Hao's character Absent Sun, was directly hit by this attack.

It was very rare to see blood from a Qi Master attack!

Bright red sprayed from Absent Sun's mouth. This was typically the sign of heavy internal injuries. The attack didn't stop there - Fang Rui continued with his familiar

flurry of brutal and powerful attacks, and Absent Sun's initial 17% lead was quickly erased.

The cheers of the Happy fans reached a new high.

For the fans to put in the effort, they had to see the player's results. Only a beautiful performance could ultimately ignite the fans' support. Fang Rui slaughtered his way toward a 1v3. Liu Hao? Everyone saw how he was sent spinning in circles from Fang Rui's trash talk attack. Not openly mocking him too much was already a sign of his special relationship to this crowd.

But even if the fans were nostalgic, Fang Rui was already continuing his trash talking.

"I said so many times that I was behind you, why didn't you believe me? How many times do you want me to say it? Give me a number!" Fang Rui continued to enrich the contents of the chat channel.

Chapter 1277
The Greatest Margin in History

Fang Rui's trash talk was brazenly thrown into the public chat, but his character Boundless Sea? After completing this combo of attacks and discovering that Liu Hao had adjusted fairly quickly, he didn't continue with the opportunity and instantly tried to retreat.

"Don't run!" Liu Hao very heroically yelled this in the chat to show that he hadn't been beaten senseless by Fang Rui. As soon as his Spellblade Absent Sun stood steady on the ground, he sent out an Earthquake Sword. Unfortunately, Boundless Sea had already rolled away, hiding himself behind a giant boulder over there.

The opponent was the master of playing dirty, so of course Liu Hao didn't dare have Absent Sun directly chase him. His character moved horizontally first, pulling enough of a distance between them before charging towards that direction.

As expected, Boundless Sea was indeed gathering qi behind that boulder, but when he saw that Liu Hao was prepared, he could only helplessly give up the attack.

"So careful! Scared?" Fang Rui said in the chat.

"If you're a man then stop running!" Liu Hao shouted.

"Can't. I'm very scared of you." Fang Rui's reply seemed quite refreshing, but anyone could tell that this was a joke. Words that might otherwise be welcoming to hear sounded mocking from him. And Fang Rui's actions followed his words; as he spoke, he had Boundless Sea move away. He clearly had no intentions of fighting Liu Hao directly.

But even though he ran away, he didn't run too far away. He continued to circle around the boulder, as though prepared to go around and around with Liu Hao.

This sort of technique was a bit cheap, but coming from a dirty player, everyone thought it was very reasonable. Liu Hao was sorely tempted to use a Wave Formation to cover that whole area, but he also feared that while he was casting, Boundless Sea

would suddenly jump out and ambush him. After deliberating for a while, Absent Sun came forward, but he didn't chase. He only crept a bit closer to the rock, checking his left and the right, his hand on his short sword, ready to act at a moment's notice. Liu Hao was prepared to sit here and wait for his target. Whether Fang Rui continued to circle around clockwise, or suddenly reverse and go counterclockwise, he would just wait here.

But he waited and waited, and there was no trace of Boundless Sea. Fang Rui's trash talk popped up in the match channel yet again. "Huh, what's going on, how come you're not chasing me? Didn't you tell me not to run?"

Liu Hao felt like spitting blood. This guy, did he just leave after circling around the boulder? And now, had he already circled around behind him?

Liu Hao was just about to turn around in a hurry, but in that instant, he was suddenly alert. He had been carefully watching his left and the right. He felt that in this short span of time, there was no way that Fang Rui could have controlled Boundless Sea to circle behind him without his noticing.

He almost fooled me!

Liu Hao huffed a breath. But he couldn't guess Fang Rui's plans right now. Was he trying to use his words to paralyze him, and actually taking a very long path to circle around him? Or was he still hiding behind that boulder, prepared to launch an attack on him?

Liu Hao couldn't wait around like this forever. He had Absent Sun move back away from the boulder, using the same strategy as before to pull apart the distance, and then, use this increased field of view to check behind the boulder.

He immediately saw that indeed, Boundless Sea was hiding right behind the boulder, his hands cupped before him, gathering qi again, waiting to sneak attack!

This bastard!

Liu Hao was furious. This was an exact repeat of what had just happened before! Good thing he stayed calm, otherwise who knew what could have happened.

Fang Rui? His same strategy was once again broken by the opponent. He simply tossed a "Huh, you found me again" into the chat, and then twisted and continue to circle

clockwise around the boulder.

Liu Hao was about to go crazy. Who the fuck designed this map! Throwing this stupid goddamned rock right here! It gives opportunities to these kinds of guys, and the quality of matches goes way down!

Of course Liu Hao thought this way, but the live audience was swimming in a sea of amusement. Perhaps this match wasn't thrilling or intense to draw people in, but they burst into laughter watching this teasing situation.

And now, Fang Rui was doing the same thing for the third time. How would Liu Hao respond!

Absent Sun raised his short sword and began to cast. Electric Wave Formation!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea had circled around behind the boulder, meaning that he, too, could only guess at Liu Hao's actions. Only in the final instant of a Wave Formation cast was there any sound, and this time, Liu Hao bet that the opponent wouldn't anticipate this.

His bet was correct!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea didn't reveal himself. The accumulated electricity on Absent Sun's sword ultimately condensed into spheres on the surface of the boulder before him.

By the time the zapping sounds were audible, the electric sphere were already formed. With a flash, they were released, flowing all around. If there was a target, they would automatically lock on; if not, they would wander about freely. Liu Hao was, after all, a Spellblade who had entered the All-Stars. Even if he didn't see the target, from the flow of electricity he could draw many conclusions.

No target!

Liu Hao was shocked. This meant that Boundless Sea wasn't in range for the Wave Formation, then his position now, it must be…

Liu Hao's mind quickly outlined the range of Electric Wave Formation. His gaze settled on the scenery in front of him, and Absent Sun rushed forward.

His view widened as he pulled away, and indeed there was no sign of Boundless Sea, but there…

Behind the boulder, there was a crack just large enough to fit one person, looking like a collection of shadows. Liu Hao's pupil contracted. As an expert Spellblade, he was very clear on the quirks of all the Spellblade's skills. If there was such a crack in range of an Electric Wave Formation, there was a high chance that a character could hide there and avoid damage.

Liu Hao wasn't entirely unfamiliar with this map, but did this boulder really hide such a detail? Liu Hao wasn't sure. But now, he saw this, and immediately guessed that Boundless Sea must be right there.

Unfortunately, it was already too late.

This time, he hadn't made any preparations or calculated out any space before having Absent Sun charge forward to check behind the boulder. Seeing that crack, in the time it took for his brain to click-click-click and flash through these thoughts, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea had already attacked.

Liu Hao had guessed correctly. Boundless Sea was right there.

Landmine Quake!

Only Fang Rui's hands exposed themselves from the crack, and by the time they were exposed they'd already slapped against the ground. Qi spread along the earth, and Absent Sun had no time to dodge and was sent flying into the air. Boundless Sea no longer played dirty, shooting out like an arrow, his body like wind, carrying qi and slamming into Absent Sun's body.

Another combo of powerful attacks.

Absent Sun's health slid downwards, and the Happy fans in the crowd whooshed alive with applause.

"1v3!" they continued to scream, and Wind Howl's fans had already shut their mouths. The vice-captain in whom they'd trusted and believed didn't seem to stand much of a chance against this dirty-playing Fang Rui. This was entirely like the first and second battles, with Fang Rui firmly in control of the battle rhythm. If this continued, it wouldn't even be a question of victory, it would be… this time, by how large of a margin

would Fang Rui win this 1v3?

Up until now, Boundless Sea hadn't even lost any health yet in this third battle, while Absent Sun's health had plummeted. Boundless Sea's 83% health was now in the lead. And completing a 1v3 also often involved the problem of running out of mana, but it seemed that Boundless Sea was fine on that end as well. Fang Rui's attacks were simply too efficient. When he attacked, his attacks were always effective, so his mana usage was very efficient. He had plenty of mana left to finish this battle.

But for the audience, all they cared about was victory, they couldn't care about such details right now. Those in the live crowd, those watching online, they watched as Fang Rui went back and forth with his harassment, ultimately grinding Liu Hao's Absent Sun to death. Liu Hao did display some of the skill befitting an All-Star, taking away 15% of Boundless Sea's health, a better performance than the previous two Wind Howl players, but that was all.

1v3 completed, 32% health lost. This was the final answer Fang Rui gave. The stadium hollered and cheered, not resting even as Fang Rui came down offstage and returned to his seat in Happy's player area.

1v3. Happy's Tang Rou had once wanted to do this, and failed, but now, her teammate Fang Rui accomplished it. Many of the reporters at the stadium were so excited they couldn't even sit still. They could hardly wait for the match to finish, they wanted desperately to interview right there. But of course they knew that this was impossible, so most reporters calmed down, flipping through their data and making preparations for the interviews post-match. In the midst of this, Chang Xian of Esports Home, after looking through every single 1v3 in ten years of group arena matches, he finally confirmed that Fang Rui had set a new record.

The record for the greatest margin in a 1v3 victory.

32% health lost. This result beat out the previous record set by Wang Jiexi in Season 4, 52% health lost, by a solid 20%.

It had to be emphasized was that Fang Rui was the first to appear in the group arena. With 32% health, he defeated three opponents at 100% health.

And Wang Jiexi at the time had been third in the group arena, the anchor. Even though the total reversal had been more exciting, no matter what, he was inferior both in

terms of how much health he knocked away and in terms of how much he had remaining.

Fang Rui's record here was solid gold. It would be very, very difficult to surpass.

And the method he used to set this record was also worth remembering. He hadn't used an overwhelming advantage to slaughter the opponents all the way until the end. These three battles had all taken some time, they'd been played rather slowly. Fang Rui played dirty to create an abnormal efficiency. This sort of attack efficiency wasn't something that could be replicated by those hard-hitting players. When they directly collided with their opponents, there was inevitably some exchange, and the health that they ultimately sacrificed wouldn't be so low.

Playing dirty, the style that had received so many cold gazes, finally entered the history books with this record.

History's greatest margin of victory for a 1v3, was created by playing dirty!

This was Fang Rui's victory, and a victory for the dirty playstyle he'd persisted in using even after changing classes to Qi Master.

Chapter 1278
Mid-Match Break Wind Howl

A historic record! The majority of people who cared about this record were reporters. The viewers cared more about the feeling of a 10-0. Happy just needed to win the upcoming team competition.

The 1v3 chants in the group arena were replaced by 10-0s. The loyal fans who followed Wind Howl all the way to their away game were in low spirits. Liu Hao being dominated by Fang Rui wasn't a small blow to them. They had originally been hoping for Liu Hao to turn the tables with an astonishing 1v3 and show them their team's might! But they couldn't see any sort of fighting spirit in their vice-captain. Liu Hao looked completely lost facing Fang Rui's dirty tricks.

Wind Howl's fans were quiet, very quiet.

Seeing the excited cheers from Happy's fans, they felt an unpleasant taste in their mouths. This exhilaration should have belonged to them! Because Fang Rui… didn't he used to be part of Team Wind Howl? Despite having switched classes to a Qi Master, his style was still very familiar to Wind Howl's loyal fans.

This was someone who had used to bring them joy, and now?

The Wind Howl banners created by the fans always flew in the air whether it was Wind Howl's home or away game, but right now, it seemed to be thrown aside, drooping in disappointment. Wind Howl's flag bearer looked dispirited. The others weren't worried about him though, because they knew that Fang Rui had been this person's favorite player. Fang Rui had been hard for him, and now, seeing Fang Rui complete a 1v3 against Wind Howl produced a feeling he couldn't describe with words.

How would the upcoming team competition go?

Team Wind Howl's loyal fans were unexpectedly feeling doubtful towards their own team.

Their captain and core, Tang Hao. The new generation Zhao Yuzhe who they had high

hopes for. Lin Feng who they wanted to inherit Doubtful Demon. The super value Liu Hao who the team had gotten at an amazing price… in the individual competition and group arena, they seemed to have been crushed by opponents on an entirely different level than them. With these people making up the team, how could they hope to beat Happy?

Wind Howl's teamwork wasn't anything too praiseworthy! Wind Howl's own fans knew this point better than anyone else. As for Happy? Starting from Round 9, their team had yet to lose a single round. Was Happy a team their Wind Howl could beat?

The fans were doubtful, doubtful that their team could win this match, doubtful of their team's claim to be the champions this season. Wind Howl's win record this season wasn't as stable as last season's! Didn't the team say they would form an all-new team more compatible than before after letting Fang Rui go? An all-new team? Wind Howl could see it. The team had given up on the dirty style. The dirty tricks from before had turned into a more aggressive offensive.

Perhaps this style was more like a champion's. Apart from Blue Rain's deviation from the norm, the other champion teams had all given off this sort of grand aura. Wind Howl was trying hard to construct this aura, but did it really fit them?

The former Criminal Partners had never considered themselves as the strongest duo in the Alliance, but the fans always felt steady with them there. No matter how much of a crisis the team was in, they would always be confident about their team. But now? The team's win record was worse than last season's. The team was still within the playoffs zone, but how could they not be nervous about why? The current Wind Howl made them feel like there was something missing. This sort of mystery feeling really didn't feel good!

Wind Howl's most loyal fans were pacing back and forth. Wind Howl's players were also in low spirits.

In the individual competition, their core player Tang Hao was crushed by Ye Xiu and then their other two players lost as well.

In the group arena, the team sent three strong players, but their former teammate Fang Rui took all of them down with just two thirds of his health.

How humiliating. The player you let go just casually cleaned up three players you had

cultivated with the utmost care. Right now, the first thoughts that came to their mind were classic idioms like "have eyes but cannot see" or "buying a wooden box and returning the pearls"…

Team Wind Howl's players felt this embarrassment the most. What should they do? Beating their opponents would obviously be the greatest retaliation. However, Wind Howl's players had been beaten one after the other. It seemed like they couldn't break free from their losses. Only the remaining second-string players on the side busily circling around and around.

"What's going on? Have you guys gone stupid from losing?" Finally, someone spoke up.

Ruan Yongbin.

Wind Howl's Cleric.

Healers were never replaced in any team, so their status in the team was always relatively high. In addition to healers being rarely transferred, healers almost always held seniority.

Ruan Yongbin had been a part of Team Wind Howl for nearly six years. He had joined the team alongside Fang Rui. When Fang Rui left, Ruan Yongbin became Team Wind Howl's most senior member. He was the type of player who obeyed orders and didn't like to talk too much. However, seeing how the team's morale had been shaken and how the main players all looked like they had been swatted down like flies, he couldn't resist it anymore and finally spoke out.

Healers were only needed in the team competition, so the outcome of the individual rounds never impacted them as much as the others. They could always maintain a rational mind and watch from afar the morale of their teammates rise up and down in the individual rounds. As a result, for the most important team competition, a level-headed healer could always act as a stabilizing force for the team.

But unfortunately, Ruan Yongbin spoke too rarely in Wind Howl. He didn't fully utilize the special existence brought by his class's speciality. Everyone looked at him when he suddenly spoke out. Their eyes were completely filled with confusion. They didn't look like they had been enlightened in any way.

"The team competition hasn't been fought yet! Half the points are waiting to be taken

by us. We can do this!" Ruan Yongbin tried his best to say words that he wasn't use to. Anyone could say this though. The logic was obvious. What was needed was a wake up call to break apart the doubt formed in the players during the individual rounds. However, Ruan Yongbin's wake up call didn't have enough power behind it. He was talking, and everyone was looking at him, but… morale? Their morale hadn't been ignited. Only Liu Hao clapped his hands and squeezed out a smile: "Yongbin, you're right! The match isn't over yet. We still have five points to take. Why does everyone look like we've already lost?"

Liu Hao was the vice-captain. His popularity among the fans this season wasn't bad. His relations with other people in the team weren't bad either. His words were clearly more effective than Ruan Yongbin's. Ruan Yongbin let out a sigh of relief and looked at Liu Hao with gratitude. He was glad that their vice-captain could maintain a level-head and look at the match with reason.

Liu Hao had a smile filled with reason on the surface, but inside, he was feeling extremely annoyed. After walking off stage, he saw the expressions of his teammates and the silence from Wind Howl's loyal fans and knew his performance had disgusted quite a few people. However, Liu Hao's strength was his practically cruel ability to fake it. He could cover his true feelings well and then push the most suitable attitude for the situation onto the surface.

As a result, he had been depressed and silent along with the other players. But when Ruan Yongbin spoke out while the others didn't respond, he could force himself and wake himself up. He acted like a vice-captain and started encouraging the others following Ruan Yongbin's example.

"Look, our fans, our fans who traveled so far to support us are feeling bitter and in low spirits! How could we disappoint them? Everyone, hurry up and get your spirits up. Let's get our Wind Howl's banner flying into the air again! We lost quite a few points, but it's just five points. Next, if we win just this upcoming team competition, we can win five points. Then, the score will be 5 to 5. Is that a loss? No! If the away team wins five points, shouldn't that be considered a win? Right now, we still have a chance to win!" Liu Hao put up his thumbs and emphasize that they just needed to win this team competition.

"What bullshit!" Wind Howl's captain, Tang Hao, suddenly interrupted Liu Hao very rudely.

"Let alone five points, if we can win even one more point, we can't give it up!" Tang Hao grit his teeth.

"Captain Tang is right, we can't back down even if it was just one point," Liu Hao didn't appear to be unhappy with Tang Hao interrupting him. Instead, he immediately agreed with Tang Hao. Tang Hao had raised the team's morale to the peak.

"Let's go beat them!" Tang Hao shouted, "Don't tell me you're willing to let a certain someone slap our faces!"

It was obvious who he was pointing to. Taking a former hero of Wind Howl and pinning him as the enemy was a bit ugly. When an old veteran of the team like Ruan Yongbin heard these words, his expression turned unnatural. Ling Jingyan and Fang Rui had left the team peacefully, but how could those inside the team not understand? This had nothing to do with what was right or wrong. It was the choice for the team to grow. For this choice, the team should feel sympathy for those that had been given up. Team Wind Howl shouldn't have these negative feelings towards them.

Fang Rui had won the group arena and had embarrassed Wind Howl, but this was competition. There was only victory. Nothing else mattered. It wasn't like they could hope that Fang Rui would throw the match for them.

Tang Hao unadorned despise made Ruan Yongbin feel quite unhappy. But what about the other players? Zhao Yuzhe? Lin Feng? They had just been humiliated by Fang Rui. Tang Hao's out-of-line attitude had ignited their fighting spirits.

Chapter 1279
Cowards

"Win!" With Tang Hao's final shout, although the mentality of Wind Howl's players weren't yet in unison, their low morale had reignited to a certain extent.

"It seems to be quite lively over there at Wind Howl." At Happy's side, the players were finishing up their strategy prep for the team competition. Chen Guo liked to listen on the side, but every time she listened, she would feel dizzy and her attention would run astray. Trying to follow their discussion on strategy was hard. The poor Chen Guo could only look around and noticed Wind Howl suddenly fire up, yelling and shouting fervently.

Everyone in Happy had noticed the shouts from over there too, and when they looked at them, they just happened to meet gazes with Wind Howl. Compared to Happy's relaxed and casual glance, Wind Howl seemed to be focused on a certain individual.

"Hm, it looks like our last minute changes were very necessary," Ye Xiu said.

The others looked towards Fang Rui. Happy's changes in the team competition were on Fang Rui. Today, he was the main character.

"No problem." Fang Rui gave two thumbs up to everyone.

"Then… let's get ready!" Ye Xiu nodded his head and said.

After the break was over, the referee called for them, and the players participating in the team competition started walking towards the stage.

Team Happy: Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and their sixth player, Steamed Bun.

Team Wind Howl: Tang Hao, Liu Hao, Zhao Yuzhe, Lin Feng, Ruan Yonbgin, and their sixth player, Guo Yang.

Team Wind Howl's roster had undergone a transformation within these past two

years. Just looking at the current line up, apart from Ruan Yongbin, no one else in the team had played on the team for three years yet. From this perspective, Zhao Yuzhe was actually the most experienced among them. Tang Hao and Guo Yang had only been a part of the team for two years. Liu Hao and Lin Feng had joined the team last summer. After this season, they would complete their first full year with the team.

An entirely new player roster meant a change in Wind Howl's original tactical style, which included their class composition. Both Brawler and Thief were still important, but their stable Knight position gradually fell to a secondary position this season. Liu Hao's Spellblade entered the team. Guo Yang's Qi Master joined the team last season and his position hadn't been too stable until this season, where he finally became a part of the main roster. Guo Yang rejecting Ye Xiu's invite to join Happy didn't seem to be a bad choice. He had at least established a firm position for himself in Team Wind Howl.

Of the total twelve players between the two teams, three of the classes were repeats.

The Brawlers, Tang Hao and Steamed Bun. The Qi Masters, Fang Rui and Guo Yang. The Clerics, An Wenyi and Ruan Yongbin.

But because Steamed Bun and Guo Yang were the sixth players, the starting lineup only had Clerics as repeats. As a healer class, two Clerics weren't anything rare.

The two teams walked onto the stage and greeted one another. The Wind Howl players, who lost in the individual rounds, clearly wanted revenge. The smell of gunpowder was heavy. The referee watched the two team's players closely. After confirming that neither side said anything out of bounds or made any violent physical contact, he gestured for the players to go to their player booths. The team competition was about to start.

Wind Howl's loyal fans had lost all hope, but after noticing how their team had suddenly spirited up, their energy returned too. Wind Howl's banner began flying around in the Xiaoshan Stadium again. The needs of the fans were quite simple. They didn't need to see any crazy results. Just their attitude alone was enough to make them feel like their support wasn't wasted.

After the countdown, the two teams loaded into the map, and the team competition began.

The map was the Peili Town Market.

Peili Town was a small town in the Glory continent. And this marketplace had been taken straight out of this small town as a map. In reality, around ninety percent of the Glory PvP maps were taken from places on the Glory continent. The map's design already existed, so when taking the map, only its usage needed to be evaluated.

The Peili Town Market was considered a city map. Streets, different height buildings, and indoor and outdoor playable areas were common in these maps. The Peili Town Market had relatively fewer outdoor areas. Just the market plaza took up nearly half the map. This plaza wasn't just an empty field, and the market naturally had all sorts of booths and goods scattered around. The durability of these goods were rather low though, so the entire market could be seen as destructible.

The starting five characters of the two teams spawned at opposing corners.

Happy - Unspecialized Lord Grim, Launcher Dancing Rain, Qi Master Boundless Sea, Ghostblade One Inch Ash, Cleric Little Cold Hands.

Wind Howl - Brawler Demon Subduer, Spellblade Absent Sun, Elementalist Beautiful Light, Thief Doubtful Demon, and Cleric Soul Healer.

As soon as the match began, Wind Howl displayed their reinstated spirits. The entire team went into formation and ran straight for the center of the map.

The Wind Howl fans nowadays were no stranger to this scene, but in the past, when the Criminal Partners were there, Wind Howl rarely chose such a direct opening. However, the current Wind Howl would almost always rush at their opponents to crush them no matter who their opponents were.

In truth, the fans had also liked this sort of bearing in the beginning. Who didn't like to see their team destroy the opponents? In the first five rounds this season, Wind Howl had crushed everything in their path, dominating their opponents each round. However, their opponents these five rounds were Conquering Cloud, Radiant, Lightly, Bright Green, and Miracle… not a single one of them were strong teams. Wind Howl's beautiful opening was somewhat stifled by their schedule.

In Round 6, Wind Howl faced Samsara. Their momentum suddenly hit an iron wall.

Then, in Round 7, they were decimated in the team competition by Tyranny.

Round 8, wrecked by Blue Rain in the team competition.

Round 9, wiped out by 301 in the team competition.

Round 10, Wind Howl faced Seaside and swallowed them up.

Of these ten rounds, Wind Howl immediately became the bad name among strong teams. They won against weak teams, but as soon as they met against anyone strong, they crumbled…

Luckily, in Round 11 and Round 12, Wind Howl beat Misty Rain and Void, proving themselves. But in Round 13, Hundred Blossoms washed them. In Round 14, Thunderclap stomped on them again. Round 15, they suffered an embarrassing defeat to Royal Style. Round 16 and Round 17, they matched against Heavenly Swords and Parade, and Wind Howl once again stood back up.

Wind Howl was among the top eight because they were clearly superior to the weaker teams, not losing points they shouldn't be losing. However, as soon as they faced anyone even a tiny bit strong, their team instantly collapsed. Were they a strong team? Right now, this title had been knocked off of Wind Howl. Players were calling them cowards, their knees turning soft as soon as they encountered a strong team.

This round, they had run into a strong opponent after bullying two weak teams. It was time to prove that they weren't cowards. But right now, the team had been swept clean in the individual rounds. If they lost the team competition, they would have zero points. It wasn't possible to go any lower than that.

Even so, Team Wind Howl displayed their usual tyrannical and dominating bearing. The five characters formed a standard offensive formation and headed straight for the center, the Peili Town Market Plaza.

With the plaza taking up half of the map, all sorts of booths and goods were scattered and smashed apart. Even the player cameras became messy.

Zhao Yuzhe received an order and immediately had his Beautiful Light jump towards a pile of bags to the side. With a few hops, he reached the top, and before he could look down carefully, gunshots rang.

The gunshots were loud and clear. Wind Howl instantly figured out the general location of the gunfire and immediately pushed towards that direction, including

Beautiful Light, who had jumped onto the pile of bags to lure in the attacks.

Zhao Yuzhe's offensive prowess was exceptional. As soon as the gunshots rang, he quickly adjusted his character's line of sight and instantly Teleported in that direction. He escaped and pushed forward. The one being attacked instead became the attacker.

"How fierce!" At this moment, the dirty master Fang Rui's trash talk popped up mysteriously in the chat.

Wind Howl's offensive had considered the surroundings too. Seeing the sudden trash talk, the five characters split the work and surveyed the surroundings to ascertain Fang Rui's position.

However, he wasn't there… there was only one person in their sights, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

An ambush!

In this situation, anyone would have thought that. Lord Grim was just bait. Happy's other characters were probably lying in wait in this complicated terrain.

However, Wind Howl didn't retreat. Continue forward!

To be able to set up such an ambush this quickly meant they didn't bring their healer.

It was a very logical deduction. Wind Howl had rushed here very fast, but if Happy could set up an ambush before they arrived, it could only mean that Happy had let go of the healer, who would slow down the team.

An ambush without a healer? What's there to be scared of!

Wind Howl's captain Tang Hao thought like this, so their momentum didn't falter. Liu Hao had his misgivings though. He had wanted them to slow down a bit and be more cautious, but seeing Tang Hao's firmness, he didn't much more of it and followed along with his captain's pace. But at this moment, a spinning blaze of fire fell towards the center of Wind Howl's formation.

Heat-Seeking Missile!

"Dodge!" Liu Hao typed a warning instinctively. His Absent Sun scrambled for his life

towards outside of this Heat-Seeking Missile's range. Tang Hao's Demon Subduer raised his arms and threw a Brick, which looked weak, in comparison to the missile. However, a Brick was still much bigger than a bullet, so it was much easier to hit a target with it. And as it turned out, the Heat-Seeking Missile was smacked aside by the Brick.

None of the other Wind Howl players had moved. Only Liu Hao's Absent Sun had sped out of there. Seeing the danger averted, his face turned burning hot, though he didn't forget to call out in the public chat: "Our captain is mighty."

"If you've got the time to spout useless words, why don't you use it on moving your character instead?" The praise that he had typed into the public chat was only met with Ye Xiu's disdain.

Chapter 1280
Not Focused Enough

Liu Hao's eyes twitched a few times, and even a few old fans of Team Excellent Era felt some deja vu at that moment.

Ye Xiu, Liu Hao, this pair of old teammates had already become enemies, but their back-and-forth in the public chatl was reminiscent of their time back in Excellent Era.

Liu Hao would never forget the icy contempt that Ye Xiu showed towards his well-meaning compliment.

To Liu Hao, calling out a beautiful play by a teammate was a way of boosting the morale of the team, but Ye Xiu maintained that his praise was too excessive.

Praise was also a form of encouragement, who would feel that such things were excessive? On top of that, it wasn't as if he didn't have any situational awareness. He'd never left an opening because of it, so wasn't it fine?

