THE KING'S AVATAR

BOOK 13

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The King's Avatar

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(全職高手)

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Synopsis

In the online game Glory, Ye Xiu is regarded as a textbook and a top-tier pro-player. However, due to a myriad reasons, he is kicked from the team. After leaving the professional scene, he finds work in an Internet Cafe as a manager. When Glory launches its tenth server, he who possesses ten years of gaming experience once again throws himself into the game. Bringing with him the memories of his past and an incomplete, self-made weapon, his return along the road to the summit begins!

After fighting and scheming, who snatched away my glory? Under the tossing of the wind and rain, my dreams shall still appear as though they had never been shattered. In all its splendor, the path shall never be lost. Before the gazes of millions, this is where I return!

More Information: The King's Avatar (Quan Zhi Gao Shou 全职高手), written by Butterfly Blue (蝴蝶蓝), is under the Gaming category. It received the title for Best Work in 2013 and is the first and only 1000 Pledged Work (千盟作品). It has 23 million hits on Qidian and has the 2nd most recommendations in its category with 4.6 million recommendations.

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Chapter 901: Stockings Per Player Rankings

From just this single round, Happy's achievements were exceptional. However, in the current rankings, their numbers didn't stand out much because Happy had only completed one round, so for now, no one noticed anyone except for Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion. These two had actually grabbed a grand slam and even obtained rewards for it! Both incredible pieces of Orange equipment were announced publicly in the global chat. It wouldn't be possible not to notice.

The top guilds were gloomy!

Seeing their current achievements, 31 stockings was their best record so far. This record was equivalent to around 10 stockings per round, just half the number of total stockings in a round, but now Lord Grim had come out and snagged 20 stockings in one round, double their achievements. It was truly infuriating.

But what could they do? They had failed to form an alliance. Even if they did, because of the randomness of the event, there were many variables that they could not control. From the start, there was no way to directly oppose Happy.

The various guilds were distressed! Ye Xiu and the others had begun another round already. After knowing that achieving a grand slam came with a reward and that the reward was quite good, this achievement definitely needed to be pursued.

However, Happy did not adjust their team arrangements. The

group of five was still the same group of five. The two were still the same two. The three were still participating individually. Getting the most stockings overall took precedence. After all, a grand slam wasn't exactly an easy feat.

Everyone quickly used up their three event chances.

As expected, a grand slam wasn't easy to get. Tang Rou, Wu Chen, and Mo Fan tried their best, but none of them managed to obtain a grand slam. Individuals didn't have any helpers. They had to rely on their own skill for everything. As a result, if the all 20 stockings were picked up and distributed among many players, it was truly too difficult once the countdown started.

The only reliable method was to give up on a stocking to win more time to search for more stockings. However, relying on this method to achieve a grand slam might put you in an infinite loop. In the end, it was because you were on your own. You had limited information about the movements of the other players, so it wasn't possible to complete an effective stocking robbery. Without efficiency, in the later stages, you would likely be a walking stocking bag. It might just be better to forcefully end the round with what you had.

On the other hand, Wei Chen's team achieved a grand slam once in the following two rounds. Wei Chen pretty much copied Ye Xiu's strategy. He didn't feel embarrassed about it at all. As a result, along with a bit of luck, they swept the field with all 20 stockings in the second round.

The grand slam rewards didn't disappoint them either. Each

player in the team was rewarded with a piece of Orange equipment. All of them were top-tier equipment that didn't lose out to Apocalypse Star or Sundering Apocalypse.

However, in the third round, their luck didn't go so well. In the end, they ended with only 17 stockings, one less stocking than their first round.

As for Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, their luck didn't go as well in the next two rounds. They ended up with 15 and 16 stockings respectively.

Their grand slam in the first round had a lot of luck involved too. Just take how Steamed Bun followed that last team closely. That team decided to take a gamble and put all of their stockings on a single player, allowing Steamed Bun to snatch it all for himself in one go. If they had split the stockings between each member, no matter how fast Steamed Bun may be, he wouldn't be able to chase all five members.

The goal of Ye Xiu's strategy wasn't to go so far as to achieve a grand slam with every run. The strategy was to guide the overall situation. Then, when an opportunity arrived, they would strike, obtain a whole bunch of stockings at once, and take the lead. At the same time, their strike would mark the end of the round. That was Ye Xiu's original goal. Being able to achieve a grand slam at the end had been a pleasant surprise. The occurrence could only be encountered not sought out.

After these three rounds, even if Happy wanted to avoid attention, they wouldn't be able to. No matter if it was their teams

or their individuals, their achievements put them far ahead of the pack.

For teams, as the event continued, the original leading record of 31 stockings became 33 stockings. It had improved, but it was no longer in the lead. Wei Chen's team was in the lead with a total of 55 stockings after three runs. It made the admirable record of 33 stockings set by the original scoreboard leaders turn into something incredibly tiny. After them, there was Lord Grim and Steamed Bun with 51 stockings too.

In total, Wei Chen's team had the highest total, but their team was a five-player team like the others. Although their total was the highest, in terms of stockings per player, they lost to Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion by a wide margin.

Because when this duo popped up on the rankings, players took note that the rankings could also be looked at by stockings per player. As a result, in that perspective, one team in Happy was above Windward Formation's team.

In the stockings per player ranking, Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion averaged 25.5 stockings. It truly made the others jealous.

As for Windward Formation's team, their stockings per player averaged to 11 stockings, number three on the ranking list.

In group in second place, players discovered a team that was also made up of two players. This duo averaged 15 stockings per player, meaning their current total was 30 stockings. 30 placed them in

the upper levels of the overall rankings, but it still didn't stand out, so it was no wonder that no one noticed them.

This duo consisted of a character called None Dare Attack and another called Lower Your Head. Both characters had the same class, Sharpshooters.

Because of Zhou Zekai's rising popularity recently and Zhou Zekai being last year's champion, Sharpshooters became the most popular class in Glory. According to the officially released statistics, a week after Samsara became the champions, the number of new Sharpshooters in the ten servers was no less than 50,000.

Who knew if these 50,000 accounts were alternate accounts who happened to be leveled up at this time, but it was still an unprecedented occasion. The game company couldn't restrain themselves from reporting this incredible statistic to the public.

The influence of the pro scene on the game could be seen from this occurrence alone, but for the pro scene itself, this influence couldn't be seen in a short period of time. From a long-term perspective, the higher the Sharpshooter player base, the more Sharpshooter experts existed. However, for pro teams, team composition mattered. Just because there were numerous outstanding Sharpshooters didn't mean they were going to cram a bunch of Sharpshooters onto a team. So in the end, although there may be numerous experts, there were only a limited number of spots, leading to an even more intense competition. As a result of this fierce competition, many outstanding players were unfortunately unable to obtain a spot. The good thing was the ones

who did obtain a spot were bound to be more outstanding.

No one knew where None Dare Attack or Lower Your Head came from, nor if they were new players influenced by Zhou Zekai. However, although their 30 stockings were still far from Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, compared to other players, they were absolutely exceptional.

Most teams consisted of five players. Playing as a two-player team might be the most difficult way of participating in this event. In the individual rankings, everyone was on their own. For five-player versus five-player teams, the numbers on each side were equal, but two versus five was undoubtedly the biggest discrepancy possible in this event.

Yet even with that discrepancy, these two were able to obtain 30 stockings. Each player averaged 15 stockings. They didn't need to be compared to other teams. They could even be compared with those in the individual rankings.

In the individual rankings, Tang Rou acquired 27; Mo Fan and Wu Chen both obtained 32. All three of them were far ahead of their competition. The highest total stocking count for the other individuals was still around 16 stockings.

This record was only one more stocking greater than the record set by None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head.

Despite being in the most disadvantageous position, these two were able to acquire 15 stockings each. If they participated in the

individual rankings, they would be existences that looked down upon countless players.

"Who are these two..." After seeing the average stocking rankings, Wei Chen was curious about the two above them.

"Two sharpshooters..." After Ye Xiu saw their classes, he had clearly thought of something.

"Do you think they're pro players?" Wei Chen guessed.