But even if this was the case, Ye Xiu still maintained that he wasn't focused enough.

Yes, not focused enough, this was the flaw that Ye Xiu always pointed out when it came to Liu Hao. From the time he became a player in Team Excellent Era, to the time when he became vice-captain of Excellent Era.

"If you've got the time to spout useless words, why don't you use it on moving your character instead"

When he saw this line, Liu Hao was infuriated. He hadn't delayed his inputs at all due to these few words that he'd typed, what did Ye Xiu expect from him?

Liu Hao exploded with fury, and Absent Sun pounced towards Lord Grim more violently than anyone else. He was originally someone who could control his emotions well, but deep in every person's heart, they had certain inviolable taboos. These words that Ye Xiu said had effectively stabbed at a scar that had lasted many years. In the past, he could only brood about it silently, but now, he could finally use his actions on

the battlefield to speak for himself. He wanted to tell Ye Xiu: controlling or not controlling your character for a moment isn't anything important!

Earthquake Sword!

Absent Sun swept out with his sword, directly destroying a merchant's stall in front of him. Upon clearing this path for himself, Absent Sun trampled on the wreckage and charged forwards.

Demon Subduer and Doubtful Demon, the two strongest characters in Wind Howl, followed behind Absent Sun and advanced through the trail of wreckage.

Once upon a time, they had been called the Criminal Partners, but now, this name was on the verge of becoming history. In the Alliance's voting for Best Partner, these two characters that had fought side-by-side for so many years weren't even grouped together. Being partners wasn't something that could be achieved simply by being in the same team, if not, the Best Partner selection would be selecting an entire team of five people at once.

Partnership wasn't something that the Alliance had ever clearly defined, but going by the results of previous years, these "partners" were usually the pair of core players in a team who had the most rapport, and their teamwork had to be extremely outstanding.

In today's Wind Howl, Demon Subduer was a core character, just as before, and he was just as outstanding as before, but Doubtful Demon's place in the team had gotten weaker and weaker. Brawler and Thief, this pair was no longer the centerpiece to Wind Howl's playstyle. Nowadays, who stood beside Demon Subduer as his greatest helper?

Fire Wave Formation!

Absent Sun slashed out again, directly cutting a path through the obstacles in his way. After sending out consecutive skills, Absent Sun's movements slowed down. Demon Subduer overtook him from the side, stepped in the middle of the flames of Fire Wave Formation and charged forward.

An extremely beautiful covering play.

Anyone would admit as much.

The timing of Fire Wave Formation and the charge of Demon Subduer was coordinated beautifully, and the enveloping blaze gave Demon Subduer a temporary layer of protection. At this time, anyone who wanted to attack him from close range would first have to suffer the damage of Fire Wave Formation.

But if it was from a long range……

Boom boom boom!

Three shots sounded out, and Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain once again joined the fray.

When the Heat-Seeking Missile had been sent out earlier, everyone in Wind Howl had more or less figured out her position. She was very far away, and as such, was unsuitable as a breakthrough point, so everyone continued to focus on Lord Grim. As for Su Mucheng's continued harassment from afar, Wind Howl could be said to have foreseen it. When the cannon shots rang out, Zhao Yuzhe's Beautiful Light had already pointed with his staff, instantly creating an Ice Wall at the side of the Fire Wave Formation.

The brilliant combination of fire and ice gave Demon Subduer complete protection from all sides. The Anti-Tank Missiles that Dancing Rain fired over were a low-level skill, without enough power to shatter the Ice Wall, and if Su Mucheng were to use another skill, Demon Subduer's charge would have been completed.

Following the flames of Fire Wave Formation, Demon Subduer had rushed close to Lord Grim, and reached the effective range for a Brawler's control skills.

Sand Toss!

Demon Subduer flicked his wrist and threw the skill out.

Lord Grim simply opened his umbrella to block the attack.

Screensaver!

When Lord Grim opened the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella, everyone immediately thought of this point. The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's Shield Form was so large it was borderline criminal, to the point where it could not only hide attacks, but could even hide another player who could attack from the side.

Tang Hao had obviously seen that there was no one at Lord Grim's side at the time, but he still didn't dare to attack head-on. Instead, he moved horizontally and adjusted his angle of attack, leaving the head-on assault to Liu Hao.

Liu Hao quickly grasped his intent, and Absent Sun walked forwards a few steps before attacking. As he directly faced Lord Grim's open umbrella, he sent out an Ice Wave Formation without any hesitation. He was able to maintain a more mid-ranged distance when fighting, so he didn't have to worry as much about what kind of tricks Ye Xiu was hiding behind that umbrella.

At this time, Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon had already activated Stealth, creeping behind enemy lines. Even though he was a Battle Thief, he wouldn't completely abandon the sneaky skills of a Thief.

What about Zhao Yuzhe? At this time, he had spotted a cargo crate and was controlling Beautiful light to jump on top of it. When looking down from an elevation, he would have a wider field of view and a larger area which he could attack.

When he'd jumped halfway and his field of view had expanded a little, he spotted a Ghostblade behind a pile of cargo sacks, the Taichi in his hands already charged with a Phantom Ghost's power.

"Careful, there's a Phantom Demon!" Zhao Yuzhe shouted as Beautiful Light casted a Piercing Lightning towards him.

But at this time, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had already completed the cast for his ghost boundary and an Ice Boundary instantly formed, protecting Lord Grim. Of the three characters from Wind Howl that had charged up, two were already inside the Ice Boundary.

Tang Hao's reactions were swift, directly using a Powerful Knee Strike to leap out of the Ice Boundary. On the other hand, Lin Feng was humiliated; after leaving Stealth, Doubtful Demon's movements were slowed, and he was unable to escape the sudden Ice Boundary in time, immediately being frozen into a large ice block.

One Inch Ash had successfully casted his Ice Boundary, but he couldn't avoid Beautiful Light's Piercing Lightning in time.

Piercing Lightning hit, and as it did damage, it also informed everyone in Wind Howl of the Phantom Demon's whereabouts. Just as Zhao Yuzhe was preparing to attack

once again, there was already cannon fire incoming. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had gotten control over a high vantage point and started to interrupt his attacks.

In the team competition, the players would all suppress each other and interrupt attacks, so there was rarely a situation in which a player could capitalize on one successful attack and complete a combo, unlike in the individual competitions.

Beautiful Light's attack was interrupted, but Tang Hao's Demon Subduer had already started rushing over to the spot where One Inch Ash was concealing himself, while Liu Hao's Absent Sun continued his assault on Lord Grim.

In terms of their positioning, Absent Sun was actually closer to One Inch Ash than Demon Subduer was. But at that time, Lord Grim was under the protection of the Ice Boundary. While the Brawler did have ways to attack at a medium range, if he was unable to attack at close range, the control that he could exert was insufficient. It was incomparable to the Spellblade, which was specialized in mid-range fighting, and so Tang Hao abandoned the closer target to seek the one that was farther away, attacking One Inch Ash while leaving Lord Grim to Liu Hao.

Doubtful Demon was frozen by the Ice Boundary, Demon Subduer had gone to attack the hiding One Inch Ash, Beautiful Light had been suppressed by Dancing Rain's firepower…… As he looked at Lord Grim, not far away from him, Liu Hao suddenly had a bad premonition. He could smell the prelude to a violent storm!

The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella… dipped down very slightly.

Was it about to come!

Liu Hao opened his eyes wide. For now, disregarding what attack Lord Grim was going to use, he sent out a Wave Formation, but immediately afterwards, an arrow of blood spurted out from Absent Sun's neck. Absent Sun was then lifted from the ground and thrown into the Ice Boundary.

Fling was a grab skill, and there was no way to prevent the character from being thrown. Absent Sun was thrown into the Ice Boundary and his speed immediately dropped. As he raised his camera upwards, he saw Lord Grim, who had appeared behind him.

Shadow Clone Technique?

Liu Hao had already realized it at this point, but if it was Shadow Clone Technique, it required hand seals to be cast. Lord Grim was holding the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella in front of him the whole time, how did he manage to form the hand seals?

Liu Hao only held his suspicions for a moment, before immediately thinking of the time when the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella dipped down very slightly.

That motion wasn't the hand seals. Instead, Lord Grim had momentarily let go of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, finishing the hand seals in the blink of an eye before grabbing the umbrella again…

To be able to instantly think of this after the situation had occurred, Liu Hao could be considered to be very skilled. Ye Xiu also immediately praised Liu Hao, "Your ability to read the match is extremely outstanding, but you're always unable to put one hundred percent of your attention into the match. There are far too many other things you're concerned about…"

It was these cliché line again!

Liu Hao was infuriated, but his character was in danger and he really had no ability to type something out to fight Ye Xiu verbally. The Spellblade clearly had a stronger Spirit stat than the Thief, so his Absent Sun had only been slowed upon entering the Ice Boundary and not frozen solid unlike Doubtful Demon. He had to think of a plan to quickly escape the boundary, but with Lord Grim eyeing him so closely, would he have the opportunity to do so?

At the end of the day, Lord Grim suddenly turned his head.

Liu Hao froze.

Crap!

He suddenly realized, Cleric, their Cleric! After the sudden attack earlier, they had been ambushed by Happy in the east. The west was completely barren and had eluded all of their attention. Cleric, they had completely forgotten to protect their own Cleric.

But… where was he?

Liu Hao froze again. Ruan Yongbin's Soul Healer should not have been far behind them, but how come they couldn't even see a shadow of his figure now?

Had he hidden somewhere? That guy was really dirty!

Liu Hao thought about it, this Wind Howl, they truly deserved to be called a dirty team, this attitude had affected everyone on the team, aside from their new players. Ruan Yongbin, he might only be a Cleric, but he still had a dirty playstyle. The only thing was, the master of dirty play who had influenced everyone in Wind Howl was now on Happy! Where was Fang Rui? Where was Boundless Sea?

Liu Hao suddenly realized, aside from trash talking once at the start, this guy had never appeared at all.

"!!!"

Just as he thought that, in Wind Howl's team chat, a cry for help from their Cleric suddenly appeared……

Chapter 1281
Lost Direction

Liu Hao was skilled at reading the situation. He was the first to sense something abnormal: their Cleric, who had hidden himself, and that trash talker Fang Rui, who was nowhere to be seen.

A second later, a string of exclamation marks flashed into Team Wind Howl's chat.

"!!!!!"

The exclamation marks came from Soul Healer; this was Wind Howl's agreed upon rescue signal.

Wind Howl saw it and turned around, but no one was able to find Soul Healer's whereabouts.

Dirty!

Zhao Yuzhe immediately thought of this word. He hated this word. Even when the team had featured dirtiness as their style, he had never tried to understand it. He only felt thankful that Wind Howl ended up changing styles, discarding the word dirty. However, it hadn't been eliminated thoroughly enough. There were still hints of this word in their team.

For example, Ruan Yongbin had his character hide like a dirty thief. Zhao Yuzhe wanted to help him, but he couldn't find him…

Annoying annoying annoying!

Zhao Yuzhe was irritated at Ruan Yongbin's dirtiness. Their captain Tang Hao, Liu Hao, and Lin Feng weren't able to immediately locate Soul Healer either. Reading an agreed upon rescue signal was easy, but no one had any synergy with Ruan Yongbin's dirty style. They symbolized the new Wind Howl, while Ruan Yongbin was a Cleric player, left over from the old Wind Howl. Nearly all the other old players had been replaced, but who would have thought that the healer, a character with a different role than

others, was unexpectedly going off beat from the rest of the team because of the old style. And Happy's Fang Rui had persisted with this old style, so he was able to accurately locate Ruan Yongbin's hiding spot.

Ruan Yongbin had been caught by Fang Rui, so he had sent a rescue signal. However, none of his teammates were able to find him. It looked like a hilariously stupid situation, but it let everyone realize just what kind of team the current Wind Howl was.

Outstanding players? Powerful characters?

Wind Howl possessed these, but whenever they encountered anyone strong, they just couldn't win. Why?

Now, everyone understood.

Team Wind Howl was still experiencing the hardships of going through a transformation. However, Wind Howl's deep-rooted style wasn't so easy to get rid of. Just letting go of the master of playing dirty, Fang Rui, and changing their Doubtful Demon to a battle Thief weren't enough to complete this transformation.

Wind Howl wanted to give up on their roots. For a team, this was no different than demolishing an old building and constructing a new one. Last season, their determination hadn't been too clear. With Fang Rui at the head, the team had someone who played dirty as a part of their main roster, who was displaying the soul of the old team. With the support of the others in the team, Wind Howl had looked quite strong last season.

Then, Wind Howl's new core became Tang Hao. He didn't realize the strength of Fang Rui's supportive play. In contrast, he and Zhao Yuzhe detested this playstyle. He couldn't see the soul of the team and only emphasized his own strength. He wanted his own strength to be magnified a step further, and this dirty style wasn't the support he liked. He was the captain. He was the core. The team revolved around him, and he didn't like this dirty style support. As a result, even the master of playing dirty, Fang Rui, lost his spot on the team.

Fang Rui left, and Team Wind Howl added in a whole bunch of new players. These new players, who revolved around Tang Hao, weren't dirty at all. The rest, who were good at playing around a dirty style as a foundation, had been pushed to the second-string.

What waited for them was either to leave like Fang Rui did, or to change their styles to the new one.

Letting go of playing dirty didn't necessarily spell their downfall. Many outstanding powerhouses in the Alliance didn't rely on playing dirty to win. But the problem was that once Wind Howl chose to abandon the style they had been familiar with, did their new playstyle have a clear direction?

An aggressive style centered around Tang Hao?

This seemed to be their plan, but how should they bring this plan into reality? How should the players work together? What responsibilities should each character have? When fighting, how should they coordinate their attacks?

Thinking back to Wind Howl's matches this season, everyone discovered that while Team Wind Howl had gotten rid of the old style, their new style had yet to be realized either. A new and mature tactical system hadn't been formed.

Facing weak teams, they could overwhelm their opponents through superior individual skill. However, when facing strong teams, without a clear tactical system, there were holes everywhere. Wind Howl's individual round results were quite good because their players and characters were strong. However, their team competition record was a disaster, all because their style hadn't fully matured yet.

They couldn't find Soul Healer?

Maybe they could blame it on not eliminating the dirty style thoroughly enough. However, it also showcased the mess Team Wind Howl was in. Champions? Right now, no one dared to bring this word up along with Wind Howl. Becoming the champions wasn't as simple as having individually strong characters and players.

Wind Howl was like a fly without a head. They couldn't find Soul Healer's position, but they could still ask in the chat. Ruan Yongbin saw the question and replied back with his coordinates. Rescue had finally arrived. However, Happy had taken advantage of Wind Howl's confusion to attack wildly, smacking Wind Howl into a sorry state. Wind Howl had no idea what they should be doing.

Although, when Zhao Yuzhe, Lin Feng, and Liu Hao, the three who had been 1v3ed by Fang Rui in the group arena, saw Fang Rui's Boundless Sea, their target was very clear. But how dirty was Fang Rui? How could he give them a chance to surround him?

Seeing that he was outnumbered, he didn't even try to be brave and scurried off into the marketplace to play cat and mouse with the three.

Fang Rui now had the attention of three of them, how was that okay? Liu Hao quickly noticed the imbalance. However, Zhao Yuzhe was still chasing after him. Liu Hao gave him a reminder and all he received was a "I can handle him alone".

Liu Hao didn't agree with this reply, but he didn't immediately point it out, because he knew Zhao Yuzhe's personality. Saying "just you alone isn't enough" would certainly infuriate him. It would definitely have the opposite effect.

Liu Hao chose to stay silent. He and Lin Feng would provide support in other parts of the battle. Shortly afterwards, Zhao Yuzhe was ambushed by Fang Rui. Happy had even coordinated with Fang Rui and shifted targets. As a result, Zhao Yuzhe was now the one typing "!!!!" The entire team hurried over to rescue him. Liu Hao had predicted this outcome though, so he came to the rescue promptly.

"Good!" Zhao Yuzhe felt very thankful for Liu Hao's prompt rescue. Everyone had also seen Liu Hao save the situation at a key moment.

But…

"It looks like you were ready for it!" Ye Xiu rushed over from the side. Lord Grim used several movement skills in a row to instantly move to Liu Hao's Absent Sun. Such a fast response, such… Ye Xiu had been ready too.

Dancing Rain's artillery barrage, One Inch Ash's ghost boundaries, and even Happy's healer Little Cold Hands appeared in Liu Hao's sight. In an instant, an offensive formation had formed. Their target: Absent Sun.

It was a trap!

Liu Hao didn't hesitate and immediately typed "!!!" He didn't think he could break through the premeditated formation set up by Happy so easily. However, even if his teammates rescued him, what then? Wind Howl had to many openings. Happy just needed to pick one and attack their openings again and again, while Wind Howl ran around rescuing one after the other. Apart from the opening, Wind Howl had never showed the initiative once.

"Fight!!!" Captain Tang Hao shouted. However, was Wind Howl's problem an issue that

could be resolved through morale? Their individual players were good, but they weren't overwhelmingly strong to the point where they could just crush everything in their path through superior individual skill alone. What they lacked was teamwork.

Liu Hao's Absent Sun was the first to fall. To the viewers out there though, even in this losing situation, Liu Hao's performance had no lack of highlights. He had saved Wind Howl several times during crucial moments.

"If you could completely focus on the match, how would things have turned out?" But when he fell, Ye Xiu once again lectured him on that annoying old subject.

How am I supposed to focus more? Why are you so annoying, always blabbering? Do you really think that with your trash talk, people will think that I didn't perform well? Hilarious. Even though Wind Howl's going to lose, who could pick out anything wrong with my performance?

With one player dead, Wind Howl went into an even more passive state. From start to end, they had never taken the initiative even once. Wind Howl's loyal fans had seen their players march onto the stage in high spirits, but their opponents instantly tore them apart as if they were paper tigers.

If Wind Howl had lost an intense back and forth, even though the fans would still feel sad, they wouldn't feel downhearted. But Wind Howl seemed to have gone into the match full of confidence, yet they had never gained the upper hand from start to finish. The fans weren't able to find even a shred of hope.

The Wind Howl banner once again drooped down. That loyal fan responsible for the banner was reminiscing about the Team Wind Howl with the Criminal Partners. Even though that team hadn't placed as high on the rankings as the current Wind Howl, they had never made the fans lose all hope.

Matches needed to be won, but winning wasn't everything in a competition.

Team Wind Howl failed to win a single point nor did they perform well. All they seemed to have was high morale, but when they came onto the stage, they were like balloons and instantly burst apart.

How could this sort of team give us any sort of hope? Wind Howl's fans were suddenly at a loss. A team that currently qualified for the playoffs was unexpectedly making many people feel lost.

Chapter 1282
After Round 18

Wind Howl lost.

A thorough, bitter loss.

Even though their team competitions had always had the style of bullying the weak and fearing the strong, their individual round performances had always been quite good. They'd won two points against Samsara, four points against Tyranny, and three points against Blue Rain. Aside from Samsara, in which they'd been slightly weaker, against Tyranny and Blue Rain, Wind Howl had won the majority of the individual round points.

But when it came to the team competition? A team that lacked strategic focus was that much more vulnerable in front of powerful enemies. In the team competition, it was clear that passion and spirit weren't enough to win. And this time, Wind Howl hadn't even managed to win a victory in the individual rounds, either.

0-10. Wind Howl lost cleanly and completely. Amidst the jeers and laughter of the stadium filled with Happy fans, the six players from Wind Howl who'd played in the team competition were drooping like that team flag in the midst of their fans, never to fly again.

This was the first time this season Wind Howl had lost so badly. In fact, it had been several years since they'd earned zero points in a match. How long would it be before Wind Howl was never again swept like this? Wind Howl's members were stunned! In terms of length of time they'd been in the team, each player's was shorter than the next. Had they paid attention to Wind Howl's past before? They were the ones who hated and abandoned Wind Howl's long-standing dirty playstyle, and it seemed that they had never bothered to note this team's past and tradition.

Accepting the cheers of the crowd, Happy's players left the stage. 10-0, another 10-0, and the fact that they'd won this over a strong team like Wind Howl only made this achievement even more joyful. Their performance from start to finish had been exceptional. Ye Xiu came up and wiped out Tang Hao, Fang Rui scored a record-setting

1v3, and then they'd easily defeated their opponents in the team competition. Just as Wind Howl's diehard fans were beginning to doubt their team, Happy's fans were only swelling with belief toward their team.

In the post-match press conference, even Liu Hao didn't have the heart to try and please the media. Amidst all the doubts, Wind Howl gave a few words of official, meaningless talk, and then forcefully ended their press conference. Then, Happy's players came up, and Fang Rui was immediately the subject of attention. A record-setting 1v3 against his old mother team, wasn't this a thrilling topic? As soon as the group arena had finished, the reporters had frantically prepared all sorts of questions, and now they tossed them about heroically. During this press conference, Happy's other members were basically invisible.

Round 18 finished. Happy's victory over Wind Howl was the big highlight. This time Samsara, Happy's direct competitors in terms of 10-0 scores, lost to Happy. In their home game against Thunderclap, Samsara lost an individual round, and ultimately won the match 9-1. This match that had been chosen for the television broadcast finally allowed the broadcasters to feel no regrets about their choice. This was truly an extremely exciting match, especially the team competition at the end.

There was a great disparity in both players and characters. One reporter added up the value of the players and characters in each team's roster for comparison, and the power indicated by those numbers only made this match feel even more like they were trying to use an egg to crack a rock. But ultimately, the two teams had fought in the team competition for 33 minutes, which was extremely rare to see in a match against the powerful team that was Samsara. It could be seen that they'd faced many hit and runs.

Relying on their seemingly much-cheaper roster, Thunderclap played a careful and calculating death battle against Thunderclap.

Samsara's ultimate victory had been extremely difficult, and some people had even thought during the match that it was a good thing this was Samsara's home game. If it had been Thunderclap's, then Samsara's golden win streak might have finally been broken. After that, the strategy that Samsara had used to obtain victory was exactly the same strategy that Happy had used to defeat Thunderclap in Round 16.

In the end, Samsara's Sun Xiang had forcefully broken his way through countless obstacles, performing exceptionally well to drag down Xiao Shiqin. Even though his

One Autumn Leaf didn't have the same crazy attack rhythm as the unspecialized Lord Grim, the offensive power of the other members of Samsara was generally a step higher than that of Happy. Ultimately, Samsara had relied on this one opportunity to shatter Thunderclap's strategic plans.

This was raw power destroying refinement, and many people felt that it was a shame that Thunderclap lost. And after this destruction, the question of whether or not to open voice channels was once again brought up. Thunderclap, who had once taken advantage of the rule but then suffered twice, finally stood firmly with Blue Rain as a victim of the rule.

And this time, the opponents of the ban on voice comms made their point unusually clearly: the rules were killing the development of Glory.

After seeing that strategy had been completely destroyed by power, one could imagine, in the future why would anyone bother to study these sort of refined strategies? Because even if they developed them, they would be of no use. After several teams in a row successfully used these methods in battle, then the shotcallers of the more strategy-oriented teams would face all sorts of suppression, the goal simply being to prevent them from having the time to type words.

This is a slaughter of Glory strategy. If this continues, then all we will see in future battles are crude, brute-force competitions of raw handspeed. And Glory was more than just that!

The opponents of this rule let their voices resound, and all sides began paying more attention to this than before.

At first, Thunderclap had profited from this rule, but the two subsequent times, they had suffered from it. And they were also without a doubt a team that performed tactics to the peak level. Even before this season, Thunderclap was always this kind of team, but during that time they hadn't had this kind of unbelievable performance. But after Xiao Shiqin went and played around in the Challenger League, it was like the team had become gold-plated.

Even though they'd been defeated by Happy in Round 16, that hadn't seemed to waver their belief at all. Facing Samsara, this unbelievably powerful opponent, Xiao Shiqin once again prepared carefully. He continued to believe that their Team Thunderclap had the ability to defeat any opponent.

This determination moved many people, and Xiao Shiqin's popularity this season exploded. Even with a collection of nameless, ordinary players who were nothing compared to a powerhouse team, they'd still managed to obtain such shining results. This had never before happened in the history of the Alliance. Happy, the self-proclaimed grassroots team, in reality had three All-Star level players, two All-Star characters, and an evildoer unspecialized that no one in the Alliance could grow accustomed to. It'd been a long while since anyone thought of Happy as a grassroots team.

Even though Thunderclap still lost to Samsara, this loss carried a lot of weight. The debate over allowing voice comms grew more and more heated. Some people even demanded that they not wait until next season to change the rules - for something like this, if they could change it, they should change as soon as possible.

Of course, the Alliance couldn't just say they'd change and change it. After the first time this had come up, they'd been studying this problem nonstop. With a new wave of pressure from public opinion, they focused harder on this issue. And after the end of Round 18, the rankings saw new changes. Samsara's strong lead didn't change, but after Happy swept Wind Howl, their ranking rose again. They were now in fifth place, with the same number of points as Tyranny. This round, Tyranny had played a home game, but lost 2-8 to Hundred Blossoms. Because of Zhang Jiale, these two teams had a rather strong conflict. Hundred Blossoms' away game victory this round caused the diehard team-following fans to become carried away in their elation. But the blood of Tyranny fans ran hot, and brawls broke out in Tyranny's stadium. Even though they'd been provoked by the excessive behavior of the Hundred Blossoms fans, it was the host side that generally had to take responsibility for these sort of entanglements.

Fortunately, no injuries had resulted, and the Alliance only gave Tyranny a serious warning. Tyranny suffered, and because of their failure this round, they'd slid down to fourth place, with 127 points like Happy.

Blue Rain and Tiny Herb had each taken down their opponents, and were currently in second and third place.

On Blue Rain's side, they'd faced quite a bit of disruption earlier after losing points to weaker teams. But judging from their recent performance, that had just been a temporary downturn. After adjusting, their scores instantly improved, and in just a few moves they had charged back to second place on the rankings… Tiny Herb continued their beautiful win streak in the group arena. In this round, they only lost

one individual round to Misty Rain, and won by a large margin of 9-1.

Misty Rain's situation was becoming more and more alarming. With 87 points, they were already 21 points away from the playoff zone, and right behind them, Miracle was quickly catching up to them with 83 points. And this new team, Miracle, was only improving with every battle. If Misty Rain was said to still have hope at making the playoffs, then Miracle, only 4 points behind them, also seemed to have this chance.

This had a great deal to do with the change in attitude of the three former Excellent Era players.

These three were originally very depressed about their fall, and they all hoped that they'd quickly find a new home. They all fought quite hard, but how much of it was for their team, that was unknown. But because of their hard work, Miracle actually managed to earn quite good results. Praise came in from all sides, causing them to become overjoyed.

They had come from a powerhouse, and there, they had only ever been side characters. Whenever the team had results, it was very rarely because of them. But now, in this Team Miracle, the three had gradually gained a true sense of owning this home. This team's scores were earned through their hard work; the heartfelt cheers of the fans were meant for them. This sort of fortune steadily let them feel satisfied, and they steadily set down the arrogance bred from their time in a powerhouse. In the private messages between the three of them, they began to recognize that being in Miracle was really quite good.

The three of them began to fight not only for themselves, but for the team. And so the new team's scores became more and more stable. Now, the season was half over, and they were actually in twelfth place.

If Happy weren't here stealing all the spotlight, then Team Miracle really would've lived up to their name, becoming the most miraculous new team in Glory history.

But even in this current situation, Miracle would no longer be overlooked by everyone.

After eighteen rounds, the media reported on the state of the Alliance after this round and the circulating topics. But just two days after the end of this round, a piece of particularly attention-grabbing news appeared in the headlines of all the major media.

Team Wind Howl, with an asking price of 15 million, was seeking to purchase Team

Tyranny's Zhang Jiale.

Chapter 1283
Golden Body Broken

15 million!

Putting aside the target player for now, just this amount was enough to set off stormy waves. The news revealed was very clear that this price didn't include the character, only the player. Without a doubt, if this transfer was successfully completed, the value of professional Glory players would reach a new high.

It was worth noting that the current record for the most expensive player transfer was already set by Team Wind Howl. In the summer window between Seasons 8 and 9, Tang Hao transferred to Wind Howl, and that price of 10 million was currently the highest.

The winter transfer window was generally only for small adjustments and supplements, or if a team needed to fill a hole because of illness or other such special reasons. When Excellent Era obtained Sun Xiang in Season 8, that was a rarely-seen core player transfer. But that, too, was only because Ye Xiu had retired mid-season and Excellent Era was forced to fill the gap.

And now, Wind Howl directly pulled out a record-breaking transfer offer for Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie. It was clear that they had completely recognized the problems with the team and were eager to solve it.

Was Zhang Xinjie the magic treasure that would solve all of Wind Howl's problems?

When everyone thought about it, they realized that Wind Howl had made a fairly correct decision in choosing a player. After giving up on the dirty playstyle, Wind Howl was unable to establish a new tactical system. Bringing in a Master Tactician would undoubtedly help in this area. Wind Howl hoped to establish a new playstyle that involved strong offense, and since Zhang Xinjie came from Tyranny, he would entirely be able to adapt to such a style.

But in the end, relying on acquiring a new team member to solve a problem was a solution for when there was no other way. Choosing Zhang Xinjie seemed to be a

correct choice, but the important point was that you couldn't just buy any transfer you wanted, especially if you were targeting the core player of the other team.

So Wind Howl didn't even bother probing carefully, they directly gave this record-breaking price of 15 million. Evidently they didn't have any win-win trade to offer, so they could only use money to open the way, and hope that they could strike a price that Tyranny had no way of rejecting.

Everyone's eyes were focused. All sorts of media came to investigate, and quickly confirmed that this news was true. Team Wind Howl indeed directly proposed an official transfer request to Team Tyranny.

But… Without even waiting to discuss any specifics, Tyranny had already given a lightning-fast answer, announcing their reply directly through the media: declined.

There'd been no official discussion, just a simple refusal. Tyranny's fans hadn't even had the time to become worried before the official response of the club was there to reassure them.

Tyranny's attitude seemed very resolute, but those who were familiar with transfer operations knew clearly that attitude sometimes was only a bargaining chip for the price. Tyranny's attitude showed that they wouldn't be moved by the price of 15 million, then, what about more?

Those looking forward to watch the excitement weren't disappointed. Less than an hour after Tyranny refused Wind Howl's price, Wind Howl followed up.

20 million!

Double the record set by Tang Hao for a solo player transfer. Everyone recognized once and for all Wind Howl's current insanity. This old team had never given people the impression of being a bold, rich, and ostentatious team. Yet as it turned out, they might be quiet when not moving, but when they moved, it was with the sound of thunder.

A team begging for a big-name player, this was entertaining for any team's fans to watch. Wind Howl's fans were still depressed over being swept by Happy, but they grew excited by Wind Howl's continuously bold strokes. Added to the fact that Zhang Xinjie was a good choice, this caused the Wind Howl fans to suddenly grow lively. Even as they waited in anticipation, they took the initiative to use their fan passion to send praises and welcomes to Zhang Xinjie. Everyone knew that in this transfer, the player's

own opinion would have a great influence, especially for a big-name player like Zhang Xinjie.

In the end, this time Tyranny hadn't even made an official reply when Zhang Xinjie already made his own announcement, expressing that he had absolutely no intention of leaving Team Tyranny.

The passion of the Wind Howl fans had only just been ignited when it was immediately extinguished by this bucket of cold water. Completely thrown off, they could only blankly wait for their own team's next step.

Wind Howl's two public price offers had already made them the talk of the town, but of course in reality, a transfer was never worked out without a direct conversation between the two sides. Wind Howl was in private contact as well. 20 million wasn't their upper limit, this was just broadcast to increase the morale of the team and boost the hopes of the fans.

But afterward, in the private negotiations, Wind Howl again kicked a steel wall. Neither Tyranny as a team nor Zhang Xinjie as an individual showed any sign of wavering. In private, Wind Howl had already raised the price to 25 million and promised even better accommodations for Zhang Xinjie.

Refusal.

They continued to receive nothing but refusal, that sort of immovable refusal with no room for negotiation.

Wind Howl was helpless. Even as the outside world still anticipated Wind Howl to give an even higher price, in private, Wind Howl had hit the wall until their heads were bleeding. Their invitation toward Zhang Xinjie had instantly become a farce of loud thunder with only a drizzle of rain. When Round 19 began, two small teams had already completed two transfers that didn't draw any attention at all, but Wind Howl? After those two days of noise, there was no more movement.

The acquisition of Zhang Xinjie was unsuccessful, but they had made too much noise with this. The fans' hopes had all been lifted, but in the end it didn't work out. It had to be said that Wind Howl had been too confident with this. They'd had excessive belief in the power of money to open the road. It seemed that they hadn't even considered that in response to these prices and conditions, Tyranny and Zhang Xinjie

would still say no to them.

Wind Howl now needed a backup plan to appease the fans whose hopes had been lifted. But just looking at healers, who in the current professional scene could compare to Zhang Xinjie? Besides, Wind Howl had hoped to solve the team's problems from the basis. Just swapping out a healer player would be to no avail. Wind Howl understood clearly that their current problem wasn't that their healer Ruan Yongbin maintained the dirty playstyle. The key point was that, after giving up on the dirty playstyle, the team had been unable to find a mature strategy to use in their matches.

Wind Howl, unable to obtain Zhang Xinjie, seemed like a fly without a head. And in the upcoming Round 19 of the league matches, Wind Howl faced another strong team, Tiny Herb.

Tiny Herb had strong performances in the group arena all season, but their team competitions had caused some worry. After this match, however, everyone saw clearly that even if Tiny Herb's team performance wasn't the best, it was still more than enough to take care of Wind Howl. At least they weren't as fragmented as Wind Howl, who relied entirely on each individual players' instinct and judgment to fight matches.

9-1. Tiny Herb played their away game at Wind Howl and ultimately achieved a large victory. Even though Wind Howl had scooped up one more point than they had last round, this one point was far from enough to make anyone happy.

In the same round, Tyranny, who'd received Wind Howl's request for Zhang Xinjie, displayed their resolve, winning their away game at Void with a score of 8-2.

But in Round 19, the result that was most unexpected was that Samsara's golden win streak was broken.

The team that had completed this snipe was Hundred Blossoms. In their home game, they won 7-3 against Samsara, previously undefeated in the team competition.

Samsara's performance in this team competition was indeed not good that match. After the match, analysts pointed out that their long and slow match against Thunderclap last round had crushed Samsara's rhythm thus far, and in this match, they still hadn't been able to adjust their rhythm back to normal.

But no matter the reason, victory belonged to Hundred Blossoms. After 19 rounds, every team had faced each other exactly once, and only Hundred Blossoms had

managed to defeat Samsara. This was something that the Hundred Blossoms fans could feel proud of. In all these years, this team had received much more mockery than praise, and they really didn't have many honors that they could claim as theirs and theirs alone.

Samsara's golden body was broken, and this of course became headline news. But Happy was now no longer a little invisible team that would easily be overlooked and forgotten. In this round, Happy had also met their first loss since Round 9, which also earned quite a bit of attention.

This round, Happy had played their away game at 301, ultimately losing 4-6. After winning 4 points in the individual battles, Happy's supporters were sure that this would be yet another big victory and were lamenting the fact that this wouldn't be another 10-0. But in the team competition, Happy actually lost.

Ever since Round 9, not only had Happy won every match, their winning scores had never dipped below 9-1. This was a point-scoring rhythm even more fearsome than Samsara's. If the Pro League was only from Rounds 9 to 18, then the championship would already belong to Happy.

It was true that Happy hadn't met any of the top powerhouses in their crazy win streak, but teams like Misty Rain, Void, Thunderclap, Wind Howl weren't opponents that could be casually defeated. The ferocious thing was that when Happy faced these four strong opponents, their scores had actually been even higher. Among these four matches, they'd earned three 10-0's.

Happy's results these ten rounds had been even more insane than Samsara's, and everyone recognized Happy's strength. But no one really treated them as some invincible fleet.

Because Happy always had a weak point, their healer. From the very beginning, people had realized that his skill wasn't enough. This wasn't any secret, this was something that even the newspapers reported.

The various teams would of course target such an obvious weakness. But they soon realized that Happy's protection of their healer was so extreme, it could be called frenzied.

Against Hundred Blossoms, against Misty Rain, then against Void… It was very

apparent in these matches.

And then Thunderclap had made clear strategic plans to target this weakness, but in the end, because Xiao Shiqin was forced into a position where he couldn't give commands, his strategy was broken. If he'd been able to give voice commands, then in this battle, perhaps Happy would lose because of their Cleric's inability to keep up with the rhythm.

Happy's weakness was extremely apparent, but so many teams were unable to grasp it. And then in Round 19, against Team 301 Degrees, Happy's weak point was broken.

It was broken through brute force.

301's captain, the number one Assassin in Glory, Yang Cong used Life-Risking Strike to directly self-destruct and steal away An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands.

Chapter 1284
The Overlooked Sacrifice

Yang Cong was named the number one Assassin in the Alliance, but his Assassin style wasn't particularly liked. For Assassins, most people liked the thrill of a one-hit kill from Life-Risking Strike. But Yang Cong almost never used this skill, to the point that people wondered if his Scene Killer hadn't even added points to this skill and only used it to bluff.

But in the most recent All-Star Competition, Yang Cong's Scene Killer revealed the fangs of an instant-kill, defeating his opponent in just one strike. Even though that was just a show, Yang Cong at least let everyone know, he knew how to use Life-Risking Strike, the most thrilling of all the Assassin's skills.

The All-Star Weekend ended, and all the players returned to their normal competition conditions. But in the match against Happy, Yang Cong once again revealed his sharp fangs, and Life-Risking Strike stole away An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands.

This move was incredibly unexpected, and losing the healer in the team competition was deadly. Lord Grim's little healing skills could occasionally save a situation at critical points, but relying on him to support a 5v5 team battle was impossible.

Happy could only launch a full, rapid offensive, hoping that they could use this to obtain an advantage of numbers. However, 301 was clearly prepared for this situation. As soon as Yang Cong's attack succeeded, they immediately lowered the tempo of the battle and began a slow battle of attrition. Neither arrogant nor rash, they tightly protected their own healer, and ultimately they swallowed Happy like this.

The battle of attrition wore on for almost 20 minutes, but nearly all of the light of this match came from that Life-Risking Strike of Yang Cong's Scene Killer. This was a brilliance possessed only by Assassins.

During the post-match press conference, Yang Cong of course was surrounded by the reporters. Everyone was extremely curious, after seven years of persistence, why did he suddenly change his playstyle in this match? Was it because he found inspiration from that performance at All-Stars?

"Perhaps!" Facing the questions of the reporters, Yang Cong smiled. "You know, it's not that I don't know how to use Life-Risking Strike, it's that I'm unable to use it!"

"What does that mean?" The reporters didn't understand.

"Because I'm 301's captain," Yang Cong responded simply.

The reporters suddenly understood. The captain was a team's soul, its banner. At any time, the captain had the responsibility of leading the entire team. They might use words to encourage the team members, they might use actions to carry everyone along, but no matter how they led, the captain, first and foremost, had to be present.

And Life-Risking Strike? This was a lose-lose playstyle. After using Life-Risking Strike, the Assassin would only be left with a sliver of health. There wasn't a single team who would miss a target like that. And Yang Cong was 301's captain. He needed to strive to remain on the field. He couldn't just simply kill one target and then come offstage.

Life-Risking Strike. It wasn't that he didn't know how to use it, but that he was unable to use it.

Because he was the captain. On his shoulders, he carried more duties and obligations than others did. He could not be an independently-acting Assassin, because he represented not just himself, but the entirety of a team.

Once they understood this, the reporters suddenly realized something that everyone had overlooked all this time.

From Season 4, everyone praised how Wang Jiexi, for the sake of Tiny Herb, quietly adjusted his playstyle, gradually putting away his more elegant, more attention-grabbing, more popular Magician playstyle. But there was another player who joined in the same season as Wang Jiexi, another All-Star level player, another team captain. From the very beginning, he had also quietly sacrificed some things, for the sake of his responsibilities.

Life-Risking Strike was the most brilliant skill of an Assassin.

Perhaps compared to Wang Jiexi, Yang Cong hadn't done as much. But both players had the same determination of sacrificing themselves for the sake of their teams. For this sentiment, it shouldn't matter exactly how much was sacrificed.

After realizing this point, all of the reporters present felt extremely moved. But even as they were moved, they were still curious.

"Then why did you suddenly use Life-Risking Strike in this battle?" a reporter asked.

"I was probably inspired after All-Stars! After the All-Star Competition, I realized that nowadays, methods like this are probably the best way I can contribute to the team. It's about time that I leave some responsibilities for other people to carry," Yang Cong smiled.

The reporters were once again stunned.

This… was someone already preparing to give way and retire!

Players from Season 3 were indeed at the twilight of their careers; very few were still active in the circle. But how many were like Yang Cong, already deciding to step down before he'd even begun to reveal significant signs of decline?

The All-Star Competition… what did it allow him to see?

Did being at the bottom among All-Stars allow him to see the exit toward which he was walking? Or did the younger players allow him to see a future that was worth looking forward to?

None of the reporters continued to press for details. They knew that even if this was Yang Cong was doing this voluntarily, even if he could still smile gently as he faced everyone, his heart would certainly have feelings of sadness. The helplessness brought by the flow of time was cruel. Who was insensitive enough to dig into this scar for details?

Yang Cong's statement already revealed many things.

Team 301 Degrees was about to change their tactical core. Yang Cong's Assassin stepped aside for this, and he could use a freer method to battle. Perhaps starting from this round, Scene Killer's one-hit kill fangs would set off a new scene in the Alliance?

No one would overlook the fact that this was the number one Assassin in the Alliance! Nearing the end of his professional career, he voluntarily gave up his position as the core player, and from this he would step onto the road of a true Assassin.

Then, after Yang Cong stepped down, who would be 301's new core?

The reporters were just as curious about this question, but 301 didn't give an answer during this press conference. Looking at 301's current players, there was Li Yihui who'd transferred from Tiny Herb. Even though he'd dropped out of All-Stars after leaving Tiny Herb, he was still a very strong player. There was also the Blade Master player Gao Jie, whose ability had been steadily increasing the past few years. These two players both had the possibility of becoming 301's new core.

But two days later, the Monday of the new week, in the register of people signing with the Alliance, some people discovered that 301 just signed a new contract. Not a transfer, but an independent registration.

Bai Shu, a name that no one knew, silently entered Team 301 Degrees. And from the public data released by the Alliance, everyone could see that this person named Bai Shu was using the character that former 301 player Xu Bin had left behind after transferring away, the Knight Tide.

Who was Bai Shu?

Countless people were desperate to know this answer, but the Alliance was currently on a weeklong break. This year's Spring Festival had arrived relatively early. January 22 was already Lunar New Year's Eve, only two days away. All of the teams were already on break. Only the Alliance was still reporting as usual on the newest transfers and replacements as they happened during this transfer window. The players of the various teams had all long gone home to celebrate the new year.

Happy also became a lot quieter. Even Wei Chen and Fang Rui, these dirty and shameless guys, very seriously and obediently reported home for the Spring Festival. In an instant, only three people were left in Happy's training room.

"It's just the three of us again!" Chen Guo said, looking at Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng. She didn't feel lonely because there were so few of them. Two people still with her, this was more excitement than she'd ever had since her father passed away.

"Yup, us again," Ye Xiu said.

"Is your brother coming this year?" Chen Guo asked.

"Probably not!" Ye Xiu said.

"You're not planning on going back home?" asked Chen Guo.

"We'll see, we'll see." To this question, Ye Xiu's typical calm, free, and easy attitude wavered a bit, a rare sight to see.

"Then, let's get ready for the Spring Festival!" Chen Guo didn't ask any further.

"Are we going shopping again?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Scared?" The two women smirked at him.

"Even my legs are shaking," Ye Xiu smiled bitterly.

"Then, thanks for your hard work." The two of them showed no intention of letting him off easy.

Just as the three of them prepared to depart, Ye Xiu saw that the door to the R&D area was unlatched, and there seemed to be sounds coming out.

Ye Xiu shot a puzzled glance at Su Mucheng and Chen Guo, and the two immediately noticed this as well. The three of them went forward, Ye Xiu gently pushed open the door, and they saw Guan Rongfei sitting at the computer, completely engrossed in operating something, his mouth moving nonstop as though muttering something to himself.

"What's going on?" Chen Guo barged in, waving her hand in front of Guan Rongfei's face. "Isn't your train at 9? What time is it now?"

Guan Rongfei finally looked away in disgust after Chen Guo blocked his line of sight. After hearing Chen Guo's shout, he casually checked the time. "It's 9:40? Oh, I missed it."

"What are you doing?" Chen Guo shouted. If someone who didn't know what was going on saw this, it would have been really difficult to tell who was the one who had missed the train.

"Working on equipment." Guan Rongfei's response was incredibly simple, so simple that Chen Guo had no response. She of course figured that Guan Rongfei was suddenly investigating some clue, and then became so focused that he forgot about everything else. But her head really hurt over how this guy was always forgetting himself like this,

so much that aside from his work, everything else was ignored.

"You're not going home?" Chen Guo asked.

"Don't rush." Guan Rongfei raised his finger and waved it.

Chen Guo suddenly thought that this guy must have reached some critical point, so she didn't dare to say any more and just waited to the side.

After that, Guan Rongfei continued to lose himself in his work, seemingly forgetting everyone standing around him.

"So what exactly are you working on?" Ye Xiu walked up to him.

"Look, this…" As soon as Ye Xiu came up, Gaun Rongfei immediately grew animated, beginning to chatter away at Ye Xiu.

"Huh, is that so. Let me see." As Ye Xiu spoke, he turned on another computer.

Chen Guo's jaw dropped. What happened to their Spring Festival celebration?

Chapter 1285
Strengthening the Cleric

In the end, Chen Guo couldn't harden her heart to drag these two away from the computer. As for preparing for the Spring Festival, she and Su Mucheng quietly went to take care of it by themselves.

By the time the two women finished and returned to the Internet cafe, when they came upstairs and looked, the two in the R&D room were in the exact same positions as earlier. Such focus meant that Chen Guo couldn't bring herself to interrupt them. After exchanging a glance with Su Mucheng, they quietly retreated.

There was plenty of space in the strategic planning room, so all of the New Year's goods they bought were piled up there. Chen Guo sat on the couch, looking at the points leaderboard on the wall of the strategy room. In her heart, there was a taste she couldn't describe.

The season was officially halfway over, and Happy was currently ranked fifth with 131 points, a full 30 points buffer between them and the edge of the playoff zone. Such an outstanding score had already caused tremors within the circle, and of course Chen Guo rejoiced at these scores. But nowadays, she was no longer that fan who only saw the beauty and elegance of the players' performances onstage. As the phrase went, one minute onstage was the result of ten years of work offstage. Chen Guo, with her new identity, now saw all of the hard work and hardship these players had put in offstage.

Ye Xiu, Tang Rou, Fang Rui, An Wenyi, all of the players, as well as Guan Rongfei in R&D, and Wu Chen in Happy's guild, everyone was working furiously, working so hard that Chen Guo never felt that she was able to relax. They'd made it to the Spring Festival, and she wanted to give everyone a short rest, but Ye Xiu and Guan Rongfei ended up unconsciously squatting in Glory yet again.

For the first time, Chen Guo felt that the championship wasn't just beautiful and glorious, it was cruel. Those that obtained it, those that didn't, both had to sacrifice so, so much.

If they obtained it, at least their efforts were rewarded.

But if they couldn't?

After enduring these kinds of hardships, even though she hadn't even suffered these setbacks yet, Chen Guo already felt that she could feel the pain of those who were unable to win the championship.

She couldn't help but think of Zhang Jiale, the most famous "championship loser" in Glory, having the championship slip through his fingers four times. Yet he still didn't give up. The passion of a person like him was probably just like that of Ye Xiu and Guan Rongfei!

"They're all crazy," Chen Guo muttered.

When Su Mucheng heard this, she laughed and sat down beside her. "Isn't there that saying, only the crazy survive."

"But… What if you go crazy, and you still can't survive?" Chen Guo asked.

Su Mucheng was startled, and her gaze also landed upon that leaderboard.

True… This was competition. If they treated "surviving" as "winning the championship," then it was simply fact that many people, no matter how crazy they became, couldn't become champions.

"Then probably… they can only live with their regrets!" Su Mucheng said. She didn't say anything like "as long as you tried there'd be no regrets." For those who had been pro players, she believed that playing without regrets was possible, but the disappointment of being unable to win the championship certainly wouldn't be erased by such policy of "no regrets." Ultimately, perhaps these regrets were what accumulated in the heart the most.

"Then what about you?" Chen Guo suddenly asked.

"Me?" Su Mucheng was again startled. She became a pro in Season 4, and starting from then, Excellent Era had never won a championship again. Ye Xiu had won three championships, but so far, Su Mucheng was also a player who didn't have the championship keyboard and mouse.

"Would you feel a lot of regret?" Chen Guo asked.

"Probably… as well…" Su Mucheng's answer was hesitant. She was still unsure about this question. She would feel regretful, she was sure of that. But she wasn't sure, would her regret be for herself, or for Ye Xiu? In the end, she still wasn't so dedicated to and crazy for Glory. It seemed that she had practiced just so that she could keep up with Ye Xiu's footsteps. Chen Guo, who was now fairly close with her, could observe this point, and so she asked this question.

"If… If your brother were still here, what do you think you would be doing now?" Tentatively, Chen Guo asked another question.

"If he were still here… I would probably stand at the side and bring them tea and water? And…" Su Mucheng laughed as she continued, "I would also play some Glory, so that the feeling of being together would be a bit stronger!"

"Yeah… Together." Chen Guo nodded, and didn't ask any further. The two women sat together on the sofa, lost in their own thoughts, until a voice suddenly shouted from over there, "Done! Just like that!"

.

The two looked at each other, stood up together, and quickly made their way to the R&D room. When they pushed open the door, they saw that Guan Rongfei, who normally spent all his time staring intently at the computer screen illuminating his face, had actually revealed an extraordinarily happy grin.

"What's done?" the two women immediately asked.

"This set of equipment is complete!" Guan Rongfei said.

"What equipment?" The two women peered over to see. They'd originally thought that Guan Rongfei had spent all this effort working on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella as usual, but from these words, it didn't seem like that was the case. The umbrella wouldn't be described with the word "set"!

"Just a set of Cleric equipment, that's all," Ye Xiu said from the side.

"'That's all???" When Guan Rongfei cared about something, he would display that he did indeed have an extraordinary IQ. He sharply picked up on Ye Xiu's wording.

"High intelligence, high crit, that's not too new, is it?" Ye Xiu said.

"It's the Cleric equipment set with the highest intelligence and highest crit in the entirety of Glory!" Guan Rongfei emphasized.

Ye Xiu shrugged and didn't say anything else, as though he didn't have the energy to argue.

"Highest intelligence? Highest crit?" Chen Guo repeated.

"Yes!" Guan Rongfei nodded emphatically. "Added to Little Cold Hands' skill tree, he'll definitely become the Cleric player with the strongest healing ability in all of Glory. Where's Little Hands? Let him come try it out." Guan Rongfei looked around, searching for him.

"He went home for the Spring Festival," Chen Guo said.

"What about his account?" Guan Rongfei asked.

"I'll get it!" Chen Guo immediately turned around and flew toward the training room to get the account card. Strictly speaking, the account cards were all property of the team, and so the players couldn't casually carry them everywhere. Although Chen Guo wouldn't make a fuss about such a detail, with An Wenyi's personality, he would always stick to the rules, and he'd handed over Little Cold Hands' account card without hesitation to Chen Guo before leaving.

The account card was quickly retrieved, and they swiftly logged onto the game. After trading with the account that Guan Rongfei had been using for research, a full set of Silver equipment was transferred to Little Cold Hands' body, and Chen Guo was dumbstruck.

Head, shoulders, upper body, waist, lower body, shoes, six pieces of clothing.

Cape, necklace, left hand ring, right hand ring, badge, pendant, six accessories.

Plus the common weapon for a Cleric, the cross.

13 pieces of equipment, all Silver.

Now that they were in the tenth season, more and more characters had full sets of

Silver Equipment. There wasn't a speck of Orange to be found on the core players of the various major teams. But Chen Guo never thought that their Happy would also get a fully Silver-equipped character so quickly, let alone that the first character to get all Silver equipment would actually be Little Cold Hands.

"This… is now the strongest Cleric?" As Chen Guo controlled Little Cold Hands, her hands were shaking a bit.

"Strongest? That depends on how you define it. From healing amount, this is the strongest," Guan Rongfei said.

"I understand," Chen Guo nodded. Even though she wasn't a pro player, she understood things like which stats were more important for a Cleric.

Intelligence, this was the number one thing a Cleric had to strive for. How high the intelligence was determined how strong or weak the Cleric's healing ability was.

And then, the more Vitality and health, the more ability they had to survive. Every class cared about the Vitality stat, and the survival of the Cleric determined the survival of the team, so some Clerics felt that Vitality was even more important than intelligence.

Aside from that, cast speed was also an extremely important stat for a Cleric. The faster the casts, the more heals could be made, it was another way of increasing how much the Cleric could heal, and on the battlefield, it decreased the chance of interruption from the opponent.

Crits, something that had a certain probability of occurring. Critical attacks increased damage. Healing criticals increased the healing amount.

These were all stats used to strengthen the healing ability of a Cleric. And when trying to strengthen the survivability of a Cleric, all sorts of defenses and resistances were also regarded as very important.

With all sorts of stats, it was very difficult to rank them. Generally, it depended on the characteristics of the individual player, so that these Cleric stats were allocated to form the most comfortable and effective partnership with the player. This was key in choosing equipment, and was also the value of Silver equipment: only self-made equipment could achieve the ideal stat distribution.

And this set for Little Cold Hands, the stats were rather aggressive. Intelligence and crit were strengthened without restraint, while aside from that, stats like cast speed which couldn't be overlooked by any Cleric suffered a cold shoulder. On the defensive side, this equipment had high resistance to ice and dark, but they were strengthened at the cost of fire and light defense.

"This… suits An Wenyi?" Chen Guo was now a more worldly person, and she didn't have any doubts looking at the stats of this set of equipment. She trusted that Ye Xiu and Guan Rongfei wouldn't give her something to laugh at.

"Yes," Ye Xiu nodded. "An Wenyi is weaker in terms of technique and reaction, so having to constantly cast heals to support the whole team makes things too difficult. Might as well give him this set, with a slower rhythm, but a strong explosive power."

"Ice and dark resistance, to decrease the risk of him being controlled." Chen Guo knew that the attacks with controlling and restricting effects were largely ice and dark element.

"Right," Ye Xiu nodded.

"So our weaknesses are taken care of just like that?" Chen Guo asked happily.

"The equipment is only a supplement. Even with all this, his reactions are still somewhat slow, he still needs to improve!" said Ye Xiu.

"Then what should he do?" Chen Guo asked.

"It's up to him," Ye Xiu said.

At the same time, in the Glory world, in the Heavenly Domain, in front of a Level 60 100-person dungeon, Lost Fleet.

"What? Solo healer? Bro, don't kid me, okay? This is the entrance to the 100-player dungeon. The 5-player dungeon is over there," said a surprised Knight player, to this Cleric who was wearing decent equipment.

"It's just a Level 60 one," said this decently-equipped Cleric. "Solo healer is enough. With more damage, it'll go a little faster."

Chapter 1286
The Scoundrel Healer

Level 60 100-person dungeon, solo healer.

The one who proposed this ludicrous idea at the entrance of the dungeon was Happy's healer, An Wenyi. One could only imagine the extreme chaos that such a situation would force upon the healer, but An Wenyi wanted to use exactly this type of environment to improve his own reactions.

The only problem was that this idea was quite ridiculous. In Glory, there had never before been the idea of solo healer for a 100-person dungeon, even if everyone was at Level 75 now, and this was only a Level 60 dungeon. There was a level advantage, but that didn't mean that players could easily crush a 100-person dungeon. If that were the case, healers wouldn't even be needed.

An Wenyi found a wild raid group. With his current identity as one of Happy's pro players, he could directly go to Happy's guild dungeon groups to practice, but those groups would definitely coordinate with him and care for him unconsciously. The teamwork of a stable team would lower the pressure on the healer. What An Wenyi needed was the most chaotic and insanity-inducing environment possible, and a wild dungeoning group formed right outside the entrance of the dungeon fit his needs exactly.