"If they were pro players, which team has two Sharpshooters?" Ye Xiu said.

"Samsara?" Wei Chen blurted out. He was truly a Samsara spy. He knew Team Samsara's situation very well. Otherwise, how could he have pretended to be a Samsara fan?

"So you're saying one of them is Zhou Zekai?" Ye Xiu said.

"Uh....." Wei Chen didn't know what to say. Zhou Zekai only being able to get 30 stockings? Wouldn't that be too embarrassing? After winning the championships, he was the undisputed number one player in Glory.

"Tiny Herb also had two Sharpshooters." Qiao Yifan stood up and brought some information into the discussion.

"Uh... I don’t think they’re pro players." Ye Xiu said. Just take Zhou Zekai, the number one player in Glory. Just thirty stockings was too disgusting to look at! He couldn’t just step on other pro players either. If 30 stockings was inadequate for him, then how could 30 stockings be adequate for any other pro players? Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had snatched 51 stockings, no? Even though they had gotten lucky, Ye Xiu had pretty much figured out this event. Based on his judgement, if pro players competed with normal players, they would at least acquire a minimum of 40 stockings over three rounds. If they were lucky, they would get more. If they were unlucky, they would get fewer. Pro players could crush normal players with ease. Zhou Zekai being the number one player in Glory wasn’t the reason he would attain an outstanding record.

The reason should be because the opponents were too weak, so everyone was very amazing.

"If not pro players... then who are they?" Wei Chen said.

"Let’s see if I can add them as a friend and contact them." Ye Xiu said.

"Are you saying..." Wei Chen had thought of it. If they weren’t pro players, then they were definitely sleeping experts. After getting a better understanding of them, perhaps they had the potential to be stars in the pro scene. Moreover, it would be two at once.

Chapter 902: There's Still a Third Round

You could never have too many outstanding talents even if it resulted in competition. That would be considered a good type of problem.

Not every team had Sharpshooters, but when teams selected talents, class was only a reference. It wasn't usually a deciding factor. In the end, what mattered was the player's skill level. Moreover, the Glory combat system wasn't rigid. Oftentimes, players were simply more adept and familiar with their original class. Switching to a new class just required some grinding and getting used to. There were very few cases where a class was completely incompatible with another.

Thus, in this average stocking rankings, when these two brilliant players appeared and Ye Xiu came up with this idea, none of the club guilds lost to Ye Xiu in this area.

Friend invites flew at these two players like snowflakes.

Ye Xiu himself was a bigger name than any of the existing guild leaders, but compared to what the other invitations represented, his invite was undoubtedly the lightest.

No matter how it was said, Happy was a newly-formed team. Happy was still a team in the Challenger League. With a powerhouse like Excellent Era in this season's Challenger League, Happy's future prospects was extremely unpredictable.

But the other guilds? The teams supporting the guilds stood steadily rooted in the Pro Alliance. What they could provide to these two players was very different from what Happy could provide them with. Even Excellent Era extending an invite was more solid than an invite from Happy. Their confidence could be more easily trusted.

Ye Xiu’s friend request still went through smoothly, except when he messaged him, it took a long time before he finally got a response back: "In the middle of an event...."

Ye Xiu was stunned.

"Christmas event?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Yes!" The other side quickly replied.

"They haven’t finished all three rounds yet!?" Wei Chen, who had come over to watch, cried out in astonishment. 30 stockings wasn’t their final total? It was only their total after two rounds. If they continued with their average stockings per round, after three rounds, the two players would end up with around 45 stockings.

Ye Xiu had felt that above 40 stockings could be considered pro level. He originally thought that these two players weren’t quite there, but from the looks of it, their skill level was rather high-end. Could they really be pro players?

Ye Xiu didn’t hurry to ask. The other side was currently busy

with their event. Ye Xiu waited patiently. As for when the event would end, that was very easy. He simply needed to watch the average stocking rankings closely. Once their round ended, there was no way those two wouldn’t be able to get a single stocking. When their numbers updated, it would mean that their final round of the event was complete.

Ye Xiu didn’t have to wait long. Sure enough, the average stocking ranking for this two-player team updated.

46 stockings!

The final total for None Dare to Attack and Lower Your Head was evidently at the top.

Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had obtained 51 stockings because they had achieved a grand slam in the first round through some very good luck. If not, according to their performance in the second and third round, their average stockings per round would be around 15 or 16 stockings. For three rounds, their total would have been around 45 stockings too.

None Dare to Attack and Lower Your Head looked as if they lost to Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, but their competitiveness wasn’t below Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun.

"Pros?" After their event ended, Ye Xiu immediately messaged them. If they were actually pro players, there was no need to waste any time on them.

"No." Their reply gave Ye Xiu a thread of hope. However, he understood that this outstanding achievement must also have been noticed by the various club guilds. Fishing for talents in the game was one of the main duties of a club guild. If they didn’t ask at all, that would be neglecting their duties. Ye Xiu reckoned that these two were currently receiving a bombardment of messages. It was hard to avoid receiving concise replies.

"Are you busy right now?" Ye Xiu was very understanding.

"Yes." The other side replied bluntly like before.

Ye Xiu didn’t waste time and went straight to the main subject: "Your skill levels are very high. My guess is that the top teams will reach out to you. What are your thoughts? Are you planning on moving along this path?"

"It’s being considered." The other side replied simply.

"Haha, have you considered trying to get more of a challenge?" Ye Xiu said.

"From the Challenger League?" The other side replied. From the looks of it, they weren’t experts like Mo Fan who had no knowledge of the outside world. The other side had a good understanding of the Glory pro scene and knew that Lord Grim’s Team Happy was currently participating in the Challenger League. The other side could hear Ye Xiu’s intentions.

"What do you think? Are you interested?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Haha, no." The other side directly put the nail in the coffin.

"Actually, participating in the Challenger League can be considered a warm-up. Then, the next step is officially joining the Pro League. It’s a very good transition!" Ye Xiu wasn’t discouraged and continued to put out facts and reasons.

"Is there even a need to do that?" The other side replied.

"You guys are very confident!" Ye Xiu said.

"Of course." The other side replied.

Ye Xiu looked at Wei Chen and Chen Guo, expressing rather apologetic expressions.

The other side didn’t say much, and the content was very simple, but Ye Xiu could read quite a lot about their situation from just that. The other side had a good understanding of the Glory scene. Even though they never stated their intentions, Ye Xiu could clearly sense the other side’s attitude. They had ambitions for the pro scene and were confident in their own abilities. It would be very difficult to convince someone like that to join their newly created Team Happy.

Team Happy currently had no status nor could they pay high salaries. Apart from Wei Chen and Wu Chen, everyone that had

been netted in by Happy had grown together. Everyone practiced and prepared to become pro players together. However, for these two, whether it was confidence or conceit, their attitudes were no different than pro players. Perhaps they still had space for improvement, but at this moment, they considered themselves as mature already.

Mature players would obviously choose mature teams. Team Happy was still in its preparation phase and naturally weren't even be in their realm of consideration. It was the same reason why many pro players wouldn't choose to join Happy, unless there was a special reason. However, for these two, Ye Xiu couldn't think of a special reason. The other side had completely ignored the challenge and time allowed for adapting to the environment brought about by the Challenger League.

"These two guys are kinda crazy!" Wei Chen sighed.

Wei Chen wasn't the only one who had these thoughts. The various club guilds had sensed the arrogance and confidence from these two. However, it was still their responsibility. They couldn't judge them based on their own preferences. First, they did some preliminary probing to get a good read on their situation. At the same time, they sent this information to their club. The guild department was in charge of finding talents, but whether the talent would be used or not wasn't within their scope of authority. It wasn't as simple as just adding them to the guild.

When the club received the news, all sorts of specialists immediately convened to discuss the matter.

It wasn’t possible to determine their strength and start giving offers just from their performance in this event. Once the official discussions started, the clubs asked about their names, ages, and other basic information. Apart from that, they wanted to see recordings of them in combat. If not, sparring with them in the Arena was fine too.

In other words, the first thing that needed to be done was figure out their true level of skill before making any arrangements. Don’t look at how Ye Xiu immediately asked if they were interested in a challenge. If the other side had replied yes, Ye Xiu would have asked similar questions. Unfortunately, Happy failed to even reach that step.