"Solo healer…" Even though this Knight was forming a wild raid group, he had a few companions. He didn't speak for a while, probably to discuss this issue with them.

An Wenyi quietly waited to the side. If this team rejected him, he could only search for other groups. Today was only Monday, the dungeons had just refreshed for the week, so large crowds of people gathered to dungeon. Only a minority of these players had set groups. Most players just casually threw together a team and dungeoned where they could. In such a setting, it shouldn't be too hard for An Wenyi to fulfill his desire of solo healing. After all, like any online game, in activities like dungeoning, healers were always a scarce resource. And of the 24 glory classes, healers made up only 8% of the player base, but for a 100-person dungeon, more than 8% of the spots typically needed to be healers, which only worsened the scarcity.

The group deliberated for a while. Finally, they probably looked at the people they'd already gathered and the applicants to the team. There were piles and piles of the various classes, but the number of Clerics and Paladins was so low it was pathetic. Whenever any were discovered, if you were too slow by a heartbeat, they would have already joined another group.

"How about… we give it a shot?" The players were tempted, and An Wenyi's Cleric was pulled into their group.

An Wenyi let out a long breath.

Level 60 100-person dungeon, solo healer. He'd never done it before, but he wasn't going in without any preparation. Why would he choose this dungeon to do this sort of thing? This decision had been made through calculations. The person who gave him this answer was Luo Ji, that person who could write countless Idiot's Guides just from watching dungeoning videos. He'd been a great help to An Wenyi for his. After calculating the damage in the Level 60 100-person dungeons and the healing power of the Cleric character An Wenyi would use, as well as all of the various situations that were likely to occur in these dungeons, he concluded that it was theoretically possible for a solo healer to sustain a raid group for a Level 60 100-person dungeon.

The raid group was quickly assembled. After they stopped considering healers, adding people was an extremely fast thing. But very quickly, players in the group also realized the fact that, in the entire group there was only one healer.

"Solo healer?" After one person asked and received an answer, everyone was in an uproar.

"Is he a dumbass? Does he even know how to play?" Immediately, many players immediately quit the raid group.

"For a Level 60 dungeon, solo healer is enough, max efficiency!" The team leader used An Wenyi's earlier words. But still, many players who thought this was impossible left. Of those that were left, some were shocked and some were curious, and then new players were added, some discovered the solo healer and quit in a rage, more were added, repeat the struggle, until finally, a muddled raid group was pulled together.

Solo healer!

Everyone was searching for that one healer in their group, wanting to see what kind

of character it was.

At this time, An Wenyi couldn't help but feel a little nervous, too. He didn't come here wanting to screw everyone over. Solo healer… he had to pull it off.

"Enter!" the team leader ordered. The team entered the dungeon, and An Wenyi's crazy training began…

Wiped out.

Ultimately, the 100-person raid group fell to the very first boss of Lost Fleet.

"What solo healer you fucker!!!" At least 50% of the entire group immediately started berating him mercilessly.

They were Level 75, challenging a Level 60 dungeon. Even if it was a wild group as long as they were supported by a normal proportion of healers, they should at least make it past the first boss without wiping out.

The self-proclaimed solo healer was thrown into a mess right after meeting the first wave of monsters, and at that time the leader was already feeling a shadow over his heart. Wild dungeoning groups were chaotic, mismatched in both awareness and cooperation, and they needed healers to frequently stabilize the situation.

And so they progressed, chickens flying and dogs jumping, and whether in the chat or in voice, the most frequent content was cries for healing: heal heal heal heal heal.

People were dying nonstop, ending their dungeon adventure, and by the time they reached the first boss, over 30 people had already died. The remaining 60 or so ultimately fell to this boss.

…

As soon as the wounded leader was sent out of the dungeon, he immediately tried to find and harass An Wenyi. That guy, he came here purely just to screw people over, right? Had the leader accidentally made an enemy of someone, who came to take revenge with an alt account? The team leader stewed in anger, but he didn't think that anyone had such a large grudge against him that they would go to all this effort to destroy a wild team that he'd casually pulled together. But when he took a circle all around the entrance of the dungeon, there was already no trace of that Cleric.

"Fuck, don't let me see you again!" the leader spat bitterly.

"It really is very difficult…" An Wenyi, who had already quickly escaped from the Lost Fleet dungeon, summarized this failure of a dungeon adventure. He'd been prepared for the chaos of a wild group, but the reality had still been far worse than his expectations.

But even though it'd turned out like this, An Wenyi had no thought of giving up. If he'd been able to do this right from the start, then would he even need this training in the first place? He'd already made all the preparations, including a drawer of Level 75 Cleric accounts.

An Wenyi did have a lot of experience in-game. He knew that this kind of scoundrel Cleric repeatedly doing this scoundrel thing would very quickly show up in the global channel, and so he'd already prepared to switch to alts.

However… always searching for a solo healer team, this action also seemed too conspicuous. Even switching accounts wouldn't be enough to hide it! An Wenyi was very thorough when considering problems, and he'd thought of this from the start, and so the new Cleric account he switched to was on the fourth server.

The ordinary servers had the same content as the Heavenly Domain, and their 100-person dungeons weren't lacking at all. An Wenyi had prepared these Cleric accounts specially for the ordinary servers, and so he began to wander all about the various servers as a solo healer, becoming a natural disaster for dungeon groups left and right.

Yes, natural disaster…

At the very start, the only thing that could be used to describe An Wenyi was "natural disaster."

One after another, wild dungeon groups were wiped out because of him, and group after group of players wasted their dungeon runs. An Wenyi was apologetic in his heart, but he twisted his head and, calm and determined, continued to be a natural disaster.

Did his skill show any increase?

Just looking at the progress in the dungeons, there was no significant change. Every run had different situations, and An Wenyi's performance had its ups and downs.

Clearly, he didn't have the ability to stabilize and control these situations. But with An Wenyi's logical mindset, he hadn't anticipated any miraculous rhythm of instantly becoming God-like, so step by step he continued to use the drawer of accounts and wander around.

The new week gave him many opportunities to join dungeon groups. But the the Spring Festival quickly arrived, the time of the year with the lowest number of people online in Glory. Even though that was the case, Glory would still put out an in-game event during this time with many prizes for the players.

During an in-game event, the number of people actively dungeoning would decrease greatly. But this year's Spring Festival event also happened to be a huge group event. Even though it wasn't a dungeon, it was a dungeon-like environment for training, and so An Wenyi continued to train. After being a natural disaster for the dungeon groups, he became a natural disaster for the event groups.

About halfway through the Spring Festival, this legend of a natural disaster began to circulate in-game. Numerous players were complaining about meeting this scoundrel Cleric, and quickly even a discussion thread popped up, with the subject "Those Clerics Who Screwed You Over In Those Years." And so one after another, players showed up and told their stories, and gradually people began to realize, these experiences, how come they all sounded so similar? And afterward, the players who had been screwed over by the same Cleric character excitedly gathered together on this common ground.

"It's An Wenyi."

After Chen Guo told about this everyone about this exciting thing going on in-game recently, Ye Xiu found the thread in question. After flipping through a few of the descriptions written by the victims, he made this declaration.

"Ah?" Chen Guo was stunned.

"He's using this kind of method to crudely train his reactions," Ye Xiu said.

"This… does it work?" Chen Guo was doubtful.

"With such persistence, there'll always be some improvement," Ye Xiu said.

"But with him causing such a ruckus, he probably won't be able to persist much longer,

will he?" Chen Guo scrolled through that thread, and toward the end people were already beginning to analyze this scoundrel Cleric. Even though they hadn't figured out any clues for now, it was clear that with the recent booming popularity of this thread, even ordinary players who liked to surf the discussion boards might see it, and once they saw it, they would be vigilant against any Clerics proclaiming they could be a solo healer.

"Haha, I'm sure he'll think of a way," Ye Xiu said.

An Wenyi indeed thought of a way. After being repeatedly refused as a solo healer, he began not to worry about maintaining that setup, and instead simply tried to find groups where the pressure on the healers was relatively high. In reality, after so much professional training, An Wenyi's current skill was higher than any ordinary player. He couldn't make the solo healer 100-person dungeon reality because of his own weaknesses, but for situations where there was a lack of healers and thus more pressure, he could handle them easily.

But healing step by step as usual, that wasn't the intense training that An Wenyi was looking for. And so in these kinds of groups, he took on all responsibilities, ignoring the divisions of the team. He treated the situation as though he were a solo healer, and furiously tried to maintain the health of the entire team.

Because there were still other healers supporting, it didn't fall into chaos. In fact, An Wenyi's extremely high-level wide-range observational ability became evident as he saved the situation all around. And so An Wenyi took the chance to make a request: "With me here, we don't need this many Clerics. Add some more DPS so we can go faster and kick out some healers for the next dungeon."

Chapter 1287
A Cheap Idea

The winter break for the Spring Festival passed by quickly. Guan Rongfei, who had missed his train due to being too absorbed in his research, decided to just forgo going home altogether, spending the Lunar New Year with Chen Guo, Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng. It was because of his presence that Chen Guo didn't manage to experience much of a celebratory air during their Lunar New Year's Eve feast.

Guan Rongfei focused on devouring his meal when he wasn't speaking, and when he spoke, he never deviated from business. Don't look at how Happy now had a full set of Silver Cleric equipment; their overall Silver equipment development was rather lacking. This topic was definitely a heavy one, especially when Guan Rongfei ran right back to his lab and retrieved a stack of documents to show Ye Xiu the materials they were in dire lack of. The entire atmosphere of their dinner simply sank.

With what Ye Xiu had accumulated through his efforts this past year and a half, plus Guan Rongfei's wealth of experience, Happy had already been able to take many shortcuts in developing Silver equipment. Apart from the upgrade of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, the development of their other equipment had cost them extremely few materials. Otherwise, it would've been impossible for them to develop so much Silver equipment with their foundations - or lack thereof - as a new team.

However, after this half a season, their stocks had been depleted. They were good with low level materials since Wu Chen, now in charge of the Guild Department, had brought them to a standing a club guild should have. Throughout the servers as well as the Heavenly Domain, they were continuously accumulating materials. Their profits from dungeons were very stable.

However, the rare materials only a wild boss could provide, faced with a battle of guilds, wasn't so easy to gain. Wu Chen clearly didn't have Ye Xiu's ability to submerge everything into chaos and benefit from it. Plus, with Happy's current standing, it wasn't the same as back then when Ye Xiu could charge into the fray on his own and create an uproar. Balance was something Happy had to research and attain.

What Happy had as an advantage was the passion in their guild.

As a new team with a new fanbase, they had achieved some outstanding results and the passion for helping their guild and playing a part in their team's improvement swelled amongst their fans. Their efforts and dedication allowed Happy to maintain their competitiveness.

However, the rare materials from wild bosses were, at their core, very different from what could be obtained through dungeoning. There were only so many each week, you'd have to see if you could manage to win them first, and even if you did win them, would those materials be what you needed? With that, Happy was at a disadvantage.

Happy was, after all, a new team. Their need for these materials was far greater than that of the other teams.

Seeing the materials on the list Guan Rongfei handed over, Ye Xiu knew that it would be impossible to suit everyone up like they had Little Cold Hands. Next, they had to have a plan, and decide which character to focus on first.

Among these, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was a huge burden. Its materials were very demanding in the first place, then, as a project in development, it incurred huge material costs. After looking over the materials Guan Rongfei had used on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's development, Ye Xiu's heartbeat had quickened. If it weren't for the necessity of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, how many pieces of Silver equipment could they have created from these materials?

"The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella…" Ye Xiu was a little hesitant. Since Guan Rongfei wanted to boost the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella directly to Level 80, there were many added variables to the research of this weapon. More variables meant a higher expense, and more importantly, this expense would continue.

"Should we give up on it for now…" Ye Xiu couldn't help but wonder, but… giving up now would mean wasting everything they had already poured into this. The research they had done on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had gotten to a point where it was difficult to stop. Even so, they couldn't just charge recklessly like this. When push came to shove, they'd have to make small scale sacrifices!

Ye Xiu took a deep breath, trying to force himself to calm down and consider this rationally. On the other hand, Guan Rongfei didn't consider so much. Seeing Ye Xiu looking over the materials required for the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, he instead became rather exultant. "It's almost done. Right now, we just need one more

part. Once we confirm this one material, I'm pretty sure we'll be good."

"Can this part be modified on its own?" Ye Xiu's heart thumped again. Whether the part could be modified in isolation or not made a huge difference. If it couldn't, then this situation would be rather terrible. As a piece of equipment, if a single part had anything wrong with it, the equipment would fail; they might lose all the materials put into the equipment's conception and have to start anew. If they could modify and test it in isolation, then just redoing the part would cost far less materials.

"It can't…" Guan Rongfei gave him a most disappointing answer.

Ye Xiu sighed heavily. The next step of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was made entirely out of Level 75 rare materials. The consequences of these materials going to waste was something happy couldn't afford. If these materials were used on other equipment, then it could greatly improve Happy's overall strength. Seeing the materials required for other pieces of equipment, Ye Xiu made a decision. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella would have to be set aside for the moment!

Yet, he hadn't even made his decision known when Guan Rongfei continued, "We can only modify it locally, at a cost of about three rare materials."

"…" The solemn decision Ye Xiu had made immediately dispersed. Though the expense of three Level 75 rare materials was rather painful, it was far more acceptable than all the materials the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella would be using!

"Good luck!" He quickly swept away the heavy heart of having to abandon the progress of his weapon and changed to encouragement.

"When the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella is finished, should we push all the other equipment to Level 80?" Guan Rongfei said in a smug tone. His passion seemed to have extended from researching the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella to whether it was possible to upgrade the rest of their equipment to Level 80 under the current level limit.

"That's… a little too taxing on our materials. no?" Ye Xiu said.

"I'll do my best to get out a list," Guan Rongfei replied.

"Don't rush it," Ye Xiu hurriedly reminded him. "Let's go step by step according to the plan we had decided on!"

"But how cool would that be. All Level 80 equipment!" Chen Guo suddenly called out.

"Calm down!" Ye Xiu yelled. He hadn't expected this at all. Didn't they know what Level 80 meant? Didn't they know that Happy couldn't afford to undertake such a wide scale high level project like this? It was too irrational to push Guan Rongfei's passion in that direction at a time like this. Ye Xiu noticed Chen Guo's wine cup; was the boss drunk?

"The base stats of a piece of level 70 Silver equipment is equal to Level 75 Orange equipment. That means Level 75 Silver equipment is Level 80 Orange equipment. Conversely, doesn't that mean that Level 80 Orange equipment is equal to Level 75 Silver equipment? If we can find a way to improve our Level 75 Orange equipment and upgrade them to Level 80, then wouldn't they be like Level 75 Silver equipment? Though they won't be Level 80 Silver equipment, but being able to completely arm ourselves with Level 75 Silver equipment, that'll still make us very powerful at this stage!" Chen Guo exclaimed.

The room immediately quieted down. Ye Xiu glanced at Guan Rongfei and Guan Rongfei glanced at Ye Xiu. The two were already in deep contemplation. As for Su Mucheng, she was staring at Chen Guo in surprise. Though equipment editing wasn't her forte, she knew far more than Chen Guo would just through sheer exposure, and she definitely had a clearer understanding of the value of Chen Guo's sudden idea.

"Although this idea is a little cheap, but from a cost-efficiency perspective, this is a good idea," Guan Rongfei decided.

"Cheap!" Chen Guo's focus was always on the negative adjectives.

"Isn't that the basis of your idea? Using cheap equipment and resources to imitate more high-end equipment?" Ye Xiu retorted.

"How come it sounds so… bad coming from your mouth?" Chen Guo couldn't find any sort of rebuttal and simply sulked.

"Can Orange equipment be modified directly under the equipment editor……? This is something that's currently being researched, but I doubt anyone has figured it out completely. What the equipment editor can do is take equipment apart into parts, but there are too many unknowns regarding the variables and formulae that decide how the combined product of these parts is created. We aren't even all that clear on what materials make up some of the parts of dismantled Orange equipment. Currently, only

the game developers can increase the stats and level of Orange equipment in their updates," Guan Rongfei mused.

"Orange equipment is just an example she brought up. In reality, we don't need to use the Orange equipment produced by the system, but create the Orange equipment from scratch using the equipment editor," Ye Xiu suggested.

"Using the equipment editor to create Orange equipment…" Guan Rongfei furrowed his brows.

"Then upgrade them to Level 80," Ye Xiu continued his train of thought.

"This idea is like, in a test, everyone is working hard to get that 100 percent. We can easily get a 90 percent, then do a bonus question that no one else knows of, thus boosting our score to 100, too," Su Mucheng drew an analogy.

"Of course, in the long term, getting 110 percent or a solid 100 percent would be best. However, in the short term, this is the quickest, most effective way to increase our strength," Ye Xiu concluded.

"Let's try it!" Guan Rongfei finally nodded. Ye Xiu was delighted because he knew that this guy didn't care much about things like team results or cost-efficiency or saving up. What really incited his passion and interest was the process of developing equipment itself. Thus, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was a very interesting project, as was creating Level 80 equipment. Crafting the highest intelligence and critical Cleric equipment was alright, too. Working on something you were interested in, passionate about would make you more dedicated and efficient; you'd do better. Currently, making Orange equipment instead of Silver equipment with the equipment editor was an entirely new idea that seemed to have motivated Guan Rongfei.

Of course, anything that came out of the equipment editor would have silver names, and was "Silver equipment" from this perspective.

However, if you didn't try to reach the high stat possibilities that Silver equipment would give you, but something only on the level of orange equipment, then the standards for materials would definitely be lowered. The only awkward thing was that they couldn't aim for the best for their Silver equipment, but had to make it a level below on purpose, that… was something Guan Rongfei really didn't have any leads in.

The chopsticks in his hands suspended in the air above the dishes, the gears in Guan

Rongfei's head were already beginning to turn.

Chapter 1288
Big Surprise

The Spring Festival passed in the blink of an eye, and the various players made their way back to their teams. Unlike other people who could slowly readjust to their work after a long break, pro players needed to quickly adjust their condition back to normal. Round 20 of the League matches was right in front of them.

On the sixth day of the Spring Festival, January 28, Happy's players were already beginning to return to the team. When An Wenyi returned, he obtained the account card that had received a complete makeover.

He was Happy's weak point, the target of many opponents' strategies, and Happy had made many plans and arrangements revolving around him. His existence seemed like such a burden, and the outside world's cries for Happy to find a qualified healer player had never broken. An Wenyi knew all of this better than anyone. For a new player, the pressure on him was extremely high. But An Wenyi persisted. He knew that his own abilities were limited, and he knew that Ye Xiu had dug him out of the game not for any talent he had but out of helpless desperation. An Wenyi at least had some special trait and stood out just a tiny bit among the ordinary crowd.

There was still a lot he needed to work on. An Wenyi knew this clearly, and so he was always working hard. He hoped that he could gain something. During the entire winter season, in fact, he'd held worry in his heart. Before, Happy had chosen him because they had no other choice. But now, with Happy's current results, they could definitely attract a better healer. An Wenyi was truly quite scared that he would be replaced just like that. Especially because he was such a logical person, he felt that Happy's doing so would indeed solve the problem once and for all.

Every day after the winter transfer window opened, he carried this worry. But it seemed that Happy didn't have any intention of making any moves during this transfer window, which reassured him a little. And then during the Spring Festival, and he went home to celebrate the holiday. Even then, An Wenyi didn't dare slack off, and he continued his harsh training.

But on the last night he was at home, he still had a nightmare. Chen Guo came to find

him, telling him that a new Cleric player arrived to the team, and An Wenyi was now left to fend for himself. She only told him now because she wanted to let him enjoy the holiday first…

An Wenyi was frightened awake in a cold sweat. A method like "let you enjoy the holiday first," which took into account the human feelings involved, was definitely something that fit Chen Guo's style. After that dream, he had no way of falling back asleep.

The next day, he returned to the team. Carrying the mood that the nightmare had brought him, he returned to Happy, he returned to the training room, and Chen Guo pushed the account card for Little Cold Hands back into his hands.

In that moment, An Wenyi's heart finally relaxed. There were only a few days left in the transfer window. It looked like the team really didn't plan to find anyone to replace him.

And then, as he inserted the card and logged onto his character, An Wenyi found that in the room, Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Chen Guo were all looking at him strangely, as though waiting for something.

An Wenyi suddenly had another bad feeling. But he never could have predicted that, when he logged onto the account and checked the character's status and equipment as usual, he was suddenly blinded by an eyeful of silver words.

Silver equipment?

One piece, another piece, in total thirteen pieces. A full set of Silver equipment.

An Wenyi was stunned.

"How about it, still recognizable?" Chen Guo came up to him with a smile.

"This… this is…" The cool and logical An Wenyi was stammering.

"High intelligence, high crit, it should fit you very well. Become the fiercest Cleric in Glory!" Ye Xiu said.

"This is really… too great…" An Wenyi's mood was complicated, but he wasn't someone who could open his mouth and burst forth with eloquent poetry. In the end when he

opened his mouth, he only gave this simple sentence of praise.

He worried that the team would give up on him. But in the end, the team hadn't given up. They'd actually created a whole new set of Silver equipment for him, a complete set, the first complete set of Silver equipment in Happy. For him. Someone who was nothing more than Happy's weak point, Happy's vulnerability, the one in Happy who was most viewed as dragging everyone down.

An Wenyi logically thought that he would be replaced, but he was met with the team's "illogical" response. He hated the illogical, but at this moment, he had no idea what he could say aside from "really great."

"Keep working hard!" Chen Guo said.

"Yes!" An Wenyi nodded his head firmly. Not only did the team have patience toward him, they had belief in him. And he could only repay them with his determination and loyalty.

"But don't take this equipment to join dungeon teams in game. If you lost it, that'd be bad," Chen Guo added, laughing.

"Ah… you know…" There was an added weight to Chen Guo's reminder, so An Wenyi immediately realized what Chen Guo was actually saying.

"Not bad," Chen Guo praised him.

An Wenyi sweatdropped. His diligent and harsh training had caused so many complaints and made countless victims. In order to improve, An Wenyi could only toughen his skin and continue because he truly couldn't think of any more effective method. In a dungeon he had to observe the whole situation and choose the skill and grasp the timing and make judgments and position and so on and so forth. Compared to pure reaction training, An Wenyi felt that this method would allow him to reap greater benefits.

Because An Wenyi had been training nonstop ever since he'd joined Happy, but to be honest, after a year and a half, the improvement in his reaction times were complete unsatisfactory. It looked like he was naturally limited in this area, and so from early on he'd searched for breakthroughs in other areas. And this sort of grinding training seemed to him an explosive way to improve himself.

"Alright, since you just got back, take a rest for now. When everyone gets here we'll start practicing again," Ye Xiu said to An Wenyi.

"I'm not tired, I'll take another look. An Wenyi was fiddling with Little Cold Hands, a Little Cold Hands clad in all-Silver equipment.

Ye Xiu smiled and didn't stop him.

With this, Happy had given An Wenyi a huge Lunar New Year's gift. But they hadn't expected that someone had also brought back a huge Lunar New Year's gift for Happy.

Wu Chen, after returning, didn't immediately return to the guild department. With a smile, he logged onto his own account in the training room and then displayed the guild's inventory for everyone to see.

"Surprised?" Before, it was Ye Xiu and the others waiting to enjoy An Wenyi's expression. And this time, it was Wu Chen's turn to wait and enjoy their expressions.

"This is…" Chen Guo was dumbstruck. She'd created this team, but her in-game life still continued, and she had an approximate understanding of how many materials the guild had. But she didn't have the habit of checking too often because she felt that that would be hovering over the guild work, and she didn't want to do that. So Chen Guo, as the boss, actually paid less attention to the guild storage than she had as an ordinary guild member. She didn't remember when was the last time she'd checked on Happy's stores. But no matter what, these pages upon pages of filled boxes was almost ridiculous, especially the numerous rare materials included within.

"From the event?" In the end, Ye Xiu reacted first. Although there weren't many rare materials, there was no way they'd come from wild bosses. Only so many wild bosses could spawn in one week's time. These could only have come from the Lunar New Year event.

"Yup! Unexpected, right? Everyone is very enthusiastic, you know!" Wu Chen said.

"Everyone?" Chen Guo was confused.

"The fans of Team Happy!" Wu Chen said proudly. As the guild leader, Wu Chen could be considered the member of Happy who had the most interactions with ordinary gamers and fans. He watched as Happy's fan base grew bigger and bigger, and he had the greatest impression of the fans' enthusiasm. Although a club guild could gather a

large number of fan players, these players ultimately came to play the game, not to do any work for the team. So, the club could only directly control a portion of full-time or half-time players. And for these, the club needed to pay them for the benefits. They weren't reliant on fans' love and support.

But Happy wasn't quite the same right now. A new team with outstanding results. The fans that they'd gathered were still fresh in their excited support! They gave their time and effort simply out of love without keeping track of the cost. And this time during the Lunar New Year event, players in Guild Happy voluntarily organized groups to build the bricks and tiles that the team needed, and they received a roaring answer. Later, many players who hadn't joined Guild Happy but were still fans of Team Happy all came to participate. They earned materials and sent them to Guild Happy without hesitation.

Because of this massive, widespread, passionate support, Guild Happy's storage grew full to bursting in just a few short days.

"This is really… too great…" Chen Guo also entered the state An Wenyi had experienced earlier, the "didn't know how else to express praise."

"It's not just Heavenly Domain, either. The stores in all the normal servers also earned a lot from this event," Wu Chen said.

"Then… we really need to thank everyone!" Chen Guo was deeply moved, immediately going to Happy's official Weibo account to post a thank-you message.

Very soon, numerous people flocked to comment and reblog. The team had received their support, which made the fans very happy. The screen displayed nonstop everyone's shouts of well-wishes and encouragements, so many that there was no way for Chen Guo to reply to them all.

Happy now had its own official website as well. Chen Guo immediately went over there, prepared to write a more official and formal thank-you message, but after clutching her head for a while, she felt that there was no way she could express her current emotions in writing. She sat there in a daze.

"This is really too powerful. You organized this?" Ye Xiu asked Wu Chen.

"I can only say that everyone's emotions accumulated into this. Plus, everyone can see Happy's condition right now, and that we need this kind of support," Wu Chen said,

smiling.

"This is really a great surprise," Ye Xiu said, voice filled with emotion.

"It's just that the rare materials are a bit lacking. The game system is still selfish!" Wu Chen sighed.

"Even ordinary materials are good," Ye Xiu smiled. Now that they were prepared to make Orange equipment in the equipment editor, the number of rare materials they needed would greatly decrease. They'd only just discussed this plan at the Lunar New Year dinner, and now the guild brought them this huge explosion. Happy's fortune in the new year was really incomparably strong!

Chapter 1289
Second Half of the Season

Little Cold Hands' complete set of Silver equipment, a new equipment creation methodology, the fans' boom in material donations during the Spring Festival, these non-stop, pleasant surprises took a while for Team Happy to digest. However, they couldn't bask in celebrations for too long, since Round 20 was in two days.

This was Happy's home game, so the team did not need to travel arduously. However, it could be said that their opponents this round were the strongest within the entire Alliance.

Team Samsara stood before Team Happy again after half a season's worth of matches.

Nineteen rounds ago in Round 1, the reigning champions showed their dominance to the team fresh out of the Challenger League. After 19 rounds though, most were seeing Happy in a completely different light. No one still considered Happy to be a grassroots team; this was a team that was shoulder to shoulder with Blue Rain, Tiny Herb and Tyranny, with 130 points each. Also, Team Samsara was no longer undefeated. In Round 19 which happened the previous round, they lost to Team Hundred Blossoms. In the Pro League, there was no such thing as "impossible".

In their previous encounter, Happy lost to Samsara 0 to 10. It could be considered a complete and utter defeat. This time, the media was sure to label this a grudge match, and fans of Happy were hoping for Happy to take revenge.

Although everyone was paying attention to this match, all the reporters of the big media companies were still focused on the transfer market. The end of the winter transfer window was in less than three days, and every team had only made minor adjustments so far. Were none of the teams going to make any big changes this winter? That was improbable!

Wind Howl and Misty Rain had proven themselves unsuccessful for the first half of the season. Even the fans' support might waver if they didn't make any significant changes in the winter, especially for Team Wind Howl, who were very vocal when they tried to acquire Zhang Xinjie from Tyranny? Why did they fall silent after the offer of 20

million?

The media waited for a big move from these teams in vain. Instead, they received word that Team 301 expressed interest in Royal Style's Tian Sen and his Exorcist Peaceful Hermit. Apparently they had already made an offer to Royal Style.

301 was currently in 10th with 98 points. Royal Style's performance was abysmal, ranked 13th with only 82 points, even losing to the new Miracle.

Royal Style's points were dismal, and the transfer market's atmosphere this season was also dismal. Furthermore, the long term sponsor of Peaceful Hermit was losing patience with Royal Style. There was already leaked information that they would not be working with Royal Style after the end of this season.

Royal Style was a powerhouse past its prime. In Season 1, they had battled Excellent Era for the title of champions. Their decline was hard for many to witness. Royal Style would be the most suitable representative of a "has-been" in the Alliance if it wasn't for the freakishly quick decline of Excellent Era.

In this sad state, even a forever-sidelined team like 301 wanted a slice of their pie. And this slice was the former top God character, Peaceful Hermit.

Team 301 has fully revealed their ambitions. After their long term captain Yang Cong stepped down from the team's core position, they actually took the stance that they would like to shake things up.

Royal Style's performance had declined year by year. Their financial situation was no better, being limited by their core player Tian Sen. The timing of 301's move was picking at Royal Style's achilles heel.

What would happen if Tian Sen and Peaceful Hermiet really transferred to 301?

There were already people who couldn't resist fantasizing about this. This purchase would definitely end up in 301's core lineup. Along with their captain Yang Cong, who had stepped aside but could still throw down with the best of them, and the new recruit, the mysterious Bai Shu. The reporters always thought that Bai Shu was no ordinary player. However after much investigation, they could only prove that he was not a member of 301's training camp. Although at the age of 22 wouldn't he be way too much of a late bloomer if he really was from the training camp? If he wasn't from the training camp or another team, where did 301 pluck him from? He was also

directly given control of 301's existing Knight character. With no previous characters to explore, the reporters were out of options and could only wait for 301 to reveal some information on their own terms. However, 301 had put that idea to the side for now and instead made plans to acquire Royal Style's Tian Sen and Peaceful Hermit…

The biggest commotion in the winter transfer window actually came from Team 301, who only had a small role in the playoffs for many years. This was very surprising for everyone.

Regrettably, this show didn't get another act. Tian Sen personally expressed his intention to stay at Royal Style no matter what.

"Peaceful Hermit belongs with Royal Style. His inheritance will never be severed while he's in my hands!" This is the resounding statement that Tian Sen made through the media, thus ending any plans 301 had for a purchase. There would never be a shortage of idealistic individuals within the Alliance. All players shared the desire to be champions, but all players also had their own goals, their own ideals that they would never abandon. Tian Sen refused to abandon his team for his own advancement,and further expressed that he was willing to take a salary cut to reduce the financial burden on his team.

Tian Sen's actions was praised by many. A pro player did not only shine on the battlefield. In this moment, Tian Sen's personal character far outshined the God-level character that he controlled in the game.

Such a rare opportunity for a big transfer ended just like that. The media did not get what they were waiting for, so they could only dutifully report the regular situations and predictions for the second half of the season. Round 20 was finally set to begin.

The arrival of the reigning champions once again allowed the focal point of the alliance to be brought to Xiaoshan Stadium. On match day, countless Glory fans roamed around helplessly, hoping against hope that they would encounter someone who wanted to return their ticket to the match.

At around six o'clock, Team Samsara's bus pulled into Xiaoshan Stadium. The players entered the stadium while flanked by the on-site security, through packs of fans and media personnel. There was no shortage of attention for the reigning champions.

And what about the players of Team Happy? At around half past six, they left from the

back door of Happy Internet Cafe and crossed the road. There was even someone eating a piece of fruit. They arrived in the most lowkey fashion.

The two teams entered their own prep rooms respectively. They performed some final touches, such as collecting their thoughts, revising their battle plan, and making any last-minute adjustments before the match.

After this at around 7:40, the two teams entered the stage. There was no need for a fancy opening for such an anticipated match. The viewers' enthusiasm would be sparked as soon as the players entered via their entrances. Team Samsara displayed the terror of being the reigning champions. Their fans fully filled the area of the stands specifically for the away team supporters. They immediately created a deafening commotion, loudly yelling out their team and their players' names. Samsara's banner fluttered in midair in Xiaoshan Stadium. In the first half of the season, this banner was only placed below their opponent's once, and that was to Team Hundred Blossoms in Blossoms Stadium. This time, the banner waved rather menacingly, as Samsara was facing Happy, who they had swept previously in a 10-0. After an ordinary opening of introducing the players, handshakes and greetings, each team made their way towards their player stands and waited for the match to begin.

In the broadcast, the casters Pan Lin and Li Yibo had already turned the show into you guess, you guess, no, you.

"Will Team Happy once again send out Ye Xiu first in the individual competition? We know that from the nineteen rounds that have been played so far, Ye Xiu's win streak in the individual competition is eighteen rounds; it's off by one because he didn't play in the individual competition in the first round match against Samsara. Well, how would Happy go about this match against Samsara? Coach Li, if Ye Xiu doesn't appear in the individual competition this match, will his win streak count as broken?" Pan Lin asked.

"From the way the Alliance calculates their statistics, this would count as breaking his win streak. A win streak constitutes continuous victories. If you stopped playing for one match then that breaks the continuity. If you then resumed and won, we could only call it a perfect win rate, and not a win streak," Li Yibo explained.

"Well Coach Li, do you think Ye Xiu will have a perfect win rate or maintain his win streak?" Pan Lin asked.

"I reckon Ye Xiu will not shy away. His win streak is like the insurance for Team Happy's morale. He would dampen it if he chose not to play," Li Yibo said.

"Then what about Samsara's side? Will they send out Zhou Zekai or Sun Xiang to attempt to end Ye Xiu's win streak?" Pan Lin started his guessing game once again.

"This will probably depend what the Samsara players themselves want. Er… it doesn't seem likely for Zhou Zekai to try. As for Sun Xiang, I think it's possible that he might even put himself forward," Li Yibo did not dare to be too concrete with his words.

"Haha, then let's wait and see!" The two commentators finally concluded their guessing game.

"Okay, the match is about to begin," Pan Lin saw that the referee has approached the players' stands of each team so they could send out their players.

"Let's see who Team Happy sends out!" Pan Lin called out, while the cameras quickly panned to Happy's player seats.

"Ye Xiu. It's Ye Xiu!!" Pan Lin shouted loudly.

At Happy's bench, Ye Xiu stood up, waved at the clamoring fans to acknowledge them, and walked towards the competition booths.

"What about Samsara!" Pan Lin continued shouting. The camera shots cut about wildly.

On Samsara's side, the first player for the individual competition also stood up.

It's… Jiang Botao…" Pan Lin said, after glancing at Li Yibo. This time, Happy didn't slap their faces; rather, it was Samsara. Albeit, it was more of a gentle pat across the cheek. Zhou Zekai? Sun Xiang? Neither appeared. Samsara has sent out their vice captain, the Spellblade player Jiang Botao.

"It looks like Samsara didn't want to allow Ye Xiu's win streak to disrupt their rhythm too much. Jiang Botao has been sent out in the first round of the individual competition quite frequently in the past. It looks like Samsara didn't put much thought into what we were discussing earlier. Let's see how Jiang Botao plans to play," Li Yibo skimmed over the arrangement.

Chapter 1290
Who counters who?

The match quickly began. The map that Ye Xiu chose with the home team advantage was once again a simple and straightforward one. The strategy that he chose was to fight head on. This was quite surprising as an old general's strongest weapon was experience. Choosing a map that contained a lot of complexities would be advantageous for him. But not Ye Xiu. Armed with the unspecialized, he would always pick a map that allowed him to play aggressively. And up until now, no one had been able to stand up to his aggression.

In this match against Happy, Samsara had not chosen to specifically counter this arrangement. As Li Yibo said, sending out Jiang Botao first was a very ordinary, comfortable arrangement for Samsara.

When the characters loaded and saw the simple map, there was nothing else to do but to charge forward!

"Senior, you can't keep winning! You have to leave us juniors something to aim to surpass!" Jiang Botao started chatting with Ye Xiu over the public chat. The Alliance had stressed that use of the voice chat was being discussed, but they had yet to reach a decision. For now, everything remained unchanged. This rule was not actually that important for the Alliance in terms of gameplay. Why did the Alliance ban voice chat in the beginning? It was for easier broadcasting. The players could not talk and had to use text to chat, making it easier for the viewers to see their communications and strategies. There was no other intention besides this. If the players used voice chat, then the broadcasters wouldn't have it as easy. Further, if they split the voice chat into a public one and two more, one for each team, then how do they decide which voice chat to tune in at any given time? Opening voice chat would allow the players to communicate fully, but the viewer's experience would not be the same as before, where they could catch every small detail in the communications.

The current scene was a great example. Everyone loved seeing the banter between players. If it were voice chat and the broadcaster had to switch the sound around, a lot would be missed.

In the end, the Alliance was currently still in discussions with the broadcasters with no outcome yet. For now, everyone was still using text to communicate in this match.

"Well of course!" on this side, Ye Xiu actually went and agreed with Jiang Botao. Everyone was surprised, but a second message followed quickly: "That's why I didn't play in Round 1! No matter how well I do, my win streak can only reach 37. See, I left you a whole round's worth to surpass!"

"Just play…" Jiang Botao wasn't really trash talking. He liked to chat a little with others. But now, he really couldn't keep chatting after what Ye Xiu said.

"Why don't you give Senior a hand? Perhaps just type GG?" Ye Xiu pressed on.

"Senior, please stop joking around," Jiang Botao said.

"It's not like it makes a difference in the outcome!" Ye Xiu continued.

"Regardless, I should at least give it a shot!" Jiang Botao wasn't affected by Ye Xiu's taunting. He still chatted as if this was a regular conversation.

The two characters met after these few words. Ye Xiu did not control Lord Grim use his long-ranged attacks hurriedly. He allowed the characters to continue to get closer. Just as he was about to step into the enemy Spellblade's attack range, Lord Grim suddenly accelerated!

Movement skill!

This had already become a signature move of the unspecialized Lord Grim. It seemed that Ye Xiu didn't plan to play cat and mouse with his opponent at a mid- to long-range; rather, he planned to get up close to deal with his opponent. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had always played like this. He had never kited his opponent, not even when equipped with plenty of mid- to long-range methods of attack, or against an opponent who could only attack at close range. He always fought aggressively for the initiative and used any means possible to seize it.

A Shining Cut flashed out, and Lord Grim raced forward several units in an instant. Jiang Botao already saw through Ye Xiu's intentions, and Empty Waves retreated back. He leapt backwards while the Silver shortsword Divine Chain glinted. An Earthquake Sword rolled forth!

Jiang Botao, the vice captain of Samsara, had gained increasing popularity by the year as Samsara won back to back championships. But his technical skill and style did not really have any uniqueness to it like many other players did. His play was very ordinary, neither unexpected nor low-key. Games would finish seemingly very naturally.

In other words, Jiang Botao's matches didn't have waves of highs and lows where large portions of health were traded. The damage would accumulate steadily, and he would eventually win by slowly accumulating small advantages. It didn't matter whether those who lost to him were ahead or behind during the match, they would always come out of it feeling like they lost by "that much". However, regardless of how little "that much" was, a loss was still a loss in the end.

At first, people were of the opinion that Jiang Botao had frighteningly accurate calculations. However, they gradually realised this was not the case. It was more accurate to say that he did not let a single detail slip.

Jiang Botao was that type of meticulous player, whether it was in the individual or team competitions. He would consider and deal with any possibility that would arise in battle. Because of this, it was very hard for anyone to score a high combo against him. Jiang Botao was seemingly a counter to Ye Xiu in this regard: Ye Xiu's unspecialized focused on an unbroken combo in a one on one.

Lord Grim charged forth aggressively before his eyes, but Jiang Botao was well prepared. Empty Waves had already leapt back and used an Earthquake Sword as Lord Grim activated his movement skills.

In this moment, it looked as if Lord Grim's Shining Cut wasn't closing the distance, but rather pushing him to headbutt the Earthquake Sword. No time to dodge? Most ordinary players would feel this way; however, for a pro player, there was room to dodge even though the two skills were fairly fast.

Left?

Or right?

Jiang Botao was fixated on Lord Grim's every move. Empty Waves took up another stance after his jump backwards, ready to send out another Wave Sword as soon as Lord Grim dodged.

Turns out, it was neither left nor right. Lord Grim still charged forth, but his shoulders forcefully lurched forward.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Ye Xiu chose not to dodge. Rather, he forcefully had Lord Grim activate this Striker skill. An increased defence would lessen the damage taken. For a skill like Earthquake Sword that swept away the target, however, the most troublesome thing about Reinforced Iron Bones was the Super Armor status that it grants.

Even so, Reinforced Iron Bones couldn't stop Empty Waves from sending out more attacks. However, this unexpected move from Ye Xiu still ended up making Jiang Botao hesitate for an instant. Jiang Botao was still paying all his attention to the left and right sides of his attack.

As the Silver weapon Divine Chain was raised for another attack, Lord Grim's hands already sent an object flying.

Puff!

It was only a soft sound, but thick, purple smoke quickly spread and engulfed the area. Lord Grim slipped out of Jiang Botao's field of view in a blink.

Ninja Tool: Smoke Bomb!

Jiang Botao froze.

Under the cover of the thick smoke, he had no idea about Lord Grim's position.

The thick smoke continued to spread. Were there any flow currents that seemed irregular?

Jiang Botao observed closely. If a character moved within the smoke, it would definitely disrupt its natural spread. Traces of movement could be spotted like this.

But, there weren't any!

No movement?

Impossible! Under this cover, why would Ye Xiu not attack? Then there was only one

possibility!

Jiang Botao 's right hand swiped the mouse and his left hand flew across the keyboard. Empty Waves turned, stepped back and Divine Chain slashed outwards. Wave Wheel Slasher!

Lord Grim would suddenly appear behind him with a Shadow Clone Technique.

That was Jiang Botao's prediction.

Thus, Wave Wheel Slasher was unleashed, with intention to immobilize the opponent with sword waves. The purple smoke swirled and a part of it dissipated, but it didn't find a target. Lord Grim was nowhere to be seen.

Jiang Botao knew at this moment: This is bad…

A spurt of blood flew out from Empty Waves' neck. Lord Grim did indeed appear next to him and mercilessly delivered a Cut-Throat.

Did he use Shadow Clone Technique or some other movement skill? That was no longer important. Jiang Botao only knew that Ye Xiu used a timing difference perfectly. He completely predicted Jiang Botao's reaction.

Following the Cut-Throat, the short blade in Lord Grim's hand flicked again. The Assassin knock-up skill, Leaping Blade, sent Empty Waves into their air.

Falling Light Blade!

However, Empty Waves barely left the ground when he used this Swordsman low-level skill, and suddenly plummeted.

But…

Gore Cross!

Two perpendicular lines of blood appeared on Empty Waves' back. He avoided being sent into the air, but Lord Grim continued his attack and didn't dodge. This skill was chained so quickly that Empty Waves wouldn't have had a chance to completely get airborne. Jiang Botao's quick reaction seemed like it was playing right into Ye Xiu's hands.

The combo began.

"Guess what combo I can reach?" Ye Xiu actually took the time to throw out a message. Obviously, this was targeted towards the fact that Jiang Botao was rarely on the receiving end of a high combo.

"I don't think it will be that high," and Jiang Botao actually replied. Under these circumstances, he was still in the mood to chat.

"Yeah, seems like the combo was just a dream," when Ye Xiu sent this message, the combo reset to zero.

However, this did not mean Jiang Botao had a chance to escape. Ye Xiu's unspecialized Lord Grim only aimed for the combo effect, and not the combo statistic.

Fake Combo! His attacks continued to chain beautifully one after another.

"It really is difficult to deal with!" Jiang Botao sighed.

"A little too many details right?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Yeah… way too many." Jiang Botao had a headache.

Jiang Botao could counter Ye Xiu to an extent? It looked like this was the wrong call. In reality, Ye Xiu's unspecialized countered Jiang Botao. There were too many skills, too many ways to chain skills, and overall too many variations. If Jiang Botao really wanted consider every detail, his rhythm beginning from his thought process would be slow by a beat. Jiang Botao's brain had no way fully keep up with the amount of details for this opponent.

Jiang Botao fell.

Even though there were many struggles in the process, it didn't affect the final result.

"Next time, send someone else up," Ye Xiu smiled. He acknowledged the amount of trouble Jiang Botao had while facing him.

"Is there still a next time?" Jiang Botao was confused. The two teams have already met twice this season. The individual competition was done for them, so when would next time be?

"Oh, if you guys don't make the playoffs, then I guess there's no next time," Ye Xiu said.

This bold presumption of Samsara not making the playoffs again left everyone speechless.

Chapter 1291
Firing Line

Thus, Jiang Botao lost the first individual match.

19!

It seemed like Happy's fans had already prepared for this. After Ye Xiu won, the stadium was immediately filled with innumerable flashing signs.

Another match was added to this record and even Team Samsara weren't able to stop Ye Xiu's consecutive victories.

"10-0!!!" Someone very daringly yelled. Last time Happy had been crushed by Samsara ten to zero, but this time? At the very least, Samsara wouldn't have a chance like that anymore, but the possibility of Happy winning ten to zero was still there.

"That'll be rather difficult, won't it?" Commentator Pan Lin wondered aloud with a smile.

"Haha…" Li Yibo chuckled but didn't dare agree. In the individual match that had just end, he hadn't commentated much. He had been a little scared. As the match started, he had wanted to note that Jiang Botao's playstyle was somewhat of a counter to Ye Xiu's playstyle, but due to how small the map was, the two sides soon met and engaged, not giving him much of a chance.

At first he had thought it was a shame, but now, he was glad that he hadn't managed to get that chance.

The results of the match gave a very clear message. Jiang Botao's meticulous style had fallen apart in trying to keep up with Ye Xiu's unspecialized barrage.

He had almost gotten his face slapped… When he realized this, Li Yibo had subconsciously stroked his own face. It was a good thing he hadn't spoken up; after this realization, he immediately commented on how Ye Xiu's style countered Jiang Botao's.

Li Yibo, having managed to get to safety, finally got the chance to accurately display his ability as a commentator, and during Happy's match too. Even Pan Lin was impressed, but Li Yibo was cheering for his good fortune.

It seemed like reserving judgement had its benefits.

Li Yibo had finally grown some wisdom. In the past, he loved to rush to express his opinion first, then prove it through the match, thus showing off his analytical wisdom. However, he had recently found that more and more often, his analytical wisdom would head in the complete opposite direction. In the future, he'd have to be more patient, Li Yibo concluded from these experiences.

The second individual match soon began.

On Happy's side, Su Mucheng rose to the challenge while Samsara sent out Wu Qi. He was the Assassin player of the team and a member of their main roster during the two consecutive championships. But after Sun Xiang transferred in, he mostly appeared as the sixth player.

Launcher against Assassin, one with a very far range, one with a very close range. Both sides played cautiously. Su Mucheng kept a close eye on the distance between them, while Wu Qi didn't dare approach without an opportune moment.

"What a troublesome Assassin. Team Samsara surely has raised many very talented members! After Yang Cong, I'd say that he'd be a good choice for the Alliance's Number One Assassin." At the player stands, Ye Xiu commented on Wu Qi as he watched the match.

"True. He's patient and merciless. He's mastered all the characteristics an Assassin should have." Wei Chen nodded in agreement.

"Could it be that… Team Samsara will soon have a five All-Star line up?" Chen Guo wondered aloud at the side.

Ye Xiu and Wei Chen glanced at each other, their gazes considering.

"We'll have to see how popular their team is. If even after the votes are split up between the five players, all five are sent into the All-Stars, then that'd be terrifying," Fang Rui commented. He had analysed the situation objectively. All-Star voting was all up to the fans, so many of the votes were given blindly. Those fans loyal to their team

would unhesitantly give the players their vote even if said players had yet to reach that level.

If all five of Samsara's got into the All-Stars, all supported by their fans, then that could only mean that their fanbase was large enough completely crush the fanbases of other teams. Otherwise, they'd have to gain the votes of unaffiliated fans. For Wu Qi, this was something he truly had no advantage in, a player who was so close to entering the All-Stars getting delegated to sixth player in the team competition due to Samsara's extremely grand line-up. And, with Samsara's strength, the sixth player had very little room to perform. Without a chance to display their talents, how would they gain popularity? What Ye Xiu was commenting on was, in the end, only strength. If you wanted to talk about popularity, there were too many subjective variables.

"Who knows? Maybe by the end of this season he'll be making a fuss about leaving Samsara!" Fang Rui laid this misfortune upon Samsara, head resting on his hands.

However, his logic wasn't faulty. If the other had the ability but no chance to show it, who knows what thoughts would spawn? More importantly, WU Qi had already won two championships as a member of Samsara's main roster. He might have higher pursuits now, such as a place in the team competition line up…

As Happy discussed Wu Qi's future with interest offstage, the two onstage were still testing the waters. The two were using movement and position to circle each other, trying to find an opening. Though Su Mucheng could maintain an offense with her range advantage, Wu Qi didn't give her much of a chance to launch an effective one.

As time ticked by, the match seemed like a game of tag. Su Mucheng kept chasing after Wu Qi, throwing all sorts of bombs at him.

"That's a little hasty," Wei Chen suddenly commented. His tone was concerned, clearly talking about Su Mucheng.

"Her attack efficiency is really low. If this continues, she'll have problems with her mana," Fang Rui also spoke up.

"Her opponent is baiting her into it," Ye Xiu noted.

It was the three of them who typically had more to say on matches. The rookies would sit around them and listen to learn something from it.

"Purposefully circling the boundaries of the map, baiting Su Mucheng into attacking, he's trying to deplete Dancing Rain's mana and wait for a chance to strike back." Since there were rookies listening in, Ye Xiu would often explain in more detail to help them understand.

"What if she just stops attacking altogether?" Luo Ji asked.

"She has to retract her offense carefully, pace it well. Her opponent planned this and isn't just attacking her mana, but her skill cooldowns too. If you abruptly stop an offensive and your skill tree isn't complete, then you'll usually leave many openings which the opponent can grasp. Thus, Su Mucheng generally paces her attacks well to suppress her opponents, but now she's losing her pace a little. If this continues, her Firing Line might expose an opening."

Firing Lines were a term unique to Launchers. A Launcher's offensive relied on depth and layering. The further away a target was, the lower the accuracy of attacks; the closer they were, the riskier it would be for the Launcher. Every Launcher had a Firing Line of optimal distance unique to them which depended on their skill level and playstyle, as well as their mastery of different skills. This was the distance at which a Launcher could maintain the strongest offensive, termed the Firing Line. If you wanted to break through a Launcher's offensive suppression, then breaking past their Firing Line was crucial. To do this, one had to understand how each Launcher maintained and operated their Firing Line - which skills they preferred to use, how they arranged these skills, what methods and pacing they were used to - and think of a way to break through.

This was relatively basic theoretical knowledge in Glory, and after playing Glory for so long, there was no need for Ye Xiu to explain these basic ideas to Happy's rookies anymore. He just had to make sure they understood that what Wu Qi was currently doing was aimed at throwing Su Mucheng's Firing Line into chaos. To do this, he had displayed admirable patience, forcing Su Mucheng to mess up the rhythm she had been maintaining so well.

Boom boom boom!

Onstage, Dancing Rain sent another round of cannonfire. Her attacks were converging more and more. Under this dense firepower, Wu Qi didn't seem to be holding up very well. However, he didn't let his Assassin character Cruel Silence hide completely, continuing to expose himself to Dancing Rain's line of sight, baiting the other into

attack.

Boom boom boom!

The attacks continued without pause, but offstage, the frowns of Wei Chen, Fang Rui and the others continued to get deeper.

"This isn't good!" Fang Rui exclaimed.

Just as he said this, Wu Qi's Cruel Silence, who had been jumping around and dodging for so long, suddenly grew bold and shot forwards like an arrow.

"See! There was an opening, he's gotten past the Firing Line!" Fang Rui exclaimed. In the past, they had been opponents and now they were teammates, so he understood Su Mucheng's Firing Line rather well. After considering things from Wu Qi's perspective, he could even figure out approximately what the other planned to do next.

Of course, Wu Qi's thoughts wouldn't mirror Fang Rui's exactly, but they had caught more or less the same opening. Su Mucheng's Firing Line was getting rather patchy. She had been unable to execute her original fearsome offense to perfection due to the lack of a few certain skills.

I can get past!

In that moment, that was Wu Qi's only thought. Cruel Silence, went full speed, not wanting to waste a single moment of this opportunity, and charged towards Dancing Rain in an attempt to break through her Firing Line in one go.

"Haha…" Just as everyone in Happy was on the edge of their seats in worry for Su Mucheng, Ye Xiu chuckled.

"What are you laughing at?" Chen Guo asked.

"A cunning rabbit has three burrows*, have you ever heard of that?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Of course, what about it?" Chen Guo couldn't understand.

"Who said that you could only have one Firing Line?" Ye Xiu chuckled.

Never mind those old and young pro players, even Chen Guo immediately understood with that.

Onstage, the cannonfire didn't stop. Su Mucheng naturally wouldn't stay there like a sitting duck and let her opponent close in. She had Dancing Rain continue to hinder her opponent's momentum. However, Wu Qi had already judged Su Mucheng's Firing Line to be messed up and incapable of blocking his momentum.

He got through!

Just as Cruel Silence took another step forwards, Wu Qi let out a breath of relief. He had already broken through Su Mucheng's Firing Line, so the firepower at the following distances would only get weaker. In addition, the other might make mistakes in her panic as he closed in.

It was all coming to an end!

As Wu Qi thought this, boom boom boom, with three bangs, three Anti-Tank Missiles came soaring over.

It was just a low level skill so Wu Qi didn't think much of it, easily having Cruel Silence pass through the missiles.

Continue forward!

This was the only thought on his mind.

But…

What was happening? The firepower didn't seem to be weakening?

Wu Qi, darting in and out of cannonfire, realized that his charge was very unsuccessful and didn't achieve the results he had hoped for at all. He couldn't help but turn his head and look back. There wasn't anything wrong, Su Mucheng's Firing Line should've been left in the dust behind him! Yet this offensive…

Chapter 1292
Composed Samsara

"Not just one Firing Line…"

Spectators often had a clearer view of the overall situation, and Samsara's players had realized the crux of the problem at this point, too. Wu Qi hadn't managed to break through, but instead had fallen into an attack arrangement that Su Mucheng had set up for him.

But… Su Mucheng wasn't a new player! The Golden Generation, joining the alliance in Season 4, had become well-know very early on and gained fame rapidly, meaning that they had long since been researched by the other teams. The Firing Line wasn't something new. From the very beginning, finding the Firing Line was the heart of researching a Launcher. Su Mucheng's Firing Line was no secret, hadn't been for a long time, and wouldn't have remained one for long anyways.

Because this was a competition, everyone would give it their all on the field, and the Firing Line was each Launcher's DPS limit. In competitions, players often felt that their best wasn't enough, so who would hold anything back? Unless, of course, you were bullying someone with skill far inferior to yours, then you wouldn't need to give it your all. Even so, there wouldn't be a disparity of skill so big between anyone who had the ability to get into the Alliance, at least to the extent that one could bully the other.

Samsara's members exchanged looks. Happy wasn't an opponent they would underestimate, and Su Mucheng wasn't an easy opponent to fight. Even if they had crushed Happy 10 to 0 in the previous match, this round they would only be more prepared. However, they really hadn't thought that Su Mucheng had more than one Firing Line. She hadn't even hinted at such a talent in the previous matches.

"She's gotten better," Zhou Zekai suddenly said.

The others frowned, continuing to watch the match. Under Dancing Rain's cannonfire, Wu Qi's Cruel Silence didn't have any success closing in. Dancing Rain casually pulled away further as she blasted him. The distance between them slowly grew until…

"The Firing Line!" Jiang Botao called out. This distance was where the Firing Line they were familiar with was at. Cruel Silence had been suppressed by the attacks, Su Mucheng had Dancing Rain slowly pull away, and just like that, Cruel Silence, who had already broken through Su Mucheng's first Firing Line, was pushed back into it again.