Ye Xiu didn’t continue further understanding the two players, but someone had come to him for advice.

Lou Guanning.

Team Heavenly Sword’s boss and team captain had already received a recording of them in actual combat. He invited Ye Xiu to watch it together with him and help evaluate them.

"Sure!" Ye Xiu didn’t refuse. Even though he had no hopes of getting them to join Happy, Ye Xiu was actually very curious about them. He wanted to see just what skill level they were at.

The file was in Glory’s recording format. It was loaded into Glory and played. On screen, a 1v1 confrontation appeared. The two characters were None Dare to Attack and Lower Your Head. The

two characters were wearing popular Sharpshooter attire, a trench coat and a cowboy hat. The style had become popular because of Zhou Zekai's character. Cloud Piercer's long gray trench coat and black cowboy hat practically became signature Sharpshooter equipment. It was as if wearing this type of equipment would let them bring out the same skill that Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer had. Later on, because so many copied it, players started to change up the color scheme.

The battle soon began. The two fought extremely intensely. Their fighting was dazzling to the eye. Chen Guo, who was watching on the side, felt her eyes go blurry, but not long afterwards, she turned her head and glanced at Wei Chen. Wei Chen curled his lips in disdain: "Fake!"

"Mm." Ye Xiu nodded his head, "The two are cooperating together."

"What?" Chen Guo recovered from her shock.

"They're not actually fighting." Ye Xiu said, but continued to watch it carefully, "However, their purpose isn't to trick people. They're displaying their comprehensive capabilities."

"Their skill level is okay." Wei Chen said. The skill level shown on the recording was quite high. However, since it was scripted, they must have certainly practiced this routine. If not, how could all of their skill be comprehensively displayed so coincidentally? Wei Chen had considered this point in giving his final evaluation, so the evaluation was rather restrained.

"Mm." Ye Xiu nodded his head in approval. Lou Guanning messaged him at this moment: "This was a practiced routine, right?"

"Yeah!" Ye Xiu replied.

"No wonder!" Lou Guanning was as stunned as Chen Guo, but his skill level was higher, so he quickly saw through the reason.

"There's more as well." Lou Guanning sent another file. It wasn't a Glory recording formatted file. This type of file usually had some editing involved.

As expected, this video were edits of their real combat. This time, it wasn't a performance. The two weren't each other's opponents. It was clips of the two fighting alongside each other in the Arena. There were 2v2s, 2v3s, 2v4s, even 2v5s. Normal player skill levels weren't enough to be a threat to these two players, so these recordings didn't show whether they won or lost. It was entirely a highlight of their brilliant performances.

"These are very coordinated!" Chen Guo immediately blurted out after watching the video.

Chapter 903: Your Time's Already Over

After Chen Guo said those words, she immediately felt regret because her past experience told her that every time she commented on anything related to Glory, Ye Xiu would always help her recognize that she didn't know enough. This time, she couldn't help herself and gave quick praise. As soon as she said it, she woke up to reality and glanced cautiously at Ye Xiu.

This time was an exception though. Not only did Ye Xiu not immediately "help" her, he nodded his head: "They are indeed quite good."

"Yeah." Wei Chen also praised them, "They've got some skill."

"I really don't want to miss out on such great talents!" Ye Xiu sighed. He opened up his friends list and found the two of them again.

"After careful consideration, what do you think? Do you have any interest in joining Happy?" Ye Xiu messaged.

The videos had proved their outstanding talent. Such strong players gave them even more reason to stay away from Happy, but Ye Xiu didn't want to give up on them.

"Still none." The two were clearly together. Sending a message to one was equivalent to sending a message to both. Seeing Ye Xiu's message, the two were a bit dumbfounded. The previous "we'll contact you if we're interested" had just been out of courtesy. But

from the looks of it, Ye Xiu had treated these words as a task.

Compared to Ye Xiu, who was pestering them endlessly, after the clubs examined their skill from these videos, they immediately attached even more importance to them and became cautious.

They attached more importance to them because these two were worthy of being fought over. They became cautious because they knew that if they wanted to grab these two, they would certainly face many competitors. How could they sell the benefits of joining their team and convince them not to join the others?

The Eight Immortals cross the sea, each showing off their capabilities.

Team Samsara could say that their team possessed the greatest Sharpshooter player and character in all of Glory. If you come to our team, we can bring out your strength to the limits. As for already having the best Sharpshooter, making the existence of these two Sharpshooters mostly worthless, they could only hope that the other side would not think of that possibility.

Promises of a future. Promises of status. And of course, promises of riches.

Every club told the other side the benefits of joining their team and hid the disadvantages. The other clubs became stepping stones for their own cause.

The top teams said come to our team, going to a weak team would just be a waste of your talent. On the other hand, the weak teams said come to our team, as soon as you join, you'll be a part of the main roster; if you joined the top teams, who knows what would happen with all that competition.

In short, everyone enticed them with all sorts of things. Ye Xiu trying to persuade them with the advantages of participating in the Challenger League and growing with the team appeared extremely feeble.

These types of things would clearly be held in disregard by the two being fought for by all the top teams. This could be seen from the other side's reply, who treated their ink as gold. Ye Xiu reckoned that if he continued pestering them, the two might very well be too lazy to maintain their polite etiquette and just block him outright.

"How unfortunate." When Ye Xiu said these words again, he felt even more remorseful than before. This time, he clearly understood that Happy would not be able to acquire these two.

And at the same time, Lou Guanning was constantly messaging Ye Xiu trustingly, sharing what information he had. He was hoping for Ye Xiu to give him advice.

This guy, did he not know that Ye Xiu was also in a charge of a team and also wanted to obtain these two?

He understood all too well, but he understood these two players

even better. They most likely wouldn’t lower themselves to play in the Challenger League, let alone for a grassroots team like Happy.

The two had prepared these excellent videos beforehand. Before, they had been nobodies, but during the Christmas event, they instantly amazed the world with a single brilliant feat.

Anyone with a discerning eye would know that it wasn’t a coincidence. Even if they didn’t appear today, sooner or later, these two would sudden pop up before everyone. That had been their plan all along. Through this plan, they could beautifully raise their value. Their ambition could be seen from this plan. They had been waiting for an opportunity that satisfied them, so they could have the upper hand in their negotiations.

"F*ck, Misty Rain increased the price again. Are they short of players?" Lou Guanning complained to Ye Xiu. As a new team in the Alliance, their strength was weak and their record was subpar. Apart from having money, there was nothing else worthy about Team Heavenly Swords. If they wanted to rope in these two, they could only rely on money.

Unfortunately, they encountered an opponent even in this area. Team Misty Rain performed consistently, but always failed at the final leg of the race. They nipped at the heels of these two very tightly. As for Misty Rain’s offering price, Ye Xiu didn’t know how Lou Guanning found out, but he didn’t ask. If their only opponent was Misty Rain, then Lou Guanning still had confidence.

Even when playing the money card, there was still a limit. No matter how eye-catching these two players were, they would still

be rookies at best. Whether or not they would end up as dragons or as bugs, no one could be one hundred percent certain. Investments into rookies were always a risky venture. After several price raises, Lou Guanning started to hesitate about increasing the amount again.

Team Heavenly Sword's current placing wasn't good, but they had passed through the most difficult days. Although the team was still in danger of falling into the relegation zone, their future was trending upwards. Lou Guanning was more and more confident in being able to maintain their current position. At this moment, did he need to improve anything? Move up from 17th to16th, from 15 to 14th? 12th to 11th? If it wasn't enough to enter the playoffs, then Lou Guanning wasn't too interested. However, climbing to a spot that would qualify them for the playoffs from their current position relying on these two players didn't seem very likely either.

From this point of view, these two weren't very valuable to him either. After the offering price increased a few times, Lou Guanning considered giving up on them. At this crucial moment, he wanted Ye Xiu's advice.

"Mm." Ye Xiu replied.

"Mm?" Lou Guanning was confused.

"What you said makes a lot of sense." Ye Xiu said.

"You have no other thoughts to add?" Lou Guanning said.

"These two are very ambitious. They aren't going to be satisfied with just one aspect being good. They want both status and a future. At the same time, high pay would be desirable for them too. Just relying on pay probably isn't enough for these two. In terms of status, for your team, you're both the team's owner and a player. Your voice will always be the biggest. As for the the future... Heavenly Swords doesn't look like they'll have a brilliant future right now, right?" Ye Xiu satisfied his request and told him his thoughts.

"Okay....." Lou Guanning could hear Ye Xiu's thoroughness and decided to give up on them. Perhaps throwing enough money could buy them, but he would only be relying on money to make up for their other ambitions. This expense would certainly be enormous. Lou Guanning was wealthy, but he would never spend money recklessly.

Heavenly Swords withdrew from the competition, and at the same time, mid-tier and low-tier teams with no money or strength and could only promise them starting roles could only withdraw as well.

Ye Xiu still persevered. It seemed like unless they blocked him, he wouldn't give up.

"If you join us, struggling starting from the bottom, going against the flow, all the way until you go up the entire waterfall, doesn't that just get you fired up?" Ye Xiu urged.

"God, save your breath! Your time's already over." The other side really seemed kind of annoyed at Ye Xiu's persistence. They had been too lazy to elaborate before, but this time, their words were brimming with ridicule. They were sincere though. Ye Xiu's pestering didn't make them block Lord Grim. Instead, they stopped caring and told him their true thoughts.

"Haha, it's still early!" Ye Xiu calmly continued on.

"Is that so? Then how about you prove that to us!" They had already torn off their facade and stopped acting polite.

"You guys don't want to be a part of the miracle that will soon happen?" Ye Xiu said.

"We'll wipe our eyes and wait."

"What a pity." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?"

"I feel like you two have missed an opportunity that will go down in Glory history." Ye Xiu said.

"Haha, we'll go down in Glory history sooner or later."

"Haha, I've already gone down in Glory history."

It was just a difference of a few words, but the weight it held was completely different. "Beautiful!" Chen Guo slammed the table and yelled out. When the other side started mocking Ye Xiu, Chen Guo was completely furious. Chen Guo felt sad that Ye Xiu could only endure it, but after confirming that a peaceful conversation was no longer possible, Ye Xiu fired back. Such a flip of face felt even better than a flip of a page. Chen Guo was very fond of that.

"You should have done that long ago!" Chen Guo felt like Ye Xiu should have fired back a long time ago. Taking their mockery and responding by inviting them to witness a miracle was simply unnecessary.

"Sigh, I couldn’t win them over." Ye Xiu sighed.

"But at least you made them angry." Chen Guo said.

"I was being genuine when I said that it was a pity!" Ye Xiu said, "When our Happy becomes the champions, don’t you think they’ll regret today’s decision?"

"You were..... serious?" Chen Guo said.

"I was serious." Ye Xiu said.

"Okay, what a pity then." Chen Guo said.

"Are you serious?"

"As if I was f*cking serious! Hurry up and continue doing those event quests. Stop wasting time!" Chen Guo roared.

Even though they had used their three attempts on these accounts, didn’t they have other alternate accounts? You could never have too many stockings. After everyone switched characters, they started running the Christmas events again.

"Those two better not think about joining our Happy!" Chen Guo said to stop wasting time, but she raised the topic again. She was still angry.

"Please. They never even thought about it in the first place, okay?" Ye Xiu said.

"You shut up!" Chen Guo yelled.

Chapter 904: A Chance Encounter

Chen Guo wished she could see their faces filled with regret because they missed the opportunity to become champions with Team Happy. She even turned that into her motivation for working harder. Right now, she was loudly urging everyone in Happy to keep their spirits high.

"Of course." Everyone confronted this event energetically. At this moment, they were busy switching the equipment from their main accounts to their alternate accounts. The equipment on their alternates were much worse than the equipment on their mains. In order to maximize their strengths, no one in Happy minded improving the strength of their alternates to the peak temporarily.

Everyone except for two people had corresponding alternate accounts.

One exception was Mo Fan. This guy had his own alternate, the Assassin, Not White that he had used before when scrap picking. Who knew when this guy managed to find time to level it up to Level 75. Everyone was using their alternates right now. Instead of requesting an alternate from Happy, he directly brought out his own Not White.

The other exception was Ye Xiu. There was no other active unspecialized characters in existence besides Lord Grim. Ye Xiu didn’t level up another unspecialized specifically for this purpose. In reality, even if he did, there might not be anyone but him who could level it up. Unspecialized characters needed to complete the Heavenly Domain Challenge at Level 50 in order to continue

leveling up. That wasn't something an ordinary person could achieve.

However, not having an unspecialized didn't affect Ye Xiu much. He picked a random class from the alternates remaining and equipped it with some decent equipment to use.

The team members were the same. The class and equipment were the same. What else needed to be said?

Their achievements once again looked down on everyone. One group after the other popped up on the rankings. The club guilds watched. All of them were from Happy. They immediately understood intuitively. They were using this method too! The event had a limited number of attempts per account. In theory, the rewards should be more valuable than the rewards for an event that allowed for unlimited attempts. The club guilds thought of ways to give their most skilled core players alternate accounts to use. Happy was also doing the same. Though everyone could only watch it unfold gloomily, there was nothing they could do.

Just when everyone was continuing to loathe Happy, a formidable total suddenly appeared on the rankings late in the afternoon. The big guilds were a bit numb to it at this point. They originally thought that Team Happy had started a third round of alternates, but when they checked, they discovered that it wasn't by Happy, but Excellent Dynasty.

How could anyone in Excellent Dynasty have someone at that caliber?

As long-standing competitors, the numerous guilds knew each other very well. When they took a closer look at the classes of these Excellent Dynasty players, didn’t it seem similar to the class composition of Team Excellent Era?

Everyone was helpless.

Happy and Excellent Era, the two teams that were currently in the Challenger League, far surpassed their achievements in this Christmas event. What could they do about it though? Who let these people fight in the Challenger League instead of putting all their efforts into the Pro League?! The big guilds hoped their players could showcase their might, but they knew that it was impossible. As a result, everyone could only stare helplessly at the achievements of these two guilds.

"Excellent Era’s people."

If the big guilds could see it, Happy was obviously not an exception.

"It isn’t strange." Ye Xiu said, "If we have so much time, how could they not?"

"If that’s the case, then we have competition!" Wei Chen examined the current rankings. The two sides were neck and neck in the team and individual rankings. A difference of one or two stockings couldn’t be considered a lead until the very end.

"We'll just do our best. Don't think too much of it." Ye Xiu said.

The first day of the event ended.

On the team rankings, the team led by Wei Chen's Windward Formation still held first place with 55 Christmas stockings. However, number two was no longer Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion with 51 stockings. On Excellent Dynasty's side, it was clearly Xiao Shiqin leading the team, which sat at second place with 53 stockings. With just a 2 stocking difference, it was really too hard to say who was better than the other, but there is one point. Windward Formation's team, as well as Lord Girm's team, had explosive luck for one round. On the other hand, Excellent Dynasty had very consistent performances in all three rounds.

If it wasn't for their luck? Happy's alternate accounts answered this question. 51 stockings and 47 stockings. Without a grand slam, their achievements were lacking. With these totals, None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head were nipping closely at their heels.

"We can't lose to them no matter what!" Chen Guo gave a death order as the boss. Although Excellent Era was her hated enemy, at the moment, None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head had caused an OT. Chen Guo's aggro had temporarily shifted all her anger onto those two.

The next day on 12/26, everyone in Happy logged on. They instinctively checked the rankings.

The rankings didn’t change much, but there was one notable change. It could be seen that the teams that obtained around 30 stockings or 10 stockings for individuals had been lucky. After another three rounds, they could not replicate their achievements from yesterday. Of course, there were still a few that did better. With another three rounds under their belt, others were now in the lead in the team and individual rankings.

However, although they had a higher total, it was only temporary, unless Happy and Excellent Dynasty didn’t even attempt to run the event today.