Cannonfire poured down like a storm and this offensive was clearly a step above the previous one. This was Su Mucheng's true Firing Line, the one Wu Qi had originally broken through. Yet, he hadn't imagined that there would be another Firing Line hidden behind this one which disrupted his charge and sent him back.

That unknown Firing Line had already caused Wu Qi huge problems in his advance, and the current one he was caught in was what everyone knew to be Su Mucheng's true, strongest Firing Line.

Under the blasts, Cruel Silence's health dropped at an alarming rate. What experienced player wouldn't know what would happen when you were in a Launcher's Firing Line? Launchers wouldn't stand there like an idiot and just DPS but adjust themselves according to the opponent's response to ensure their target remained in their Firing Line. It was easy to get into a Firing Line, but much harder to get out of one.

Samsara's players all turned to look at Sun Xiang simultaneously. He had been teammates with her for half a year, after all.

"Did you know she had this level of skill?" Lu Boyuan nudged Sun Xiang, asking.

Sun Xiang shook his head, face filled with confusion. In reality, when he had arrived in Excellent Era, the Spear and Cannon Duo that had been established in Season 2 met an untimely death. Though One Autumn Leaf and Dancing Rain had both still been in the team, they had lost the sense of partnership they had in the past. Sun Xiang was rather depressed at this, but Su Mucheng's professionalism was flawless; they just didn't have that sort of chemistry. Partnerships did somewhat depend on fate. It wasn't uncommon for forced partnerships to end in an absolute mess in the Alliance.

However, even as teammates, Sun Xiang really didn't know that Su Mucheng had all these tricks with her Firing Line.

"With her skill, I think she can probably maintain her Firing Line at a wider range. What do you think, Little Zhou?" Jiang Botao said.

"Yeah," Zhou Zekai nodded.

"However, she purposefully controlled her skill use, focusing on the range of her Firing Line. But because it was so focused, she could combine and use the skills that were freed up interchangingly to split off a second Firing Line…" Jiang Botao analyzed.

The Samsara players around them all nodded. They weren't like Happy, full of rookies. Samsara's line-up was the most stable in years. This group of players had grown together, gained experience together. They understood and complemented one another very well. Communication was simple and convenient for them. Samsara's two consecutive championships was a result of these players growing to their peak. Luck would always play a factor in who became the champions, but this luck could only be grasped if you had enough power.

Now, this championship team managed to analyze Su Mucheng's current playstyle completely with just a few sentences.

"How cunning," Jiang Botao continued to comment.

"Yeah… If needed, I believe she could increase the range of her Firing Line, instead of splitting it into two like this," Lu Boyuan agreed.

"However, she didn't do that. She held back, making her choices seem more varied. She's managed to maintain great control over this," Jiang Botao sighed.

"It's not looking good for Wu Qi!" Blade Master player Du Ming exclaimed.

Everyone fell silent. It was a shame that the person they had admiring was their opponent. If their opponent performed well, then it meant trouble for them. However, the confidence of a championship team wasn't anything to scoff at. Faced with an impending loss, their mood seemed very calm, not at all panicking because of two consecutive losses.

In the end, it was Su Mucheng who claimed victory. The cheering in Xiao Shan Stadium drew on for a good while.

This was Samsara, after all! That immensely powerful Samsara, and yet, Team Happy was currently leading 2 to 0!

Wu Qi returned to the player bench. He was naturally in a rather bad mood due to his

loss.

"That really was too sly of her!" Accepting the towel his teammates handed over, Wu Qi wiped his hands before throwing the towel onto his seat dispiritedly. It was clear that, in the end, he had figured out what was going on with Su Mucheng's Launcher.

"We'll watch out next time," his teammates consoled him.

"Watch this, I'll avenge you!" Lu Boyuan said.

"It's not a group arena, avenge my ass." Wu Qi glared.

"You can avenge yourself later in the team competition," Jiang Botao told him.

"Am I in the starting line-up for the team competition?" Wu Qi's eyes shone.

"Ahem!" Jiang Botao cleared his throat. "Next time, next time."

Wu Qi returned to his dispirited state. In reality, they had already gone over the line-up before in the prep room prior to the match. It was exceedingly rare for a team to wait until the match itself to announce their line-up to the players. Wu Qi already knew that he would still be the sixth player for the team competition. He was just expressing his desire to be a part of the starting line-up. Seeing his state, his other team members started laughing. Getting into the team competition starting line-up for Samsara was very difficult nowadays. However, Samsara was a team with a truly impressive atmosphere, able to discuss this rather sensitive topic freely.

"Well, I'm off," Lu Boyuan said to his teammates before he headed off. On Happy's side, their third player was also a Fighter class player, Steamed Bun.

"Aiya, it's this guy. If I lose, you can't blame me, okay? That guy's hella weird!" Seeing Happy's next player, Lu Boyuan hurriedly turned back to speak with his teammates.

"If you lose, you can hand your place in the starting line-up to me!" Du Ming hollered.

"Hand it to me!"

"Me me me!"

All the players on rotation joined in. Lu Boyuan smiled, already walking towards the

stage.

"As expected of a championship team…" Happy's members were also paying attention to the situation with Samsara.

After two consecutive losses in the individual round, the team wasn't at all panicked. This team didn't have any very experienced veterans, but they were all very composed players. This might be the result of the confidence gained in these two years as two-time consecutive champions. Even opening with two losses wouldn't impact their confidence. The psychological advantage that taking a lead had was completely lost when faced with Samsara. On the contrary, their confidence, their composure, their leisurely attitude would unstabilize their opponents.

However… considering that Happy's third player was Steamed Bun, there was no such setting that would make him feel unnerved. Chest puffed out and head held high, Steamed Bun got onto the stage with several long strides. He gained quite a lot of cheers.

Compared to the rest of the Alliance, Team Happy's line-up was one of the least stable. Steamed Bun didn't have all that many opportunities to perform but he was quite popular amongst the Happy supporters since he could always bring surprises to the match. A match with Steamed Bun was never boring.

"Samsara's third player is Lu Boyuan. This player is a model competitive player. He has great mental fortitude and his forte is performing at his peak under pressure, turning the tables on his opponent. After falling behind by two points, he's the third to come up, but this is exactly the type of situation which he performs well in!" Pan Lin commentated on the two players in the live television broadcast.

"As for Happy, they've sent out Bao Rongxing. Eh, this player… He's a very… well, no matter where he is, he's a player who has a very inconsistent performance. Do you agree, advisor Li?" Pan Lin asked.

"Ahem!" Li Yibo coughed.

"Ahem ahem!" Li Yibo coughed more.

"Bao Rongxing is the one player that can bring the most unexpected of situations to a match," Li Yibo concluded. A player that was so unpredictable really wasn't one he dared to predict anything about.

"Alright, now the match will start," Pan Lin announced.

On the field, the characters were loaded into the maps. For Happy, Brawler Steamed Bun Invasion; for Samsara, Glory's current Number One Grappler, Chaotic Cloudy Mountains.

"Alright, let the match start! Both characters are running directly for the center," Pan Lin called out.

"Lu Boyuan struck first! Don't Grapplers usually wait for the opponent to make a move and then counter, Advisor Li?" Pan Lin asked.

"Yes, because grabs are the highest priority skills in Glory, so Grapplers have the ability to break through an opponent's offense. Using grabs during an opponent's offense is usually harder for the opponent to deal with," Li Yibo said.

"But Lu Boyuan is really taking the initiative here!"

"Samsara has, after all, lost two matches in succession. They need to be fierce in order to raise their morale!" Li Yibo explained.

Just as he finished speaking, Lu Boyuan sent a message. "I'm not gonna give you a chance to mess things up, man!"

"Advisor Li?" Pan Lin turned his head towards Li Yibo.

Li Yibo had a bitter expression. What was up with people today; how come even Team Samsara decided to start slapping the faces of commentators?

Chapter 1293
Being Too Skilled Can Become An Opening Too

"Too messy!" Steamed Bun sent a head-shaking sighing emoji like a teacher lecturing a student. Then, Steamed Bun Invasion faced Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's attack directly.

Circle Sweep Kick!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountains leaped into the air and looked as if he were trying to step on Steamed Bun Invasion. However, everyone knew that Grapplers had all sorts of grab skills. Getting kicked wasn't the scary part. It was the sweep following the kick that was terrifying. The sweep had grab priority, and it knocked the target to the ground.

Steamed Bun looked like he knew about the threat of this skill. He didn't use a skill to fight force with force. Instead, he rushed forward aggressively and then dodged to the side.

Lu Boyuan was watching Steamed Bun Invasion's movements closely. If Steamed Bun didn't move too far away, he would still be able to hook onto the target if he adjusted his Circle Sweep Kick. But when Steamed Bun Invasion dodged, he strode three steps. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's legs weren't that long. His attack was dodged cleanly. But Lu Boyuan still had his Chaotic Cloudy Mountain finish the sweep in the air. Even though it didn't hit a target, it stopped his character's aerial momentum.

Whoosh!

Steamed Bun Invasion threw a Brick. His prediction was off, and the Brick whistled by Chaotic Cloud Mountain.

"Oh! You've got some skill!" Steamed Bun Invasion praised his opponent. At this moment, Steamed Bun Invasion slid forward, wanting to attack with a Tiger Flips the Mountain when Chaotic Cloudy Mountain fell.

Lu Boyuan saw everything clearly and didn't say a word. Just when his character was

about to touch the ground and the instant Steamed Bun Invasion's arm smashed towards him, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain suddenly raised his two legs, twisting onto Steamed Bun Invasion's shoulders.

Aerial Twist!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain twisted in the air, and his two legs, wrapped around Steamed Bun Invasion's shoulder, threw him onto the ground.

Lu Boyuan used this grab skill for a dismantle effect. Being able to stop Tiger Flips the Mountains using such precise manipulation of a skill required incredible perception.

Samsara's fans fired up. Even though it was just a skill hitting, it was a brilliant play.

The attacks weren't over yet though.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had wrapped around Steamed Bun Invasion's shoulders and flipped him towards the ground, but the throw wasn't aimed directly downwards. Midway, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain loosened his legs and landed on the ground first. He then stepped forward and reached out with his hands, catching the tumbling Steamed Bun Invasion.

Overhead Toss!

Anothing skill was released. Steamed Bun Invasion was grabbed by Chaotic Cloudy Mountain and thrown towards the ground. A huge rumble exploded. Just the sound alone told how heavy this throw was. It still wasn't over yet though.

Ground Toss!

While one arm threw Steamed Bun Invasion onto the ground, the other hand stretched forward and grabbed him again, not leaving Steamed Bun Invasion any time to roll away. His arm hoisted him up and threw him back into the air.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain jumped up high. This time, he used both hands to grab Steamed Bun Invasion and then: Slam Dunk!

With matchless strength, Steamed Bun Invasion was thrown fiercely towards the ground This high-level skill's power was no small matter. Steamed Bun Invasion smashed into the ground, forming a crater. From the way his body was bent, it looked

like his back had snapped.

With just this brief combo, Steamed Bun Invasion had lost a fifth of his health. It hadn't even been ten seconds since the two characters had met. Luo Boyuan's efficiency made everyone gasp in awe. The Samsara fans were already going crazy. Happy's fans couldn't help but start to sweat for Steamed Bun.

Lu Boyuan didn't get distracted by the previous combo. After Slam Dunk, he immediately pounced on Steamed Bun Invasion.

Brick!

Steamed Bun Invasion leaped out from that crater, while also throwing a Brick. His attack had been quite sudden. However, after a season of competitive play, Steamed Bun's crazed love for Brick, which was often used as soon as it went off cooldown whether or not it made any sense, had become a signature move for him. How could pro players not catch onto this and fall for it again and again?

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain sidestepped it, dodging the Brick, and continued to press closer.

Sand Toss, Poison Needle, Molotov Cocktail.

Steamed Bun looked like he was panicked and was throwing whatever he could at his opponent. How could such a brainless offensive stump Lu Boyuan? Chaotic Cloudy Mountain continued to press closer and closer.

Brick!

Another Brick!

After a few more skills, the Brick came off cooldown again and Steamed Bun Invasion immediately used it without any hesitation.

Lu Boyuan didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Had this guy been thrown silly? What the heck was this?

"Has Bao Rongxing lost it?" On the broadcast, Pan Lin was dumbfounded. There didn't seem to be any hints of thought behind Steamed Bun's moves. He just looked to be throwing things randomly. He looked completely powerless. An extra being helpless

against the hero was common in movies, but this was the Pro Alliance. It was said that there were no weak players in the pro circle, but this ridiculous performance seemed to show otherwise!

Li Boyi also thought the same, but he resisted opening his mouth. This Bao Rongxing always pulled out the biggest surprises. Casually declaring a verdict wouldn't be good. It would be better to keep watching. Maybe he was currently trying something crazy. What if it takes effect immediately afterwards?

Li Yibo thought in this way. Lu Boyuan didn't dare be careless either. They had studied Steamed Bun's matches in particular, but apart from his love for Bricks, he didn't seem to follow any other rules. There wasn't much that could be done for pre-planning against this sort of opponent. He just had to perform well when the time came. Focus! Focus was important because Steamed Bun could suddenly pull out a trick from nowhere. Sometimes Steamed Bun's plays would be brilliant, other times his plays would be stupid. If he didn't focus, maybe the stupid play might work out. Quite a few players had fallen against this rookie. And after they lost, they would complain to the reporters incessantly and looked as if they could go on for three days and three nights.

Lu Boyuan didn't want to capsize like them, so even if Steamed Bun looked like he was lost, he didn't let down his guard. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain once again pressed towards Steamed Bun Invasion. Lu Boyuan didn't force his way through. He used a low-level Fling as a probe for the start of his next round of attacks.

Lu Boyuan stared closely at Steamed Bun Invasion's movements. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two hands reached out, but then he saw Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly crouch down. His right knee lifted up, while his left foot pushed off the ground.

Powerful Knee Strike!

This skill name flashed through Lu Boyuan's mind. Which attack was faster, Fling or Powerful Knee Strike? The answer was clear in an instant.

Powerful Knee Strike would arrive first, but Fling could be saved through some adjustments. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain crouched down, while his two hands reached upwards. He was planning to Fling his opponent once the Powerful Knee Strike passed. Lu Boyuan once again displayed his precise judgement, but this time, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain did all this for nothing. The Powerful Kee Strike he had been anticipating didn't appear.

All of the viewers saw what had happened.

Steamed Bun Invasion had lifted his right knee and his left foot pushed against the ground, but he didn't soar through the air. This attack wasn't a Powerful Knee Strike. It was just a normal one. But the problem was that for a normal knee strike, this distance was too long; it didn't even reach Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. It was a complete miss.

Steamed Bun Invasion raised his knee, minding his own business, and didn't hit the target. However, not hitting the target seemed to have the same effect. When Steamed Bun Invasion was two steps away, Chaotic Cloudy appeared to have been hit by the knee strike. His body crumbled and bent, his two arms went up into the air as if he were surrendering.

Everyone was dumbfounded at this strange scene.

When Lu Boyuan saw that he had predicted wrong, he knew that the situation wasn't good. But when he tried to adjust Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's position, crack!

The crisp clear sound of bones shattering could be heard by everyone. After Steamed Bun Invasion feinted a knee strike, he suddenly used a real Powerful Knee Strike. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was still crouched down. Right when he was about to retreat, this Powerful Knee Strike hit Chaotic Cloudy Mountain square in the chest.

Everyone's hearts turned cold at the sound of this crackling. It was as if they could feel the pain from this attack themselves. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain fell backwards, and Lu Boyuan immediately Quick Recovered. Steamed Bun Invasion's Powerful Knee Strike had been extremely fast though. He landed on the ground and followed with a Tyrannical Chain Punch, beating on the fallen Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

Lu Boyuan was depressed!

Focus, focus! He had been so focused, yet he had still fallen for a trick. That hadn't been a Powerful Knee Strike previously, but a regular knee strike. Using a regular knee strike made absolutely no sense. It wouldn't be able to hit anything. It wouldn't be able to block anything. If Chaotic Cloudy Mountain hadn't dodged it and continued forward, Steamed Bun would be in the grasp of his hands. But the problem was that not a single brain cell of his thought that this would be a regular knee strike. Had he baited himself?

Lu Boyuan couldn't help but think about what had happened previously as Steamed Bun Invasion pummeled him. If that had been a trap, then Steamed Bun was truly bold. It was because he was skilled enough that he could react in that instant. If it hadn't been him, if it had been a random player from the game, Lu Boyuan was certain that Steamed Bun Invasion would instead be the one pressed to the ground.

An opening had appeared because he had been too skilled?

Luo Boyuan couldn't accept it.

Tyrannical Chain Punch ended, and Steamed Bun Invasion leaped back. Lu Boyuan recovered and had Chaotic Cloudy Mountain get up. As soon as looked up, he saw Steamed Bun Invasion's knee rise up again.

Powerful Knee Strike!

Lu Boyuan was just about to have Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dodge to the side, but then he saw that Steamed Bun Invasion didn't fly forward. It was another empty knee strike. Lu Boyuan only then remembered, Powerful Knee Strike had just been used. That wasn't a low-level skill. It couldn't be off cooldown yet.

"You're crazy!!" Lu Boyuan lost his cool. Using a normal knee strike at that distance? Apart from crazy, there was no other explanation. Just when he blurted this out, Steamed Bun Invasion raised his arms and threw a Brick.

"A Brick again? Is that all you know?" Lu Boyuan shouted as Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dodged. He wasn't the type of person who liked to talk a lot during a match, but facing this opponent, Lu Boyuan felt like if he didn't vent, he would choke to death.

Chapter 1294
Thought Process Off Target

The audience members looked at one another.

As Lu Boyuan had thought, it was precisely because he was too skilled that he was hit by the Powerful Knee Strike. If it were a normal player, then they would've already used a Fling to throw Steamed Bun Invasion to the ground.

The viewers definitely comprised of normal players, so they didn't understand why Chaotic Cloudy Mountains had ducked down low before straightening up with his arms in air like he was surrendering. As Lu Boyuan cursed, wondering what the hell Steamed Bun was trying to do, the viewers, who had no idea what was actually going on, were trying to figure out what the hell Lu Boyuan was trying to do.

Right now, Lu Boyuan, someone who usually didn't speak much during matches, was yelling in the channel. Words like "are you fucking crazy" and the such could probably count as personal attacks, if pressed.

Lu Boyuan had completely lost it!

It wasn't just the audience who thought so; even the live commentator Pan Lin was commenting on this. Lu Boyuan's current state was just too far from his usual self.

"Calm down!" No one would've expected that, onstage, Lu Boyuan's opponent Steamed Bun would send a message admonishing him.

"Panicking like that isn't proper." Another followed. Where had Steamed Bun learned all this from?

"Fuck!" Lu Boyuan exclaimed. Why the hell was this guy suddenly scolding him?! They were opponents, okay? What the hell does my panic have anything to do with you?! And plus, I'm not panicking!

As Steamed Bun scolded the other, his actions didn't stop. With his Brick a miss, he did a Sand Toss.

Lu Boyuan wasn't in the calmest of states right now, but he wasn't panicking either. Chaotic Cloudy Mountains dodged perfectly. After Sand Toss, Steamed Bun Invasion continued to close, but Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain wasn't a ranged class, so there was nothing he wanted more than for his opponent to be close. As Steamed Bun Invasion closed in, he naturally wouldn't retreat and just observed the other's motions. Lu Boyuan decided to forgo taking the initiative and returned to the usual style of Grapplers, waiting for his opponent to make the first move and countering. He'd see what tricks this guy had up his sleeves.

Thus, Steamed Bun Invasion arrived in front of Chaotic Cloudy Mountains as the latter slowed down his pace on purpose.

Brick!

Lu Boyuan was close to tears.

Was this really the legendary use-immediately-after-cooldown style?

To be honest, if you really wanted to calculate this kind of pacing, it would be very troublesome. Although Brick wasn't a low-level skill, it wasn't very high either. It was a skill Brawlers learned very soon after advancing classes and had a short cooldown. Considering the frequency at which Steamed Bun used the skill, calculating the cooldown of this skill would be very distracting.

This was probably the real motive behind his frequent usage…

A skill like Brick didn't deal much damage, but because of its crowd control, you had to be wary of it. Steamed Bun, using this skill so frequently and making it so that his opponent's had to stay on guard against it was very distracting for his opponents. In addition, this guy often used his skills in a chaotic mess, suddenly throwing in some troublesome skill; it really was quite hard to guard against!

Lu Boyuan felt like he had discovered something; he felt like he was close to figuring out his opponent's thought process.

However, this seemly random and completely mindless use of Brick Throw wouldn't just distract the opponent, it would also disrupt your own rhythm! After all, skill usage needed to be paced. Sometimes a different skill would evidently work better in this scenario, but Steamed Bun just always chose Brick. Wasn't that a little wasteful?

Lu Boyuan, who had thought he was beginning to understand, realized that his logic didn't work out after considering it a little more.

Lu Boyuan's thoughts, very unfortunately, went down an erroneous path. He had started trying to figure out Steamed Bun's thought process and rationalizing the other's actions from a theoretical perspective. And this was something that even Ye Xiu, who had far more experience and time with Steamed Bun, had failed to accomplished in two years.

As for why Steamed Bun liked Bricks, that was something Ye Xiu could explain to Lu Boyuan. It was because Bricks were easy to come by and unsuspecting. After you used them, you could just toss them aside to get rid of the weapon.

Trying to use Glory theories to figure out this problem would only get further and further away from the truth of the matter. Lu Boyuan was thinking himself into a mess. It was true that counterattacking was a Grappler's primary style. However, this style required you to have a precise understanding of your opponent's style, a decisive judgement, quick eyes, and steady hands.

Yet right now, the one Lu Boyuan was trying to figure out was Steamed Bun. Steamed Bun, the mystery that even Ye Xiu had failed to figure out after two years.

And so he lost.

He lost without knowing how he lost in a complete mess. It was only when Chaotic Cloudy Mountains fell that Lu Boyuan woke up from his stupor of trying to figure out Steamed Bun.

He lost just like that?

Lu Boyuan was shocked. He had been under this strange impression that there was plenty of time, and he had plenty of health. Trying to figure out Steamed Bun was like losing yourself in an abyss.

After leaving the booth, Lu Boyuan was still scratching his head. As he walked back to the bench, he kept looking up at the playback on the big screen. It wasn't until he was back at the bench that he smacked himself on the forehead, "Fuck, I'm so dumb!"

When he had gone up there, it was with the decision to take the initiative more and not give this weird player any chances to play tricks. Why did he end up trying to figure

out his opponent as he fought?

"My willpower wasn't strong enough!" Lu Boyuan bemoaned.

"I don't know why, but there was a moment where I thought to myself, I can't play like this, I have to figure him out," Lu Boyuan explained.

"And somehow as you were trying to figure him out, you lost, right?" Wu Qi said.

"Yeah," Lu Boyuan nodded.

"It's 3 to 0 now, hey!" Jiang Botao reminded everyone. Right now they really were falling behind. Happy's fans were screaming and cheering, yelling thunderously about a flawless victory. As for Samsara's accompanying fanclub, they were much more subdued. They had actually lost every round in the individual competition. That really was a hit to their morale.

"Hey, did you guys actually fight seriously?" Du Ming asked the three individual competition players.

The three looked at one another.

"It's competition, there'll always be losses every now and then," Cleric player Fang Minghua comforted everyone.

"We'll take back two points in the group arena!" Sun Xiang stood. He was the first player for the group arena.

"Good luck!" His teammates encouraged.

"One versus three!" Someone said.

"No, don't, I wanna go up. I want to fight that sister in Happy," Du Ming hurriedly disagreed.

"You want to take revenge?" Everyone mocked him. They all naturally remembered how Du Ming had fought Tang Rou at the All-Stars Weekend. Back then, Tang Rou hadn't even been a pro player, just a noob, but her ferocious and relentless attitude left a deep impression. It was also then that Du Ming had lost face, getting humiliated by Tang Rou before being annihilated by Ye Xiu. He had been depressed for quite some

time after that.

"I remember Ye Xiu also fought you back then, how come you don't go looking for him for revenge?" A teammate immediately asked.

"What revenge? I just want to spar," Du Ming said.

"Is it because she's pretty?" Wu Qi grinned, an arm around his shoulders, "I mean, she really is quite pretty."

"Fuck off," Du Ming pushed him away.

After falling behind 0 to 3, the atmosphere around Samsara was still as natural as ever. No one jumped up yelling something like "we have to win the next round" or anything. However, none of them lacked this determination.

In the live broadcast, Pan Lin was analyzing the line-ups the two teams might possibly have set, while Li Yibo felt like he was just waking from a dream. He was shocked to realize that he hadn't made a single comment throughout the past three matches. Pan Lin had thrown the discussion to him a couple of times but he had gotten by with just a few noncommittal noises. He had been ever so careful like that and ended up not giving any analysis whatsoever.

He had to make his presence more evident! Li Yibo, suddenly awake from his stupor, listened to Pan Lin's analysis, and hurriedly found a place to interrupt.

"Yes!" Li Yibo continued Pan Lin's train of thought. "Samsara's group arena line up has been constant with Sun Xiang first and Zhou Zekai as the last line of defense, with a few players on rotation in the middle. As for Happy, starting with Fang Rui and ending with Tang Rou is also a relatively consistent line up. From the line ups, Samsara seems to have a slight advantage. And the advantages in the group arena stack. I'm wondering if Happy will make adjustments to counter Samsara's line-up. In Happy's line-up…"

"Happy's player is coming onstage!" That was when Pan Lin suddenly announced.!

"Ah, yes, it's… Fang Rui…" Li Yibo felt rather helpless when he said the name. He had only just wondered aloud if Happy would make any adjustments or not, and then Happy had decided to use their usual line-up. Li Yibo felt depressed! He didn't dare finish his thought on Happy. He had been prepared to talk about this possibility and

then emphasize the possibility of Happy's line-up remaining unchanged. But he hadn't even gotten halfway there when Happy's player entered the field! There was a small break between the individual competition and the group arena, could you not be so eager to fight? Do you all have something against me? Li Yibo was going to cry.

"Yes, Happy's Fang Rui seems to have decided to get into the player booth early. Let's see, as for Samsara, oh, Samsara's player has decided to get onto the field, too. It's Sun Xiang; seems like neither team has any intention of deviating from their usual arrangements," Pan Lin noted.

"Er, in this match, from the individual competition to the group arena now, it seems like neither team has decided to make any special arrangements to counter the other. They're treating the match as a normal match and haven't made special preparations in accordance to their opponent's identity," Li Yibo could only say.

"But Samsara is already behind by three points. They won't have a good time in the following games. Will they really be beaten ten to zero, like the audience is cheering for? Then Happy really would've taken their revenge," Pan Lin wondered. If this was like before, the idea of Happy winning a flawless victory against Samsara would probably make most people laugh their heads off, but now even the live broadcast was discussing this possibility in a serious fashion. The rise of Happy's position and power in people's minds was truly something terrifying to behold.

"We'll have to see how Samsara performs." Li Yibo didn't think Happy could do it. However, he didn't dare make any predictions. This was Happy, and even when he was being extremely cautious, they still managed to slap him in the face. It was better if he didn't make too many predictions like that!

"Both players have entered their booths, but it seems that the referee is going to wait for the break to finish. Coach Li, could you give us your view on this match between Fang Rui and Sun Xiang?" Pan Lin asked.

My view your ass! I don't want to do these pre-match predictions! Li Yibo cursed internally.

Chapter 1295
The Patient Sun Xiang

Despite being pushed beyond his ability, Li Yibo still had to say a few words. He didn't dare ascertain which side had the advantage though, so he just introduced the traits of each player. Meanwhile, Pan Lin was feeling down. He could do an introduction. The purpose of the guest commentator was to provide a deeper level of analysis! He could understand where Li Yibo was coming from though, so he didn't pursue it. The two chatted for the break period, and then the group arena officially began.

Happy - Fang Rui, Boundless Sea.

Samsara - Sun Xiang, One Autumn Leaf.