Ye Xiu didn’t know if Excellent Dynasty would continue coming. He didn’t plan on finding out. In short, they began taking on the event leisurely. After the first round, there was already a reversal.

On their second run, another reversal happened. None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head had thrown those bitterly struggling teams with six rounds to the dust after just one round as well.

"Those two guys are just too arrogant!" Chen Guo said.

Ye Xiu didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. They were just trying their best at these events like everyone else. What arrogance? When Chen Guo looked at someone unfavorably, she often treated them completely unreasonably.

Then, the third round.

When they entered the map, they checked the blank scoreboard to see who was participating in this event. This time, when Ye Xiu checked the scoreboard, he suddenly blurted out: "What a coincidence!"

None Dare Attack. Lower Your Head.

Ye Xiu actually saw these two names. They were like Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion, a duo. They were listed as participants on the scoreboard.

"Teach them a lesson!" Chen Guo was excited.

"The goal is to get stockings..." Ye Xiu said.

This rational and calm statement made Chen Guo feel annoyed. Fortunately, she understood how Ye Xiu did things and continued to egg him on: "They'll definitely be obstacles."

"Everyone is an obstacle in this event." Ye Xiu continued to rational.

"But they're not as big of a threat as those two!" Chen Guo stressed.

"That might not be true. It depends on the circumstances." Ye Xiu said. He adjusted his headphones. It seemed like he was going to concentrate on the game and wouldn't talk with Chen Guo anymore. He turned his head and shouted: "STEAMED BUN,

WHERE ARE YOU GOING!"

"THERE SEEMS TO BE PEOPLE OVER THERE." Steamed Bun also shouted, "BUT BOSS, THE WIND ISN'T AS STRONG. I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO SHOUT, EVEN THOUGH IT DOES FEEL GREAT TO TALK LIKE THIS."

"Keep a low profile." Ye Xiu said.

"Understood." Steamed Bun replied. At the same time, Steamed Bun Invasion started crouching as he walked. Sure enough, he kept a low profile.

Ten stockings spawned in the beginning. Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun hadn't found any. None of the other players found any either. The peace and quiet lasted for quite a long time. At this moment, everyone thought the map was bugged.

This time, there was no snowstorm. The weather was exceptionally clear. As a result, the sunlight was strong, reflecting brightly on the snow. It was too hard to look at directly. Who knew how many times a pair of stockings had been missed because of the glare!

"Ow, it hurts!" Steamed Bun complained, "It makes my eyes tired. Does anyone have eye drops?" Steamed Bun cared a lot about protecting his eyes. No one usually treated his words seriously though, so when everyone heard his question, they pretended they didn't hear anything.

But then from somewhere, a small bottle of eye drops flew towards Steamed Bun.

Steamed Bun caught it and looked in that direction. The thrower didn’t even expose his head, but only Mo Fan sat at that row of computers.

"You actually had some! How professional! How fancy!" Steamed Bun praised. He looked at the eye drops and asked: "How do I use it?"

"You’re actually going to use it?" Tang Rou asked. She seemed to be worried that Steamed Bun might somehow drink the bottle of eye drops.

"Help me." Steamed Bun said.

"Raise your head. Close your eyes." Tang Rou took the eye drops from Steamed Bun’s hands.

"If I close my eyes, how will they work?" Steamed Bun asked, while doing as Tang Rou instructed.

Tang Rou used her left hand to open his eyes. With her right hand, she lifted the eye drops and dripped it onto his eyes: "Okay, don’t move. Blink a few times."

"You really are Little Tang! Your hands are so fast! Check out how fast I can blink!" Steamed Bun said, while blinking wildly.

"Amazing." Tang Rou praised.

After getting praised, Steamed Bun stopped blinking. His head stayed in a raised position as if he had a nose bleed.

"Steamed Bun, are you done!" Ye Xiu asked.

"Boss, would you like some. It’s all cold. It feels so comfortable." Steamed Bun recommended.

"No need. Hurry up and get back to playing." Ye Xiu said.

"What a pity." Steamed Bun sighed. He continued to control his Steamed Bun Invasion and followed Lord Grim closely. At this moment, a stocking was finally found. First, everyone checked the name on the system announcement. Next, they checked the rankings to see which team he belonged to. It was something everyone did after a day’s worth of runs. Then, the entire team would become a target of everyone because no one knew if the stocking had been moved to another player.

At the entrance of a gorge in the snow valley, the team with the only stocking happened to encounter two uninvited guests.

Sounds of battle echoed. Gunshots resounded continuously.

After a short moment, a system notification appeared. None Dare

Attack had picked up a stocking.

At this moment, the total number of stockings collected was still 1.

Chapter 905: It's Easier Like This

In the five versus two battle, the five-player team was annihilated by the two in the end. The crucial question of who among the five players had the stockings immediately lost its meaning when the team was exterminated.

"Gaining the upper hand by showing our strength, I like this style!" Ye Xiu praised.

The event continued.

The second pair, third pair, and fourth pair……

The stockings continued to be collected by players. The battles grew more and more frequent because the number of players that had acquired a stocking had increased. Among the unceasing announcements from the system, None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head were undoubtedly the most eye-catching names on TV. The system continued to notify everyone about the two picking up stockings. In comparison, the stocking total for Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion's group, who were ahead of these two in the team rankings, was unsightly. Until now, their total was still zero.

However, who among the players of this map, would care whether their performance was good or bad? They only cared more about whether they could get their hands on any stockings.

A new pair of stockings spawned at the north-western corner of the snow hills. A small group coincidentally passed by, so they

went to pick it up with surprise. However, the gun muzzles of two Sharpshooters suddenly spat out gun fire. They used Aerial Fire continuously and arrived before them in an instant, moving as if they were sliding across the snowy grounds.

The battle began before anyone had the time to pick up the stockings. However, the five-player team obviously showed no interest towards fighting. They wanted to get the stockings before deciding on anything else, but None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head's train of thought was clear. The two didn't show any intentions of collecting the stocking and simply attacked the opposing team.

The sharpshooters coordinated harmoniously, and their bullets flew out continuously. Unfortunately, the five-player team didn't have a character from the Gunner class, so the five's attack speed was not as good as the two Sharpshooters. None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head kept their distance while scattering the wild enemy attacks.

The five-player team finally picked up the stockings, but what good did it do? If they couldn't deal with their current opponent, the stocking would eventually drop back on the ground.

The ending was rather tragic. The team who had the stockings fiercely attacked the two, but the two then split up and pincered them. They didn't know who to attack. On the other hand, the two were extremely familiar with suppressing, switching fire, and focusing targets, so the opponents were cleared up one by one. In the end, they collected the dropped stockings on the ground, changed directions, and left.

"Truly not bad."

Once the two left, a character jumped out from a small, snow pit.

Ye Xiu spun Lord Grim's view around and scanned the battlefield where the fight had happened, as if he was reflecting on the previous fight. However, he soon headed for the direction None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head had left for.

At this moment, Steamed Bun was also squatting in a snow pit, but this time, his view was no longer locked on one position. Instead, he constantly spun his view 360 degrees left and right, noticing if anyone got close.

There it is!

In a certain place, a team of players walked this way while looking in every direction. Steamed Bun continued to stare. As he stared, he saw that the team of players didn't plan on changing direction. As a result, he suddenly leapt up from the snow pit, rolled forward, turned around, and ran.

At the same time, the system gave an announcement: Steamed Bun Invasion picked up a stocking.

Others might not care which among the two two-player teams had collected more stockings, but the two teams themselves cared quite a bit.

When she saw this notification, None Dare Attack subconsciously opened up the ranking. When she saw it, she let out a straightforward sneer.

"Only one." None Dare Attack laughed.

"Haha, all the stockings are with us. They are thinking too much." Lower Your Head spoke.

"I look forward to them sending themselves to our door ." None Dare Attack said.

"At least they have a stocking with them." Lower Your Head spoke mockingly.

After that, the two laughed and continued to rush across the snowy grounds, looking for stockings or teams with stockings. They didn’t notice at all that, at a relatively far distance, a shadow was always following them. It appeared from time to time in the snow.

None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head’s number of stockings continued to accumulate. They had already become the target of everyone on the map. However, the two were Sharpshooters, so their attack range was long, so they had a lot more flexibility. This way why they gained the upper hand most of the time, without having to spend too much time on the defensive.

In the past, the moment the two collected 15 pairs of stockings, all of the stockings in the whole map might have been collected, so there would be a 120 second countdown. If this was a normal team and they had so many stockings, they would definitely hope for the two minute countdown to be over quickly. However, the two despised this setting. It was because of this countdown that they were never able to find a target with stockings within the time limit, so the event would finish. This was why they weren't able to achieve a grand slam.

As for this time, when the two, once again, broke through the record of collecting 15 stockings, there was still a pair of stockings with an uncollected status.

This was an unprecedented situation, so the two became a bit excited. If they could continue to keep their current total, then they had the chance of getting a grand slam. At this time, the two completely forgot to compare with the other two-player team, they looked eagerly everywhere for their target.

There were twenty stockings on the entire map, and one was uncollected. None Dare Attack's team had 16 stockings.

There were twenty pairs of stockings in the whole map, and one was uncollected. Some time passed and None Dare Attack's team now had 17 stockings;

The two became more excited and nervous when another pair of stockings was picked up.

Don’t let the last pair of stockings be collected by another so quickly! The two prayed silently.

Eighteen pairs, there were two left! One of them was uncollected, and they knew which team had the last one without checking the rankings: Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasions’ two-player team.

"Say, would they let us find them?" None Dare Attack spoke. As the target of everyone in the map, the two had already fought with all the teams possible, except for the rival they had originally paid attention to the most. However, even though the two had appeared on TV a couple of times, they only have one stocking. This clearly showed that they had dropped stockings before. Since they had dropped stockings and didn’t dare to snatch stockings from them, the two began to look down on Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion even more.

When other players didn’t have any stockings, they dared to overlook the gap in strength and attempted to snatch stockings. After all, there were no losses if you died. However, those two wouldn’t dare, so None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head thought that it was because those two were concerned about their reputation, and feared to lose face when they were defeated.

"It’s God, yeah! If they really plan on hiding, I think even we might not be able to find them!" Lower Your Head said.

"Hehe, we’ll see if they dare!" None Dare Attack said. She even sent Lord Grim a message, telling him their current position.

"So generous! Calling us to come over?"

They didn’t receive any replies. Instead, they heard a person speak. The two were shocked, and jumped separately into two positions. They moved into a pincer formation towards the source of the voice. The two player’s ability in locating the source of the sound was actually pretty accurate.

"Shouldn’t you be welcoming me?" Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim came out from a small, snow mound beside him with his umbrella in hand. As he stood in the snowy grounds, he had a demeanor that no one else possessed. When the two saw Lord Grim from a close distance, their first impression was that his flowery and green equipment were quite revolting to look at. ‘If this was a windbreaker…’ the two thought. Yes, this was the general aesthetic standard that Sharpshooter players had: Windbreakers were the most beautiful, windbreakers are the most aesthetic, windbreakers are the most elegant. If a sharpshooter didn’t wear a windbreaker, then you’re not a good Sharpshooter. Players who couldn’t appreciate windbreakers must be noobs.

However, after they looked over Lord Grim’s equipment, their thoughts finally returned to the subject.

"Were you beside us the entire time?" None Dare Attack spoke. The other side arrived the moment she had sent out her message. It would have been too much of a coincidence. Evidently, this guy was beside them from the very beginning, and he continued to keep an eye out for them. Was he… preparing a sneak attack? If so, Lord Grim was not as cowardly as they had thought.

"Yeah! I was always nearby, but I've never been so close before, so I didn't know that you two were girls until just now." Ye Xiu said.

Though he had been following them previously, the distance was rather far, so he couldn't hear their voices. This time, when his Lord Grim came out at the final moment, he could hear the two speaking and was quite surprised. These two had chosen male Sharpshooter characters. Their names were also quite domineering too. The Sharpshooter duo that had risen to fame overnight actually consisted of two girls.

"You've been following us this entire time!" The two cared more about this point. They didn't have any reactions to Ye Xiu knowing that they were girls. Although the two had chosen male characters, their voices weren't altered. They clearly didn't intend on concealing their gender. There weren't many males who played as female characters, but there were quite a lot of females that played as male characters. Girls would sometimes pick a male character because they liked the character's appearance.

"Yup!" Ye Xiu said.

"What do you plan on doing?"

"Do you need to ask? Obviously I'm here for your stockings." Ye Xiu said.

"Despicable!" How could the two not understand at this point. This guy had planned on letting them sweep the field and then

take all of their stockings in one go.

"Dealing with two people is much easier than dealing with forty eight others." Ye Xiu grinned.

"Just you?" The two sneered.

"Of course not! I have a teammate too. Steamed Bun!" Ye Xiu called out.

"I'm almost there!" Steamed Bun's reply came from outside the game. The other side didn't know that though. When they heard Ye Xiu call out, they immediately looked around and put up their guard. There was no sign of Steamed Bun Invasion though. Only a system announcement appeared: Steamed Bun Invasion has picked up a pair of stockings.

The final stocking was collected and the 120 second countdown began.

"You plan on beating us in two minutes!" The two felt like they were being looked down on.

"You're thinking too much!" Ye Xiu remarked. Following afterwards, Lord Grim raised his hands and a stocking was dropped onto the ground. The countdown disappeared.There was now one stocking that hadn't been collected yet.

"Don't take it yet. That way everyone will that have much more

time." Ye Xiu said.

The two didn’t know what to say.

"Steamed Bun, hurry! They’re waiting!" The two heard Ye Xiu shout again.

Chapter 906: There's a Ditch in the Snow

This was just an ingame event, so there was no reason for None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head to wait for Steamed Bun Invasion to arrive. It would be more reasonable if they took this chance while Lord Grim was alone to gang up on him.

However, neither of them did that and instead they actually waited. They had always thought that Ye Xiu was afraid of losing face as a God of glory if he lost to them, and that's why he had been afraid to seek them out until now. However, when had Ye Xiu actually cared about his identity as a God? He had always operated according to what was reasonable and logically. If Ye Xiu was in their shoes, he would've long since taken advantage of their lack of backup to strike, unless he had some sort of other goal. It was these two, who hadn't even become official pro players yet, that had already begun to take pride in their desired status.

The two were poised for battle. All that was left was for Steamed Bun Invasion's arrival.

"Sorry about being late!"

Steamed Bun Invasion was quick about getting here. As he arrived, so did his voice, and his brick.

The two knew that Steamed Bun Invasion was coming, but his sudden attack was out of their expectations. Though his brick didn't hit anyone, Lower Your Head's dodge was hasty and rushed.

"Let’s hurry it up. It’ll be troublesome if other groups interfere," Ye Xiu as Lord Grim swung the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella down from over his head, attacking rapidly with a Gatling Gun. The continuous stream of bullets flew at Lower Your Head. She was about to yell at Steamed Bun Invasion for his rude surprise attack, completely unprepared for Ye Xiu to follow suit so quickly. She ended up unable to dodge the Gatling Gun.

Gatling Gun produced a stream of bullets. Experienced players wouldn’t miss a single shot after hitting their target a single time. Ye Xiu was, of course, counted among these "experienced players" and unloaded all of Gatling Gun’s 20 bullets into Lower Your Head. However, as a low leveled skill, it didn’t deal that much damage. It was just when someone was hit by the continuous firing, their character would be affected by the impact of the bullets, looking as if they were having an epileptic seizure. It wasn’t a pretty sight.

The two, prideful of what they were going to be, couldn’t take this humiliating beating.

"Despicable!" None Dare Attack yelled as she returned fire. The bullets flew, but Lord Grim opened up his umbrella and used it as a shield against damage as he closed in.

Lower Your Head was even more furious, being the target of the attack, but she hadn’t let it get to her head, deciding against taking immediate revenge and instead aiming for the other target, Steamed Bun Invasion.

Lower Your Head rolled behind None Dare Attack, kneeling with her gun ready to shoot. However, all she could see in front of her

was the stretch of white snow and not a hint of Steamed Bun Invasion.