As for the map, since Fang Rui played dirty, he naturally wouldn't be like Ye Xiu and pick a wide open field. This particular group arena map had numerous holes and ditches. As soon as Boundless Sea loaded into the map, he immediately hid in one of the holes and vanished. This trench-filled map had many intersecting ditches. Players who wanted to move stealthily would have an easier time.

Boundless Sea leaped down into a trench and skillfully maneuvered around without needing to look up to figure out his position. Shortly afterwards, Boundless Sea made it to the center of the map and then headed towards a narrow ditch on the side. He quietly peeked his head above the ground but was blocked by a stone tablet. He carefully exposed half of his head and then looked outwards.

Fang Rui's familiarity with this map didn't need to be said, but unfortunately, Boundless Sea couldn't find anything in his field of view. To his surprise, One Autumn Leaf was not at the center of the map.

Fang Rui was astonished and checked who his opponent was again subconsciously. Correct, it was One Autumn Leaf, and the player was Sun Xiang, not Ye Xiu who had been as dirty as him in the past.

Sun Xiang… he didn't charge to the center of the stage? Sun Xiang also moved strategically?

This was truly outside of Fang Rui's expectations. From his understanding, like Tang Hao and Zhao Yuzhe, Sun Xiang looked down on this sort of playing. These new generation players preferred to happily battle it out at the center.

Sun Xiang maintained this same style this season with Samsara, but he suddenly switched it up this match. Was this because his opponent was the dirty Fang Rui?

Making changes because of the opponent. No one had thought Sun Xiang had it in him, but it was happening right in front of their eyes.

Fang Rui scratched his head. He suddenly realized that he had no idea what to do next.

What would a strategically moving Sun Xiang do? He couldn't understand at all because that punk had never played that way before!

Fang Rui didn't whether to be happy or sad that his opponent was giving him special treatment.

His current ambush position should still be good. Fang Rui carefully sized up his surroundings. If he were facing a different opponent, he could try to predict what his opponent would do next through the terrain, but against Sun Xiang… how could he make a prediction for someone who he had originally thought didn't know a thing about moving strategically?

Was he patiently waiting, or was he putting himself forward as bait?

Fang Rui pondered. In the meantime, he started trash talking Sun Xiang.

"Hey, where are you? You've been ruined by Samsara. You were never like this before!" Fang Rui acted like he was friends with Sun Xiang. In reality, the two had never interacted with each other before.

The chat was silent. Sun Xiang didn't respond.

"It's a match after all. Play how you like to play. Don't concern yourself over who your opponent is! Maybe my dirtiness is giving you a lot of pressure, but using a style you're not familiar with might not get the results you're expecting!" Fang Rui didn't mind the opponent not replying back as he continued to chatter.

As he talked, his Boundless Sea wasn't just standing there quietly. He was moving

cautiously through the trenches, investigating the area around him.

Where was One Autumn Leaf?

The viewers obviously knew the answer. Sun Xiang's opening move had caught everyone off guard. He had done the same as Fang Rui. One Autumn Leaf had also moved stealthily through the trenches.

"Sun Xiang's choices today are quite surprising!" Pan Lin had been talking about it earlier.

"Yes, this isn't his usual style," said Li Yibo.

"It looks like he has some misgivings over Fang Rui's dirtiness," Pan Lin said.

"Yes… Fang Rui's Qi Master is similar to Ye Xiu's unspecialized in some sense. The opponent isn't familiar with this new playstyle or class. Most of his experience with Qi Masters isn't useful because Fang Rui's playstyle is entirely different from other people's," Li Yibo said.

"But do you think Sun Xiang might be overcompensating by changing his own playstyle?" Pan Lin said.

"Ah… this… let's take a look at their performances first. I believe Sun Xiang should have come prepared. Fang Rui is most likely surprised by Sun Xiang's actions." Li Yibo didn't provide a detailed analysis, instead giving a simple prediction.

Sure enough, Fang Rui was surprised by Sun Xiang's actions. Seeing the constant stream of trash talk, Li Yibo felt incredibly happy. He had made a correct prediction, even if it wasn't anything admirable.

"Sun Xiang is really keeping his composure today!" Pan Lin said.

From their omniscient view, they could clearly see that Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf had reached the center of the map too. However, he wasn't as active as Fang Rui. He picked a spot and then quietly stood there.

"Sun Xiang, this player…" Li Yibo wanted to say something, but he stopped himself. He was like a player who had been beaten again and again. His confidence had been slapped into nothingness.

"It's a very short section of the trench. The turns on both ends are within reach of a Battle Mage." Pan Lin introduced the features of this position.

"Yes…" Li Yibo was itching to say something! But the other voice in him was telling him to calm down.

Sun Xiang was waiting patiently, while Fang Rui searched for his opponent. Boundless Sea maneuvered through the trenches, while occasionally peeking his head up to check his surroundings above the ground. The trash talk in the public chat hadn't stopped yet, but none of his messages received a response.

Finally, Boundless Sea approached One Autumn Leaf's hiding spot. Boundless Sea was practically crawling as he moved silently. Not a single sound could be heard. Everyone's heart leapt to their throats. As soon as he turned and showed his head, One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation would immediately pierce him.

But when he was two steps away, Boundless Sea's movements suddenly stopped. He leaned close to the side of the ditch as if trying to hear something.

The only thing separating the two characters was a corner. If you drew a straight line between them, it would only measure ¾ of a unit. Neither side moved. Neither side uttered a peep. Only Fang Rui's chattering could be seen in the public chat.

Fang Rui wasn't really talking anymore. After saying a few key points at the start, he didn't have anything else to say. He had even started resorting to something as unrefined as copying and pasting his own words. The two stopped at this bend.

Nervous and anxious.

The crowd didn't know whether the two players had noticed each other. The tension made it hard for them to breathe.

The first to move was Fang Rui. He carefully peeked his head up just the tiniest bit. After looking around above the ground, Boundless Sea retreated a bit. His two hands swiped against each other and a Qi Blade formed an arc, flying around the corner. He listened carefully to any noise.

He heard it… and saw it.

The instant the Qi Blade turned the corner, One Autumn Leaf stepped into view. Sun

Xiang had been waiting patiently until now. His opponent was finally this close to him. He didn't hesitate or make any feints. His One Autumn Leaf rushed out. In the end, he chose a direct confrontation.

More importantly, because of the terrain, Fang Rui's only choice was a direct confrontation as well. With the distance between them and Sun Xiang's swift and decisive response, Fang Rui didn't have any time to make any dirty escapes. To his left and right were walls, while One Autumn Leaf's spear was in front.

Li Yibo felt very regretful.

Seeing Sun Xiang's position, he had guessed Sun Xiang's plan: wait until the opponent found him. This position was extremely good. Because of the outside surroundings, Fang Rui wouldn't dare easily leap out. Inside the trench, if Fang Rui was close enough, he could force a direct fight and not give Fang Rui any chance to escape.

However, with his dimming confidence, he was too afraid to say his guess. And now, it looked like Sun Xiang was doing exactly what he had thought. After determining that Boundless Sea was right next to him, he immediately began doing what he had always been good at.

The trenches used for stealth had become Fang Rui's cage. The dirty style wasn't just in tactics but in techniques too. But no matter what, all of them required a certain amount of space to maneuver around. However, with the left and right blocked by walls and a One Autumn Leaf attacking fiercely from the front, he wasn't given any chance to jump out. His only choice was to retreat backwards. Right now, the master of playing dirty was helpless. Even the cleverest housewife cannot cook without rice.

Sun Xiang had been waiting for this very moment.

Afterwards was his usual strong offense. However, his prior patience had helped him win this situation. Sun Xiang's offense seemed even more effective and made the opponent look even more helpless.

Sun Xiang's advantage wasn't just in technique, it was more tactical. The timing and terrain all stood on his side. His performance only looked more steady.

Boundless Sea eventually fell. No one had expected that Fang Rui's dirty style wouldn't be able to be displayed in a map suited for it. Fang Rui had been suppressed as soon as he ran into his opponent. Unable to display his dirty tactics or his techniques, he

was killed in the trenches.

Yes, up until death, Fang Rui hadn't been able to get Boundless Sea out of the trenches.

In the group arena, Sun Xiang won the first round with a 72% health lead.

Chapter 1296
Mo Fan vs Sun Xiang

Finishing with 72% health left could be considered a massive advantage in the group arena.

Because this sort of advantage could stack in the group arena, the group arena was very different from individual matches, though it might seem that they were both 1v1s. In the individual competition, all you needed to do was beat your opponent first, but in the group arena, you had to consider how to use the least amount of HP possible to defeat your opponent.

Efficiency. The group arena valued the efficiency of your attacks far more. In the round that had just ended, Sun Xiang had doubtlessly managed to exhibit that excellently. Using positioning and patience, he had greatly diminished the space his opponent had to perform, winning very efficiently.

A player who usually depended on hand speed, mechanics and technique to win his opponents had suddenly decided to switch tactics and lure and trap his opponent, even managing to trick the Master of Dirty Play, Fang Rui.

"This is a very atypical victory for Sun Xiang!" Li Yibo was now confidently expressing his own opinion on the previous match. Before, when he was given the chance to make an accurate prediction, he was too careful and missed it. Li Yibo, frustrated, was frantically trying to make up for it by showing off how much he knew about Glory. For a moment, not even commentator Pan Lin had the chance to cut in and say anything. It was just good that there was a time limit to switch between players for the group arena. After Happy's Fang Rui returned to the bench, Happy's second player quickly headed off.

"How come this guy brought his brain with him today?" Fang Rui complained, returning to the bench. "This guy" naturally referred to Sun Xiang. It was clear that in his eyes, Sun Xiang was the kind of player who didn't use his brains to fight.

"You were rather impatient, too!" Ye Xiu replied.

"Yeah!" Fang Rui lamented. "I should've just stayed there and continued to stall, and see who snapped first!"

Ye Xiu didn't know if he should laugh or cry. "There's no way you didn't know about that ambush point. You should've been more careful."

"Didn't I say that I didn't know he brought his brain today?" Fang Rui retorted.

"…"

"Ok, I admit, I underestimated him," Fang Rui sighed.

"Sun Xiang's choice of action was truly rather unexpected." Ye Xiu gazed at the stage. Sun Xiang, once the overconfident captain of Excellent Era who thought himself more than good enough to replace Ye Xiu, had truly matured after being relegated and then defeated in the Challenger League.

Crafting such a plan, especially in the group arena, meant that he was starting to understand his position more, as well as what he should do on the field. He was no longer fighting for himself, but the entire team.

"Mo Fan… might not be able to do well against him either…" Fang Rui said, watching Happy's second player, Mo Fan, as he entered the booth.

"That'll depend on how he plays. The current Mo Fan isn't the Mo Fan of the past with his monotonous style anymore," Ye Xiu said.

After half a year of actual battle experience, everyone had grown. Mo Fan wasn't that same scrap-picker who would always lie in wait to ambush. He learned to judge the situation, and to use a wider variety of styles and techniques. Still, he had managed to preserve the habits and virtues he had gained from scrap-picking in-game. He had patience, he was careful, good at finding and grasping opportunities. These were the characteristics that suited a Class like Ninja, which focused on moving undetected.

Originally, Deception was a widely known and hated character in the online game. Before, many guilds had noticed him and his talents. However, his loner personality caused him to ignore the olive branches being extended his way from all over. It wasn't until he was pulled into the pro circle by Ye Xiu that his potential was realized, proving that the guilds hadn't misjudged him. It's just that Ye Xiu managed to brute force this talent, who no one else had been able to recruit, into his camp.

After Mo Fan went up, the second round soon began. In the beginning, Mo Fan didn't dart into the shadows and move carefully like usual, but instead had Deception run towards the center at full speed.

"Happy's Mo Fan is also one who's good at hiding and ambushing, but it seems like he's not planning on doing that this time!" Pan Lin noted, seeing Deceptions movements.

"In reality, with so many gullies in this map, one can use them at any time so long as they aim well. In the last match, Fang Rui's playstyle was a little too dirty to work," Li Yibo commented. History was always on the side of the victors, so the losing Fang Rui immediately turned into a bad example.

"This time, it seems that Sun Xiang doesn't plan on using the same method as the last round," Pan Lin brought up. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf had also quickly ran for the center after the match began, returning to his usual style.

"An ambush like that wouldn't work a second time," Li Yibo said.

"So this time he had One Autumn Leaf charge directly. This is the Sun Xiang we're all more familiar with. It seems like this match will be a direct clash between the two. Okay, their characters have now entered each other's field of vision. What will they do next? Huh?" Pan Lin was just getting rather excited over all this when Deception, who had been charging forward head on, suddenly rolled to the side and jumped into a gully after appearing in One AUtumn Leaf's field of vision.

"Uh, it seems like Happy's Mo Fan still intends to use the terrain to cover his movements. However, he's already been seen, so Sun Xiang can probably make a relatively accurate judgement of his position, no? Huh?" Just as Pan Lin was saying this, Mo fan's Deception then jumped out of the gully after moving around for a while.

"What is he doing? Advisor Li?" Pan Lin couldn't understand and immediately went to ask Li Yibo.

"He's probably trying to confuse the other using his pace!" Li Yibo answered rather weakly. He really wanted to append a "this is my personal opinion and might not be right" to the end of his words.

"Sun Xiang doesn't seen very affected. One Autumn Leaf is continuing forwards," Pan Lin exclaimed.

Shuriken!

In the end, the one to strike first was still Decepton, who had a few mid-ranged skills.

Clang!

One Autumn Leaf didn't slow down, flicking his spear up and knocking the shuriken away in midair. Just from a technical perspective, Sun Xiang performed flawlessly.

The shuriken didn't do anything to his opponent. Deception flicked his hands again. Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, four shurikens flew out in rapid succession. This time, it was the improved version of Shuriken: Storm Shuriken.

The shurikens sliced through the air, all four of them approaching rapidly. This time, Sun Xiang could no longer block them all with pure mechanics alone.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

In the end, One Autumn Leaf forwent blocking and directly used a Dragon Breaks the Ranks to charge forward, ignoring the damage from the shurikens.

Under the effects of Dragon Breaks the Ranks, all Storm Shuriken did was deal damage. It didn't hinder One Autumn Leaf's advance at all. One Autumn Leaf arrived in front of Deception in the blink of an eye.

Poof!

The struck Deception exploded into smoke and his real body appeared behind One Autumn Leaf. Despite facing Dragon Breaks the Ranks at such a close range, he could still dodge so precisely. Mo Fan's mechanics were impressive.

Ninja Arts: Bird Fall!

Deception, who had appeared in midair with a Shadow Clone Technique, immediately stepped down with both feet at One Autumn's Leaf's shoulders. Sun Xiang reacted extremely fast though. With the momentum of Dragon Breaks the Ranks still in effect, One Autumn Leaf had already jumped up and turned, throwing himself back with his own momentum. His spear Evil Annihilation struck with deadly precision.

Sky Strike!

The lowest level skill used at the best timing. Deception's Bird Fall couldn't hit One Autumn Leaf's shoulders anymore. In midair, Mo Fan adjusted himself swiftly, and Deception's Bird Fall ended up stepping right on the tip of One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation.

Such precise mechanics! It was truly awe inspiring. The venue immediately exploded into applause.

Ninja Arts: Bird Fall might be a level 45 skill, but it didn't have very high priority. Meanwhile, Sky Strike might be the lowest level skill, but its knockup priority was very high.

Bird Fall couldn't stop Sky Strike's upwards momentum, and Deception was still thrown into the air. It was just that since he had used skill to step on the spear, he didn't take any damage. He was thrown into the air, but he didn't tumble out of control like he would have, if he had been hit directly by Sky Strike.

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart!

Deception might not have been thrown too badly into the air, but Sun Xiang tried to rip that composure away. One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation retracted and then struck lightning fast, a Level 60 skill thrown out, in pursuit of the airborne Deception.

Poof!

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart hit, but after a bang, the airborne Deception was replaced with a straw dummy with a poof of smoke.

Ninja Arts: Hundred Streams!

Deception, having already landed, rapidly formed seals and his ninjato swung. Streams of water lunged towards One Autumn Leaf.

Sun Xiang had not noticed the sneak attack from behind, but since Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart had hit a straw dummy, he knew that an attack was imminent. He didn't even bother turning to look, having One Autumn Leaf dodge to one side immediately. As he dodged, he turned his camera to see the Hundred Streams flowing across the ground. If he had been just a little late in reacting, he would be inside a water prison right now.

"Mo Fan is competing with Sun Xiang in mechanics!" Pan Lin yelled in shock. As a newbie, this sort of courage was truly quite shocking. What was even more shocking was that after these exchanges, neither side had gotten the upperhand. It seemed like they were at a draw.

"His reactions are very fast, his mechanics precise!" Li Yibo noted. He was, obviously, commenting on Mo Fan. As for Sun Xiang, there was no need to use these general praises to comment on his performance anymore.

But after these evenly matched exchanges, Deception rolled to the side and jumped into a ditch. He had turned and hid after seeing that his attacks weren't working.

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf rushed over, Evil Annihilation held in front of him and ready to strike.

However, Deception had disappeared. A short, small ditch just like the place Sun Xiang had hid last time. It had turns left and right. Where did Deception go?

Sun Xiang was trying to make a decision when, under One Autumn Leaf's feet, the ground suddenly loosened.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Chapter 1297
Mo Fan's Characteristics

Deception hadn't left! After entering the gully, he had hid there and used an Underground Tunneling Technique.

Sun Xiang's view was focused on the two turns at the ends of the gully. He had been trying to figure out which way to go and hadn't thought to think of what was under his feet. By the time Deception's movements were large and close enough to be sensed, it was too late to react.

The ninjato struck One Autumn Leaf under his chin harshly, throwing him into the air. Mo Fan, Deception, was the first to land a hit!

Annihilate, Flame Cut, Neck Bind Technique, Ninja Arts: Flickering Charge.

Four skills landed on One Autumn Leaf in flawless succession. Even if it was Sun Xiang, he was helpless against it.

"Beautiful!" Fang Rui yelled from Happy's player bench.

Talented at timing, Mo Fan had a very solid grasp of landing combos. However, even if the system judged it as a combo, that didn't mean it was unbreakable. From a certain perspective, false combos were the real unbreakable combo. However, a consistent use of this sort of comboing, a characteristic of Ye Xiu's unspecialized, was extremely hard to master without experience. In this area, Mo Fan's talent wasn't outstanding.

However, for a system-determined combo, especially a combo of five or fewer skills, Mo Fan had such outstanding mastery that even Ye Xiu looked on with awe. This came from the habits he had developed in game. When scrap-picking, you weren't meant to entangle with targets, so he would always find a good opportunity to unleash a barrage of attacks, take what he needed and leave in the shortest time possible. This barrage had a max of five skills. More, and Mo Fan would judge it as an inappropriate time to strike.

After all this time, Mo Fan had developed a habit of using this monotonous battle style.

His habits meant that anything coming after his barrage was lacking in comparison. After joining Happy and undergoing professional training, he was finally beginning to change. At first, Ye Xiu had hoped he would be able to completely change this style of fighting in short bursts, but he soon began to realize that this habit of Mo Fan's wasn't just a thing of mechanics, but also of his spirit.

Focus.

Mo Fan's focus would also fluctuate with this rhythm. When he unleashed his barrage, his focus would peak. His mechanics would be precise, efficient, comparable to a God. However, after this short burst, he experienced a clear slip. His mechanics after that would be nothing comparable to how well he had performed in that period.

This instantly condensed overpowered focus was the reason why Mo Fan could fight on par with a God for short bursts. This was almost like a skill of his that had a cooldown.

After realizing this, Ye Xiu also realized that this would probably become a characteristic of Mo Fan's style. His eventual style would probably also develop from this.

Thus, Ye Xiu stopped expecting Mo Fan to eventually get rid of his habit and instead helped him develop his talents, teaching him how to combine his skills to make sure he could endure throughout the battle.

In the past, Mo fan would run after getting what he wanted. After his barrage, he usually wouldn't have to fight any longer, and thus naturally didn't have to consider what skills to use after that. He would throw out whatever was convenient during his barrage. However, you couldn't fight that way in an actual match. The battle was far from over after a single barrage! It was unacceptable if he was sent into a panic at what to do after, or using two skills and being unable to follow up.

Mo Fan had completed this transformation. When his barrage wasn't indiscrimmitory, his battle ability was vastly increased. Now, on the field, his focused barrage could match Sun Xiang strike for strike.

However, it wasn't unexpected to Ye Xiu that he still turned and ran after a few exchanges. At this point, his focus would scatter, and he definitely wasn't a match for Sun Xiang then.

However, not even Ye Xiu expected it when, after retreating for only a brief moment, Mo Fan came back with another barrage.

Underground Tunneling Technique, Annihilation, Flame Cut, Neck Bind, Ninjutsu: Flickering Charge.

Under the limit of Mo Fan's overpowered focus, not even Sun Xiang could match this combo of five skills.

But… wasn't a little too close together with the previous barrage?

In reality, Ye Xiu wasn't sure how many times Mo Fan could gear himself up into that focused state. He also didn't know how long it would take to enter that state after a previous barrage. Ye Xiu could only tell, by experience, that this sort of peak performance in short bursts was a sign that he was stretching his limits. That was why his focus would scatter after each barrage: it was a sign of mental strain. However, this time, Mo Fan had consecutively unleashed two barrages. How much strain was he putting on himself, doing this?

"This kid is really pushing himself!" Team Happy's members naturally all understood Mo Fan's characteristics. Seeing how he had unleashed a second barrage so soon, Wei Chen called out in surprise.

"How long can he last if he fights like this?" Qiao Yifan wondered aloud.

Everyone fell silent. Mo Fan was still quite a loner. His style had matured, but no one knew how he would use it and where his limits where.

His combo successful, Mo Fan once again had Deception hide.

"Huh? How come he doesn't continue his offensive?" Pan Lin couldn't really understand. Though his combo had ended there, it was perfectly feasible to strike fast and unleash a new barrage of attacks after this combo.

"He probably doesn't think he has a solid enough grasp of this opportunity…" Li Yibo theorized.

"Mo Fan very rarely performs long combos! With his mechanics, I think he can definitely do better. I think he's a little too cautious," Pan Lin commented.

"Heh, this is probably because of his background!" Li Yibo said.

"You mean, as a scrap-picker?" Pan Lin asked.

"Yes, the most important thing for scrap-pickers is to secure their own safety! If they can't even keep themselves safe, then how would they scrap-pick? Though, of course, Mo Fan is a pro player now, but he's been active in-game for a long time. Caution and care is probably a habit he's built up over all that time," Li Yibo replied.

These words made sense and Mo Fan did have this sort of habit from long-term scrap-picking but these two clearly hadn't noticed what was really going on with Mo Fan. You could say, that apart from his teammates in Team Happy, no one knew that Mo Fan's style came with a cooldown. After all, Mo Fan didn't regularly appear in matches and hadn't played many compared to the rest of Happy.

But in this match, against a strong opponent like Sun Xiang, Mo Fan's potential seemed to have been forced to appear in its entirety. The match had barely started and he had already unleashed two barrages of attacks, successfully depriving One Autumn Leaf of a good chunk of his health. This was something no one expected. From everyone else's view, after Sun Xiang had managed to get rid of Fang Rui so efficiently, wouldn't a rookie be easy to deal with?

Since Sun Xiang had finished his first opponent with a 72% health advantage, the Happy fans didn't dare to yell ten to zero anymore. Instead, the Samsara fans had gotten hyped, yelling one versus three and whatnot. One versus three was also something that held a rather terrible story for Happy. Samsara's fans yelling this was killing two birds with one stone: mockery amongst encouragement.

However after Mo Fan had managed to draw first blood like this, Samsara's fans shut up. They began to discuss how could this rookie be so strong?

Everyone was struck dumb by Mo Fan's barrage and even Sun Xiang didn't dare underestimate his opponent. It was rare that someone would be able to match him in technique and mechanics like that. Thus, Sun Xiang, looking for a trace of Deception, was more cautious. He had to look down every now and then, as if Deception might just pop out of the ground.

No!

Deception had disappeared completely this time. Sun Xiang couldn't find him no

matter how he looked and was feeling a little helpless. He knew that this player had a terrifying amount of patience. This was a… a player who had waited so patiently that the referee had given him a red card. This was something only he could boast in the history of Glory.

Thinking of the red card last time, Sun Xiang decided to just stop moving. One Autumn Leaf just stood there in the open. You coming out, Deception? You want another red card?

However, was this Mo Fan still the Mo Fan of the past?

Before, Mo Fan had just stayed there, unmoving, being seen as passive and unsportsmanly. However, the current Mo Fan might not be prepared to strike just yet, but he was rather active. He kept having Deception reposition himself, trying to find a chance to attack. With One Autumn Leaf not moving, Deception immediately went behind him. It was just that after getting behind One Autumn Leaf in the gully, he felt that the distance was too far to execute a sneak attack. It was unreliable. After checking it over, Deception left again.

Boos rose from the crowd. Naturally, all from Samsara's fans. Though Happy's fans didn't like this sort of wait, they were willing to give their players some leeway.

Deception had gone in a circle and not found a good opportunity. That was when the referee struck, unexpectedly giving Sun Xiang a yellow card.

Sun Xiang stared in shock. What the hell was this?

In reality, Sun Xiang didn't really understand the rule regarding passivity and sportsmanship well either. He didn't need to research something like that with his style. However, in the current situation, Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf was standing there, unmoving while Mo Fan's Deception was circling around, trying to find an opening. Who was passive and who was active was clear.

Sun Xiang, who could now curb his temper and impatience, really had improved greatly. Last match, his self-control had won him a beautiful victory. This time, however, it had brought him a yellow card.

It wasn't just Sun Xiang who was shocked, Happy's members were also exchanging looks!

The yellow card was a system message and Mo Fan, naturally, could see it. If it was Fang Rui, then he'd could probably use this to spout a good load of trash talk. However, Mo fan probably spoke even less than Zhou Zekai. Trash talk was naturally a skill that wouldn't appear with him.

Sun Xiang, forced to move by the yellow card, could only have One Autumn Leaf start looking for Deception. The group arena was also a 1v1, so the map wasn't too big. One Autumn Leaf began moving along the gully, keeping a careful eye on interior and beginning to reduce Deception's room for movement. Deception also began to head towards the direction One Autumn Leaf was coming from.

Chapter 1298
Keep Calm

The two characters approached each other little by little, and the match seemed to have turned into the scene seen in the last match. Everyone's hearts jumped into their chests as they waited for that moment to arrive.

However, before any of the audience could react, the two characters suddenly accelerated.

"They've found each other!" Pan Lin yelled.

The crowd could see the overall situation better than the participants with their omniscient view. However, to gain a deeper understanding of what was occurring, they would need to rely on the player's perspectives. The broadcast and the big screen had both replayed the shot just now from the two character's perspective,

In that moment, a figure flashed through the views of Deception in the ditches and One Autumn Leaf next to it, and neither of them missed it. Their characters charged and clashed!

Boom!

An explosion of purple smoke.

They hadn't even engaged each other when Deception tossed a Smoke Bomb. Then, he darted out of the range of the smoke.

Did he want to run?

No!

Darting out, then in, Mo Fan had Deception play this sort of trick with Sun Xiang, but was this enough to shake Sun Xiang?

Shattering the Lands!

Sun Xiang responded in the most forceful way. In the purple smoke, he didn't know where Deception was so he directly used a level 75 ultimate.

Boom!

Evil Annihilation slammed into the ground and roaring magical energy buffeted the smoke, causing it to bubble like boiling water.

Deception once again ran out of the purple smoke, his figure swaying a little. Clearly, he had been hit by the shockwaves made by this skill, his health having been reduced. Sun Xiang had broken right through Mo Fan's trick in the most brutal way.

Dragon Rises from the Sea!

Evil Annihilation swung again and a wave of tide-like magical energy unfurled, breaking through the smoke. Through the break, Deception's figure was already exposed.

Charge!

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

One Autumn Leaf raised his spear and charged out of the smoke, arriving in front of Deception in the blink of an eye. Sun Xiang didn't hope that this skill would hit his opponent; he was just using it as a movement skill.

Shining Cut!

Mo Fan once again overturned expectations, Deception advancing rather than retreating. With an Assassin skill Shining Cut, Deception's form flashed forwards, intending to slide right by Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Sun Xiang was shocked, hurriedly adjusting himself. Evil Annihilation swerved, but it was too late. Deception had already flashed behind him.