Lower Your Head turned in a full circle, but still did not see Steamed Bun Invasion at all. However, there were plenty of small snow piles and ditches on this map. It wasn't hard for a character to hide among this, so Lower Your Head started to take note of these piles and ditches, shooting at them in an attempt to scare Steamed Bun Invasion out of hiding.

On the other side, None Dare Attack was getting closed in on by Lord Grim who charged forwards her with his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. Gunners, even a Sharpshooters that possessed close-combat abilities, would never easily allow an opponent close in on them. None Dare Attack continued firing as she backed away using Aerial Fire, drawing out the distance between them. The two were very in sync with each other. As None Dare Attack backed away, Lower Your Head didn't need any prompting to follow her movements, retreating at a 45 degrees angle with None Dare Attack's line of retreat.

Yet that was when Lord Grim suddenly gave up on pursuing None Dare Attack, using Shadow Clone Technique and leaving his shadow behind as he charged towards Lower Your Head.

Lower Your Head hastily turned to attack him. Lord Grim sprinted across the map, pulling Lower Your Head's view with him. As she turned to face opposite of None Dare Attack, she heard the sound of laughter behind her.

"What's happening?" Lower Your Head could tell that this laugh

probably belonged to Steamed Bun Invasion, but didn't dare to turn around, afraid that she would expose an opening to Lord Grim. She could only ask.

"It's an invisibility cloak," None Dare Attack's disappointed voice came from behind her. Currently, she had been grabbed by Steamed Bun Invasion's strangle.

"Aiyo, your voice, you're a girl right?" Steamed Bun asked with delight.

"...."

"Are you cute?" Steamed Bun asked excitedly.

"...."

Collapsing Mountain!

Lord Grim had managed to close in on Lower Your Head as he circled arounds, dodging her shots. Now, he had unsheathed his sword, swinging down from overhead with a Collapsing Mountain.

However, the two characters weren't that close, so Lower Your Head had plenty of time to dodge the blow. Yet Lord Grim didn't end his attacks there. His sword struck the ground, sending out shockwaves that blasted a small circle in the snow. The flurry of of snow erupted, obscuring the characters from seeing each other. Using the cover from this flurry of snow, Lord Grim used Slide

Kick, sliding straight through the snow and hiding the direction in which he aimed to slide in. Lower Your Head didn't dare to let down her guard, hurriedly jumping back. Her guns were raised and her eyes were glued to the ground in front of her, prepared to shoot without hesitation at the slightest movement.

Yet, there was no movement at all. By then, the snowflakes had begun to settle again, and Lower Your Head realized that Lord Grim's strike hadn't been directed at her at all. She turned her view and saw Lord Grim jumping out of the snow at the end of his Slide Kick, his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella turning into a spear as he swung a Sky Strike straight at None Dare Attack. That was just as Steamed Bun Invasion's Strangle ended. As soon as he let go, None Dare Attack was thrown into the air.

The two chased after the airborne None Dare Attack, unleashing a furious barrage of attacks at her. Lower Your Head hurriedly charged over to save her, and None Dare Attack was also trying to save herself. Figuring out their path, she raised her guns, preparing to use an Aerial Fire to forcefully leave their attack range. Who would've known that Lord Grim's spear would be even faster than her bullets, managing to stab her before she was able to shoot, swinging her around in an arc with a Circle Swing, bringing None Dare Attack back onto the ground. Then, None Dare Attack suddenly disappeared.

Lower Your Head startled at seeing this, but it wasn't possible for None Dare Attack to die so quickly. She had probably just been buried under the snow.

Lower Your Head raised her guns and shot wildly, hoping to give

None Dare Attack a chance to escape. It was then that Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion also disappeared into the snow and Lower Your Head's bullets missed.

Lower Your Head was at a complete loss. The snow wasn't that deep to allow a whole person to disappear just like that! Even lying down, there would still be a hint as to where they had gone! Yet just now, three characters had completely disappeared under the snow. Lower Your Head shot wildly at that direction again. Snow flew, but the three were really gone.

"What on earth?" Lower Your Head finally couldn't help but ask. Her words exposed her cluelessness and that wasn't something these two prideful people were willing to do, but she couldn't care about that now.

"There's a ditch..." None Dare Attack's answer was filled with helplessness.

That's right, the situation that had Lower Your Head at a loss was just because of a ditch in the snow. Lord Grim's Circle Swing had thrown her None Dare Attack into the ditch, and then him and Steamed Bun Invasion had jumped in after her as well. The ditch wasn't big, and the three characters were squished together, with barely any space to move at all. This was a very bad situation for a Sharpshooter, especially since it was two against one. None Dare Attack wanted to cry, hoping that her partner would come and save her.

Lower Your Head started upon hearing the answer before she realized what had happened and quickly threw a hand grenade in

that direction. However, the grenade hadn't even landed when there was a gunshot and it was destroyed by Lord Grim before it even landed.

Lower Your Head felt depressed! She wished that she was a Launcher at that moment. That way, all she needed was a Satellite Beam or a Heat-Seeking Missiles or a Stinger to make the two holed up in the ditch regret their decisions. And now? As a Sharpshooter, all she could do was jump up as high as she could and shoot a stream of bullets at the ditch after finding a good angle. Yet when the bullets flew out, an umbrella opened up over the exposed opening with a whoosh. It was Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella that had opened up in shield form.

A shield couldn't completely prevent damage, but it could greatly reduce the amount of damage taken. Though Lower Your Head didn't know the stats of the shield form of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, she knew she couldn't beat a character in DPS while they had a shield up. It would definitely be None Dare Attack who would die faster.

This situation wasn't one that Lower Your Head had ever experienced before. She had no idea what to do at all. Her character landed helplessly from her jump. On the party information window, Lower Your Head could see None Dare Attack's health draining away rapidly, helpless in the ditch.

Lower Your Head didn't have any ideas left and could only approach the ditch as she jumped and shot. By the time she got close enough to the ditch, she would be able to freely send her attacks down, and that would be enough to save None Dare Attack,

right?

It was unfortunate that she never got the chance to. Seeing her charge towards the ditch, Lord Grim jumped up with his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella open. The umbrella that was bigger than most shields and hovered wildly in front of Lower Your Head and in that moment she felt like it was as if she had been blinded. This was a common tactic used by Knights and Lower Your Head obviously knew the best way to counter it was to pull away.

Pulling away was something that a gunner would like nothing more than to do, yet Lower Your Head was currently very unwilling. She raised her guns and jumped, actually wanting to jump over the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. This idea was more than a little too bold. It might work against a less skilled opponent, otherwise it could only be counted as a surprising move.

However, in front of the very, very experienced Ye Xiu, this decision wasn't something so obscure that it would surprise him. Lower Your Head's head had just peeked over the top when the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was already changing forms, breaking into two nunchucks. Lord Grim stepped forwards, using his hands to grab the jumping Lower Your Head and bending back. With a Back Throw, Lower Your Head was tossed into the ditch, too.

Chapter 907: Ditch Kill

Back Throw, as a grab, had the effect of forcing the target to the ground. However, due to the terrain, there was a space between where the Back Throw ended and the ground, causing the effects of Back Throw to pass before impact. Lower Your Head was, of course, clear on this special quirk of Back Throw. As Back Throw ended, tossing her towards the ditch, she immediately adjusted herself, firing in an attempt to use Aerial Fire to change her path, get out from the control of this Back Throw and away from danger.

Who would've thought that the moment she wanted to shoot, a figure would jump out from the ditch? As she fell, the figure ascended and by the time a gunshot actually ran out, the figure had stomped down on her with a foot.

After that foot came down, another foot came down, and then another, and then another... and another...

Steamed Bun Invasion's Striker skill Eagle Stamp had obviously been maxed out, allowing him to stomp down on her a full five times. By the time he was done, Lower Your Head had long since been stomped to the bottom of the ditch, unable to even cry. Beside her, None Dare Attack only had half her health left, looking very pitiful.