In that moment, the two characters seemed to have completed a Switch, and just as the passed each other by, the two rapidly cancelled their skills, stopped, and turned.

Dragon Tooth! As One Autumn Leaf turned, Evil Annihilation stabbed forward.

A hit!

But, a puff of smoke rose; it was another Shadow Clone.

Sun Xiang didn't hesitate. As One Autumn Leaf turned, he swept his spear out and executed a Tyrant's Destruction, reaching a full 270 degrees around.

However…

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Another Underground Tunneling Technique, Deception darted out of the ground and, as One Autumn Leaf epically sweeped his spear across, hit the other's jaw in an uppercut.

Ninjutsu: Cicada Shell Double Slash!

Deception's follow-up came rapidly, executed in an unbreakable combo. Sun Xiang already knew it wasn't good when he was hit by the Underground Tunneling Technique and had prepared himself. However, the follow-up was so fast, so precise; there was no opening at all.

And then…

Annihilation, Storm Shuriken, Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance!

Again, the same five skill combo under Mo Fan's absolute focus had rendered Sun Xiang helpless. However, the last skill in the combo was the ultimate skill Shadow Dance. This was a skill that could be manually controlled and the mechanics required were far more demanding than other skills. For Mo Fan, whose limit was five skills, this skill would only be used in his five skill barrage if he planned to manually control it. The focus needed for the mechanics for this skill was comparable to two, three, even four other skills.

In a pro-level confrontation, Shadow Dance had to be manually controlled.

The audience didn't know that Mo Fan had this sort of limit. They just thought it was a climax to the match, their applause thunderous.

However, Happy's players knew that this choice of acton meant that Mo Fan was

challenging his limits. It wasn't just a small challenge either, but throwing himself directly in the deep end.

"That's too much of a stretch!" Wei Chen commented.

"But with this skill, he can at least retreat completely, right?" Fang Rui said.

"But he… doesn't seem to have such an intention." Su Mucheng was the only one in Happy who really communicated with Mo Fan, though it was only very little.

"No, he doesn't…" Watching the match, Ye Xiu could see that after the Shadow Dance, all ten shadow clones had lunged forwards to attack, not giving himself any escape route. By this point, his focus was at its limit. Could he still control this skill to the same high level?

Bang!

With a resounding noise, a Deception shadow clone flew out of the pile of people. One Autumn Leaf, not even fully out of Falling Flower Palm's pose yet, threw his Evil Annihilation forwards with his other hand, unleashing a fearsome magical energy.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky!

The rapid follow-up of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky after Falling Flower Palm didn't even wait for this Deception to fly out much before catching up and clamping down, magical energy striking and devouring everything in its path. The other shadow clones were all turned to smoke one by one. Everyone knew that Sun Xiang offensive had struck the heart of Deception's Shadow Dance.

"It really was a bit of a stretch…" Ye Xiu sighed.

Mo Fan wanted to surpass his limits, but the step he had chosen to take was too big. His focus scattered, his Shadow Dance wasn't executed flawlessly, revealing an opening that Sun Xiang immediately caught and used.

The audience couldn't see the depth to this, only knowing that these two were exchanging blows, the battle was spectacular. The crowd went wild, and the commentators of the broadcast Pan Lin and Li Yibo were also going on about this unexpected performance from Mo Fan, how he was able to match Sun Xiang blow for blow.

"I hope so…" Ye Xiu was a little concerned. Mo Fan had unleashed several barrages in succession and continued to challenge his own limits. Wasn't he a little too excited? This… seemed like he was losing control.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky had long ending lag, and it was hard to follow-up on this. Sun Xiang could only wait until the skill ended and have One Autumn Leaf charge over to launch a new round of attacks.

"Before it was Mo Fan who was on the offensive, but now it looks like it's Sun Xiang's turn. One Autumn Leaf is advancing, how will Mo Fan deal with this? Deception… Deception ran away… I…" Pan Lin swallowed a curse. This Mo Fan's style was really quite depressing! Such a spectacular exchange, wasn't it thrilling going head to head? Sun Xiang had such a spectacular response to Mo Fan's offensive, so can't you just respond in kind and think of the audience a little? When the opponent countered, you immediately ran without any hesitation. Where's your courage to face Sun Xiang head on? Where's your mechanics that can match him blow for blow?

"This… This Mo Fan is really keeping a clear head about him! He didn't let it get to his head," Li Yibo said.

"But in competition there's no need to adhere so strictly and monotonously to such an arrangement, right? Young people should be more passionate, more reckless. This kind of strict and mechanical playstyle is a little too boring," Pan Lin offered.

"Heh, what if this is interesting to him?" Li Yibo simply said in reply. In that moment, he shone with his former identity as a pro player. Only those who had stood in the same shoes had the right to say these empathetic words. Interesting? What was interesting? The red-blooded excitement of head on clashes, intense APM battles? That was just the definition to you viewers. To each pro player, their chosen playstyle was the most interesting to them. Maybe some will purposefully change their styles to appease the crowd, but this was a trend that had appeared only after Glory became commercialized. However, Li Yibo, from an older generation of players, rejected this sort of commercial air deep down. He liked to see players maintaining their unique style, even if there were some he, his knowledge rather outdated, couldn't figure out…

Li Yibo's lightly spoken words had Pan Lin rather stunned. He didn't know what to say in response. On the stage, Mo Fan's Deception managed a smooth escape, using the gullies peppered across the map to conceal himself.

"He's got a pretty clear head!" Fang Rui exclaimed.

"Yeah, he's nowhere near as reckless as you though!" Su Mucheng said to Ye Xiu.

"Stretching his limits and performance might be an attempt to confuse his opponent. This kid must have been secretly observing my performance and learning valuable lessons from me!" Wei Chen decided.

"Shamelessness?" Steamed Bun asked.

"Bastard, he learned that from your boss!" Wei Chen cursed.

"Of course, boss is best at everything!" Steamed Bun boasted.

"Hahahaha, I won't object to that in this case!" Wei Chen laughed out loud, satisfied with the follow up attack Steamed Bun had given Ye Xiu.

"Steamed Bun doesn't understand, don't you go feigning ignorance. You're the most shameless," Ye Xiu retorted.

"Don't be so humble. You're the best at everything!" Wei Chen emphasized the word "best".

"You…"

"Mo Fan is still in the match and you're here talking nonsense!" Chen Guo got angry and yelled at the two.

"Aiyou, boss, relax, relax," Wei Chen hurriedly assured her, "Mo Fan will be fine."

"Really?"

"So long as he can keep this pace up," Ye Xiu said, "His opponent hasn't figured him out yet. Old Wei is right. By overstretching his limits, he's misled his opponent. His opponent will be having doubts about him, giving him a good chance."

"Mo Fan…" Chen Guo didn't continue her train of thought. In reality, she had wanted to express surprise that Mo Fan could beat Sun Xiang, but then she realized that this would be a blow to the players on the team, so she held back. However, she was still shocked at Mo Fan's improvement.

Could he win? Chen Guo gazed at the stage.

Mo Fan didn't fail everyone's expectations. When Deception was at 14 percent health, One Autumn Leaf fell, and the surprise Chen Guo didn't voice was yelled out by Pan Lin.

"I never would have expected that Happy's Mo Fan could defeat Sun Xiang!" Pan Lin cried out.

Chapter 1299
Challenging His Limits

Deception only had 14% health remaining. One Autumn Leaf had started the fight with 72% health, yet those comparing the matchup on paper would still think Mo Fan would be less likely to win.

Even so, Mo Fan won, and his victory astonished many.

Because Sun Xiang truly was strong. He had sunken to the Challenger League for the season and ended up losing that to Happy, but the champion team Samsara still wanted him, showing a deep-rooted recognition of his skill. Two seasons of failure hadn't affected people's evaluation of him.

For such a player, despite starting the fight with only 72% health, most would favor him in a match against a rookie.

His opponent Mo Fan was astonishingly valiant. He went equal with Su Xiang in multiple direct confrontations, which left a deep impression on the viewers.

In the end, Sun Xiang unexpectedly lost the fight.

Sun Xiang walked down slowly from the stage.

In the past, if he lost against a rookie, he would feel ashamed and fly into a rage. However, the current him didn't have an expression of anger, although he obviously wasn't happy either. He raised his head, looking at the replay on the big screens. He pondered as he watched.

"Nice job!" When he returned to Samsara's bench, his teammates welcomed him back. Losing to Mo Fan was a bit surprising, but if you looked at the outcome, Sun Xiang had nearly completed a 1v2. Mo Fan's Deception only had 14% health left. In the group arena, this sort of performance was splendid.

"That Mo Fan…" Sun Xiang felt like he should have grasped something, but he was drawing a blank right now.

"We can slowly figure it out when we go back and review the match!" Jiang Botao patted him. He could see that Sun Xiang seemed somewhat troubled by the match.

"Okay, it's finally my turn." Du Ming got up excitedly.

He was a player who yearned for competition. Before Sun Xiang transferred to Samsara, he had appeared on stage very often. But when Sun Xiang joined, Sun Xiang took up a spot on the main roster, and Du Ming's position instantly fell.

Saying that he wasn't sad about it would be false, but Sun Xiang's skill was truly there. His addition improved Samsara's strength even further. Du Ming couldn't ask the team to reject an upgrade, so he could only accept it.

Du Ming had his own plans for his future, and he hoped for more opportunities on the stage. But he was still a part of Samsara, and his resolve in Samsara hadn't been shaken! Winning three championships in a row with his teammates of many years and then leaving for his own selfish fights would be the most beautiful outcome.

As a result, even though his position was on the fringe, Du Ming worked even harder.

No one in a championship team had weaklings! Du Ming had plans on leaving Samsara, but his pride and arrogance as a part of Samsara had not lessened.

"Good luck!" His teammates yelled to Du Ming.

"Relax!" Du Ming waved carefreely to his teammates behind him like a cool person.

"Fuck, he's acting like he's our team's biggest trump card," Wu Qi cursed, "Captain, I'm not the type of person to pick fights, but I wouldn't be able to bear it if I were you."

"Haha," Zhou Zekai chuckled.

Du Ming walked onto the stage, into the player booth, and his character loaded into the map.

Blade Master, Moon-Luring Frost.

Whoosh whoosh. As soon as he loaded into the map, Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost immediately drew his sword, displaying his impatience.

"COME!" He shouted in the chat.

Mo Fan obviously didn't respond and quietly ran over.

Du Ming didn't move strategically either. After Moon-Luring Frost slashed his sword a few times, he headed straight for the center too.

Like last round, the two characters practically saw each other at the same time.

Into the ditches?

No, this time, neither side went into the ditches. The two characters came across each other, and then after a short pause, they started fighting.

Shuriken!

Mo Fan's Deception attacked first.

This low-level flying tool posed no threat Sun Xiang, and it was no different for Du Ming.

Moon-Luring Frost raised his sword and swept it aside.

Triple Slash!

Du Ming started his offense just as fast as Sun Xiang. Sun Xiang had used Dragon Breaks the Ranks, while he used Triple Slash. His momentum might not be as powerful as Dragon Breaks the Ranks, but it was more nimble.

His sword led the way. Du Ming observed Mo Fan's reaction cautiously. He hadn't forgotten how fast Mo Fan had countered after Sun Xiang and him brushed past each other last match. Anyone who saw that scene couldn't help but pretend they were there, and feel their bodies drip with cold sweat at that reaction speed and mechanical skill. Du Ming had done the same and felt stunned. However, he still wanted to try it and see if he could do what others couldn't.

First slash, second slash…

The first and second slash of Triple Slash came out, and Moon-Luring Frost rapidly closed in. However, Deception didn't move. He didn't meet it directly with an Shining

Cut like last time.

What is he planning? Du Ming muttered to himself. Triple Slash's third slash flew out, both an attack and a movement, towards Deception. At this moment, Du Min lowered his head. Mo Fan's usage of Underground Tunneling Technique had left a deep impression on him too. Du Ming didn't want to fall for this sort of trap.

As soon as he lowered his head, he saw a glint of cold light from in front of him.

Caltrops?

When had he thrown these?

Du Ming was startled. He immediately had Moon-Luring Frost's third slash switched directions. Moon-Luring Frost moved horizontally and dodged these Caltrops.

How dangerous!

Du Ming yelled in his heart. Ninja Tools - Caltrops, a low-level skill. If an opponent stepped on it, it would harshly reduce the opponent's movement speed. And even though these Caltrops were thrown onto the ground, they weren't easy to see. If Du Ming hadn't looked down because he was wary of Underground Tunneling Technique, he would have certainly stepped onto the Caltrops.

"You're quite cunning!" With the change in direction from Triple Slash, he didn't step on the Caltrops. Du Ming didn't distract himself despite the close call. His next move had already begun.

Sword Draw!

Sword qi flew out. With this as a cover, Moon-Luring Frost leaped up, Falling Phoenix Slash! He directly shot down from the sky, creating an arc in the air.

Deception turned and ran.

"Hey! You bastard!" Du Ming shouted. Against Sun Xiang, that punk had rushed forward and fought a few exchanges directly, but against him, he just ran away. What was that supposed to mean? I'm scarier than Sun Xiang? Du Ming didn't think so. He couldn't understand what Mo Fan was thinking.

"Looks like Mo Fan's tired…" Happy's players saw through it.

In the previous fight, he had played explosively multiple times and played to his limit. Those were just the two plays at the beginning too. Afterwards, in order to win against Sun Xiang, Mo Fan had fought even harder at his limits. He had beaten Sun Xiang, but those who didn't understand him wouldn't know how hard he had worked for that win. Now, against Du Ming, he didn't fight like he had with Sun Xiang. It wasn't that he didn't want to, but he couldn't. His energy didn't let him reach that crazy concentrated state.

"This punk, with that in him, we should put him in the individual competition more!" Wei Chen said.

Just when they were commenting on him, Mo Fan suddenly erupted!

Combo. Another invincible combo. Except this time, the first sneak hadn't been executed too well, and Du Ming was able to respond. However, Mo Fan didn't let up, the second, third attack… he attacked as if he were comboing and then finally on the fourth strike, he was able to break Du Ming's defenses.

Annihilation!

For the fifth strike, Deception actually used Annihilation. This low-level knock-up skill was never a finishing move for a combo. This could only mean that Mo Fan had no plans on stopping his combo.

"Is he crazy!" Wei Chen yelled out in amazement.

They thought Mo Fan was tired already, but he once again showed up with his three axes. On the fifth strike, which should have been the limit, he didn't stop but continued.

Flame Cut!

A blaze followed along the blade's path. Following Annihilation, this attack struck Moon-Luring Frost. The sixth strike was linked very precisely as well.

Then, Underground Tunneling Technique! Deception sprinted forward, but…

"Too slow," Ye Xiu said.

Yes, the seventh strike was too slow. After being set ablaze by Flame Cut, Moon-Luring Frost made a move.

Falling Blossom Form!

It was faster than Deception's Underground Tunneling Technique. The swordpoint stabbed into Deception's back, and blood spurted out. Deception crashed to the ground.

The damage dealt by the Blade Master's four Level 75 skills weren't too terrifying, but the other areas were increased further.

A forced knock-down, Falling Blossom Form.

Maxed attack speed, Meteor Form.

High priority, Piercing Wind Form.

Sword qi that can pull the target, Curving Wind Form.

Falling Blossom Form just looked like a careless attack, but Deception had been knocked to the ground.

Falling Light Blade!

Moon-Luring Frost attacked again from the air towards Deception.

This combo was fast and without any openings. Deception, who had just crashed to the ground, could do nothing.

But afterwards, Deception rolled up and tried to dodge Feather Scar's control.

Lunge!

Sword light chased after Deception.

Pu! Deception poofed into smoke, turning into a strawman.

"Fuck!" Du Ming cursed angrily. Ninjas had more escape skills than other classes. What was usually a combo would be easily dispelled in front of Ninjas.

Du Ming had Moon-Luring Frost turn around in search of Deception's whereabouts.

The earth underneath him loosened.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

At the crucial moment, an opening appeared on Du Ming. Just like how Underground Tunneling Technique had struck One Autumn Leaf, it struck Moon-Luring Frost squarely. A combo once again began.

"He…" Everyone in Happy was dumbfounded.

"He's… purposely attacking his own limits…" Ye Xiu could see it. Confuse the opponent? They had overanalyzed it. Mo Fan had been challenging his own limits the entire time.

Chapter 1300
Long History

Mo Fan was testing his limits, but the reason why limits were called limits was because they couldn't be broken easily. Improving one's mechanics and awareness wasn't like farming for equipment in-game. You couldn't just get lucky and suddenly improve your strength with a piece of powerful equipment. These were things that were improved day by day, training and training, slowly accumulating real battle experience. If you wanted to break through your limits, it was the same. It wasn't as simple as one day becoming passionate about it, deciding to work hard and achieving a breakthrough.

Mo Fan was continuously testing his limits with disregard for everything else. He really was in a state he had never reached before in training. However, breaking through one's limits wasn't like farming equipment. It wasn't as if once you accomplished it everything was good. An abrupt breakthrough was one thing, but mastering it was another. In other words, you had to accumulate experience bit by bit.

Being able to defeat Sun Xiang, even if it was a One Autumn Leaf with only 72 percent of his health, was already an amazing breakthrough for Mo Fan. Against Du Ming, he wanted to continue, and was still stubbornly, even more wildly challenging his limits again and again. However, his condition had already been slipping, and though he had managed to surprise Du Ming, the other soon turned the tables. Deception's 14 percent health couldn't take much more before he eventually fell. Du Ming's victory was without suspense. Mo Fan's performance felt like it had plummeted at at the most crucial moment.

It seemed like defeating Sun Xiang had taken a lot out of him, however, he was still so fierce in this match…

Although he was just a newbie, Du Ming still felt a sense of respect rise for Mo Fan. This kind of opponent who never gave up was always worthy of respect, no matter where, no matter if they lost or won.

Leaving the stage, Mo Fan seemed rather worn out as expected. For him, it was a mental exhaustion. Constantly drawing together his focus to launch a barrage of

intense attacks was like drawing himself tight like a bowstring. He had pushed himself, uncaring of the consequences.

"That was too reckless of you," Ye Xiu commented, looking at Mo Fan.

Mo Fan quietly glanced at Ye Xiu, but didn't say anything, returning to his own seat. Qiao Yifan passed a bottle of water over. Mo Fan stared for a moment in surprise before accepting it, nodding at Qiao Yifan in thanks.

What was this guy thinking? No one knew. The only one who could really communicate verbally with him was Su Mucheng. And even if it was Su Mucheng, she merely spoke more often to him, but never got a look into his thoughts.

"Talk with him more often!" Ye Xiu was helpless and could only hand things over to Su Mucheng, asking her to guide the loner.

By then, Happy's third player for the group arena had already stood.

Tang Rou, after the 1v3 incident, had been a constant as the anchor for the group arena. When she stood, the atmosphere in the venue chilled somewhat. Even now, Tang Rou's popularity was still at rock bottom. Even their home turf fans weren't very happy with her. It was clear what position she had amongst the fanbase. Plus, Happy only had her left while Samsara still had Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost with 91 percent health, and a full-health Zhou Zekai, Glory's Number One, Zhou Zekai.

There was no point in continuing.

That's what everyone thought. Even if they announced Samsara's victory now, no one would care, probably.

However, Tang Rou simply ignored all of this. She stood, accepting the encouragements and blessings from her teammates and walking towards the stage determinedly. Even if she heard the jeers from the crowd, she didn't care. In their home games, Happy's fans would give her face considering that she was a member of the team, but in an away game, Tang Rou was like a public enemy. If she could endure that, then this silence in their home game was like an applause.

This sort of atmosphere in a home game was really rather strange and oppressive. Even Samsara's players felt uncomfortable, looking around at Happy's fans. They, of course, knew why this was, it was just that they didn't think it would be so intense.

Tang Rou was receiving this sort of treatment from her own team's fans, the ones who would most stand up for them. And their support of Team Happy was so passionate too. This truly was strange.

They all knew too clearly what this sort of circumstance meant for a pro player, but a young lady like Tang Rou still managed to endure.

Samsara had researched Tang Rou's matches. After the one versus three event, the biggest change to Tang Rou was becoming the last line of defense in the group arena rather than the spearhead. Apart from that, there was no change. Her fearsome performance remained the same. Her popularity might have frozen, but her strength was still improving steadily. Amongst the rookies this season, she was definitely the best when considering pure ability. If it wasn't for the fact that she had started a little old, her future would have been limitless. Then, with her flawless looks and demeanor, a lot of people felt that what had happened with her was a shame.

Slowly, there were some voices that spoke out, hoping that people could be more lenient on the rookie. However, there were always those that just wouldn't let go, especially Esports Home's Ruan Cheng as a representative, who was now a professional hater of Tang Rou's. No matter what article or commentary he was writing, he could always twist it to hate on Tang Rou a little. However, it was more Tang Rou's attitude that exacerbated it. If she could stand up and address the issue with sincerity, with the winds beginning to change and people beginning to stand up for her, then this incident might have passed by without further trouble.

However, she didn't. Tang Rou didn't seem to have anything to say about this. This was why many fans hated her. Everyone felt that she refused to learn from her mistakes, staying as stubborn as a mule. Then some tied this to her appearance, arguing that she was probably used to being spoiled because of her looks, so she thought she was special and could do whatever she wanted. The few who spoke for her failed to pull her out of this slump.

However, what was most depressing for the haters was that they couldn't use her performance on the field to attack her. After the one versus three incident, Happy entered a period of consecutive wins. The worst of their scores were 9 to 1, and even their loss against 301 Degrees was a 4 to 6. They had still managed to obtain the two points from the group arena. With their group arena always victorious, Tang Rou's performance as the last line of defense in the group arena was really flawless. This meant that they were trying to pick bones from eggs, discussing subjective things such

as "what techniques were appropriate".

They had been left hungry for so long…

But now, against Samsara, Tang Rou was in a difficult place as the last line of defense. It was such a difficult place that these starved people thought that even if Tang Rou lost here, it wouldn't be anything they could feast on.

She was set against almost two whole opponents, with Zhou Zekai as one. Losing was all too expected.

After Tang Rou entered the booth, the atmosphere changed, buzzing chatter arising from the crowd. The crowd was chatting, discussing, gossiping, like no one cared about the following match. Since they didn't like the next player on Happy's side, they had already convinced themselves of how the following match would end.

There was no more sounds of encouragement. In fact, the number of people who were even remotely paying attention to the match had plummeted. Only Samsara's supporters were still cheering, happy that they would finally be able to take back two points in the group arena.

The match started. The applause that would usually ring out at a time like this was few and far between.

"Is this because of… Zhou Zekai?" Feeling this awkward atmosphere at their home game, Chen Guo was smiling in a rather strained way.

Tang Rou truly was unpopular, but when she was on the stage, she was still representing Happy. The fans might not like her, but they couldn't not hope for Happy's victory. Thus, when she went onstage to defend the arena, she would usually get some applause.

However, this time, it seemed like Happy's fans had given up on her.

Chen Guo knew that there was only one reason why this would happen. The fans believed that Happy couldn't possibly win.

Why?

Because Samsara had almost two full health characters left, a huge advantage.

Because one of these two was Zhou Zekai, Glory's Number One.

Zhou Zekai's strength went beyond just boosting the morale and confidence of his team. He hadn't even gotten onstage yet, and he could already influence the attitudes of the fans.

"They have Zhou Zekai, we can't win…"

Chen Guo now truly understood Zhou Zekai's status in the Alliance, seeing how he could create such ideas even in a home game.

Chen Guo was a little annoyed at these fans, but not long ago in the Spring Festival event, the passion of their fans had proved how much hope they had in Happy. Perhaps they couldn't be blamed. The only thing to be blamed was the sheer strength of Zhou Zekai's presence and… how deeply unpopular Tang Rou was. Perhaps, if it was a different member of Happy, they might've gotten some encouragement and support.

"Ai…" Chen Guo sighed. Tang Rou's persistence made Chen Guo feel even more helpless than Zhou Zekai's strength. That young lady really wasn't "soft" at all. Was her name given to use as mockery? Chen Guo silently thought in exasperation at that renowned father of Tang Rou's.*

The match begun under the attention - or lack thereof - of the audience. But the players onstage didn't know about the reactions of the crowd. Du Ming was very much looking forward to this match. As the match started, his character Moon-Luring Frost made a few more cool poses than he did last match.

"I never would've expected that we would meet in an official match," Du Ming sent into the chat.

Tang Rou replied with a smiley face.

"Let's give it our all!" Du Ming yelled excitedly.

"Of course," Tang Rou replied. Soft Mist charged out and Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost also charged directly. The two characters steadily entered each other's views without dodging or retreating, clashing head on.

Tang Rou was once the person who had put Du Ming in the most humiliating position.

In the audience player versus pro round of the All-Star Weekend, he had somehow lost to a challenging normal player and twice, too. For a long time, he had become a joke in their circle. But his opponent had been a normal player, while he was a pro. He couldn't go seeking revenge for something like that! Du Ming could only accept his misfortune and was depressed for a good while.

That was until the player that had defeated him seemed to have the intentions of going pro, and now, she was finally here on the same stage as Du Ming.

Revenge? Two years had past, and Du Ming really didn't have any intentions for revenge. However, he couldn't forget that incident. Thus, one day, after he realized that Tang Rou was entering the pro circle too, he began paying attention to her. The target of his attention wasn't one to keep a low profile either. Not long after entering the pro circle, she had gotten into quite the snit with the one versus three incident. She was the main character of it even.

But she didn't manage the 1v3 and broke her promise, going from the protagonist to the antagonist, someone everyone hated.

Du Ming was stunned. Disregarding everything else, she was truly a girl with character, and she was also very beautiful.

His past grudge had faded and blurred, and Du Ming began to develop a liking for the young lady he had been paying attention to. Especially the one versus three incident, that had Du Ming's heart aching for her.

He really did want to go and support Tang Rou, but… just think of his position! After the one two three four All-Stars on Team Samsara, then the Assassin Wu Qi and Cleric Fang Minghua, only then you could get to him. For this sort of sensitive topic, the reporters would casually ask for Samsara's members' opinions, but it would never fall to him to answer.

Seeing Zhou Zekai hesitate for half a day before spitting out a very strange "really strong" as an answer, Du Ming kind of wanted to go up and punch in his handsome face.

Really strong my ass, what's really strong???

Du Ming had never felt so anxious about Zhou Zekai's lack of speaking ability.

Back then, Du Ming's state could be described as heart-in-throat. However, he soon realized that his worry was excessive. Though her popularity might've plummeted, Tang Rou's performance was even more stable. In the following period, Happy had performed even better than Samsara.

Du Ming's admiration for this young lady shot up another notch.

Round 20 had finally arrived and Samsara was once again faced with Happy. This time, Du Ming and Tang Rou had the chance to face each other on stage.

Du Ming was hyped, and the Samsara players on the bench were all deep in discussion too.

The attention Du Ming had directed at Tang Rou was no secret in Samsara. For example, Jiang Botao, immensely skilled at communicating and reading others, could easily see that this guy had a crush.

"That guy took his sword and charged. Seems to me he's in a pretty good state! Does this guy want to express his admiration for his goddess by crushing her?" Wu Qi wondered aloud, seeing Du Ming's more eager than normal performance.

"He's probably trying to attract her interest through showing off his own talent," Jiang Botao, as expected, was skilled at understanding others.

"How childish, like an elementary school kid!" Fang Minghua exclaimed.

"Holy crap!" Someone yelled in shock and Samsara's players all facepalmed, lowering their heads in silence for Du Ming.

Moon-Luring Frost, charging up excitedly, had been thrown to one side by a Circle Swing.

"Has he already been wiped out?" Lu Boyuan had a hand over his eyes, peeking at the situation through his fingers.

"No…" Zhou Zekai said.

"Ah, I was too careless!" Du Ming yelled into the chat.

"Jesus, this is embarrassing…" Samsara's players all decided.

"He won't start yelling 'I love you' or something right then and there, will he?"

"If that's the case, well, the transfer window still had two days to go, let's sell him!"

"Sell him to Happy?"

"That's probably exactly what he wants!" They laughed.

Onstage, the battle continued.

TN: *The "Rou" in Tang Rou means "soft" or "gentle", the same "soft" in Soft Mist, so, Chen Guo is talking about Tang Rou's birth name, not the name Soft Mist



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