However, the current Lower Your Head couldn't even secure her own safety; she didn't have the time to worry about None Dare Attack. She hastily attempted to adjust her view, which had been messed up by Steamed Bun Invasion's five stomps. Suddenly, a shadow descended and her view, which she had just raised towards

the sky, was blocked. Lord Grim, the flashy guy, had actually opened his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella to jump into the ditch. Was there any need for a parachute for jumping just the height of this small ditch?

Yet in the next second, Lower Your Head knew her judgement was wrong.

Lord Grim wasn't doing this out of boredom; there was an actual reason behind the opening of his umbrella. Under the changing light, a hand grenade fell from who knew where. By the time Lower Your Head noticed it, the grenade had already exploded. And how could they avoid it while trapped in this narrow ditch? A low-levelled hand grenade managed to blast the two self-proclaimed experts Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack right off their feet.

Looking up again, they saw that Lord Grim hadn't actually jumped in. All he had done was shake his open umbrella over the ditch, just to throw that hand grenade down. Not only had he not come down, but Steamed Bun Invasion had also jumped out after the five stamps. Just as Lord Grim's grenade explosion died down, Steamed Bun Invasion threw something down as well. It looked to be a beer bottle. However, Glory players knew that, while this was a beer bottle, it wasn't beer inside, but petroleum!

Brawler skills were really just that low. If it was a hand grenade, skilled players could at least shoot and destroy it before it hit upon noticing it. As for a Petrol Bottle? If it was shot, no one could say for certain what the result would be.

Yet no matter what, this uncertain result was better than getting hit and set ablaze. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had the same thought and the same rhythm to their attacks. Two gunshots rang out at practically the same time. The Petrol Bottle was destroyed in midair and the petrol that splashed out turned into small fireballs, streaking down at the walls and floor of the ditch.

The two did their best to dodge, but it was only then that they realized the Petrol Bottle was just a distraction, like how Lord Grim had opened his umbrella up over the ditch. Their true offense was only just beginning with this....

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were clear on what sort of disadvantage they were at, impatient to jump out from the ditch. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to fight back at all.

This ditch was obviously something Lord Grim's duo had carefully picked. There were millions of ditches on this map, some shallow and some deep. Some shallow ones didn't even come up to their knees. A deep one like this, that could hold an entire person, was like a well; this was probably as deep as it could go.

They had gotten to this area first! Lord Grim seemed like he had been following them all this way. This ditch couldn't be a part of some sort of premeditated plan, could it? That meant that Lord Grim had found this special aspect in the terrain in the short amount of time he had been here, and now he was going to easily kill them in this ditch right here.

These two wouldn't accept this so easily. The two had the same thought, raising their guns and firing wildly at the sides of the

ditch, attempting to force the two to back off.

The two above them backed away from this attack, as expected. The two in the ditch took this chance to jump up, one after the other. They didn't think to jump out together, but in a way that they could support each other to cover for one person's escape first.

Lower Your Head, who was slightly faster with her jump, was primarily focused on providing cover. As her body rose out from the ditch, she didn't bother to use Aerial Fire to aid her escape, but turned to sweep the two with her bullets in an attempt to force them even further back.

Yet by the time the bullets began to fly, another character had also arrived.

Lord Grim, sword in hand, came down heavily with a Collapsing Mountain. The airborne lower Your Head had no way of dodging this attack. She could only use the momentum from her firing to twist her character around a little. She didn't want to crash into None Dare Attack while falling and take her down with her. She wanted to use herself as bait for this attack and aid None Dare Attack in a successful escape.

In the end, it was all just wishful thinking.

Collapsing Mountain accurately hit her body and Lower Your Head began to fall. Seeing that her fall hadn't affected None Dare Attack, she was delighted, only to see the remainder of the

Collapsing Mountain just manage to touch None Dare Attack…

Just this slight contact, Collapsing Mountain's priority still managed to beat None Dare Attack's jump.

The two of them had a plan for their escape, covering for each other as they jumped from the ditch, yet all this was defeated with one skill from Lord Grim. The precision of this slash was something neither of them were expecting at all.

The two, falling back into the ditch, received another vicious beating. However, they didn't have any choice except to try and jump out. Yet each time they tried, their plans were foiled. They were trying their hardest, but it looked more like they were struggling.

They were screwed!

That was the premonition the helplessly struggling two had and it was a very depressing one.

Disregarding how easily the 18 stockings that they had worked hard on collecting were going to end up in someone else's hands, just the battle was enough to make them cough up blood. If they were fighting on flat ground, there was no way they would lose in such an ugly way.

They couldn't accept this!

The two weren’t willing to accept this result at all, but in the end they never yelled out "let us out if you dare" or something equally immature. The two gritted their teeth, continuing to fight and charge and eventually get knocked back down.

This continued until they fell one after the other, dropping a ditch full of socks.

"Quick!" Ye Xiu called out. Steamed Bun Invasion darted into the ditch and the announcements came in a rapid stream. Eighteen pairs of socks quickly found an owner and Lord Grim had also swiftly picked up the pair he had thrown to the ground before. The 19 successive announcements made the players dizzy before the 120 second countdown popped up.

At this moment, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were anxious and impatiently waiting to revive at the revival point. The two were too depressed to speak, staying silent together.

They saw that they only had 120 seconds, and they had to wait 20 to revive... Even if they didn’t had to wait 20 seconds, they could only go and hope that they would be like a blind cat that found a dead rat.

"Let’s split up!" The two weren’t willing to give up, each running in a different direction after the 20 seconds to revive were up. However, they made sure to consider the possible places Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion could’ve gone in those 20 seconds.

How would it only be them who were looking for Lord Grim and

Steamed Bun Invasion? All other 48 players on the map didn't have any socks, crazily searching for the two!

Everyone charged around. There were many people running around like headless chickens, but no one had managed to come across these two yet.

A minute and a half...

A minute...

50 seconds...

40 seconds...

As time slipped by, their hope diminished. In the remaining time, even if they were able to find the two, who had the confidence that they would be able to defeat the two in this limited amount of time?

More and more groups gave up and in the last 10 seconds, only Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were still running around the map. Their names were for their opponents, but also to remind themselves.

They wanted their opponents to lower their heads to them, to fear attacking them. But they themselves would never lower their heads, always fight to the end even if they only had the chance to take one last strike.

"Don’t run, let’s settle this!" In the last ten seconds, Lower Your Head sent such a message to Lord Grim.

"You guys have already lost." Lord Grim replied with a smiley face.

"Again!" Lower Your Head didn’t deny the results of this round, she just expressed their unwillingness to give in.

"We’re out of attempts," Lord Grim replied.

Lower Your Head coughed blood. Who said they wanted to use stockings to settle this? The event was too random. Even if they wanted to, they had to wait and see if the Random Number God was on their side or not.

"Arena!" Lower Your Head yelled.

"No time," Lord Grim replied.

"....."

"Unless..."

"Unless what?"

"Unless you're willing to join Team Happy, then we'll have time for as many rounds as you want," Lord Grim answered with a smile.

"That's a totally different thing!" Lower Your Head was evidently unwilling to to make careless decisions about their future.

"Or how about a bet? If you lose, then join Happy," Lord Grim suggested.

"We won't bet our future on something like this." Lower Your Head was hot headed about settling things in a match with Ye Qiu, but at times like this she was very calm and rational. This round of the event ended and Lord Grim and Steamed Bun's perfect victory was announced on TV, as well as how they got the rewards for a perfect victory. Even with this, Lower Your Head didn't let it get to her head.

"Then see you in the future!" Lord Grim replied then.

Lower Your Head wanted to continue to speak, but found out that Lord Grim had already logged out.

Meeting these two in this event didn't cause any sort of waves in Ye Xiu's mind. After using the three chances on his main account, he switched to a side account and completed the event another three times. Everything followed the routine. Accept the mission, enter the map, open the party list, look at the parties.

"This future... Isn’t it arriving a little too quickly...?" Ye Xiu found, wide-eyed in surprised, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack’s names in the party list. Yet, at the same time, he found some even more terrifying opponents.

A blind cat that found a dead rat is a Chinese idiom for someone who does something they have no aptitude for, but somehow manage it out of sheer, dumb luck. ~Joui

Random Number Goddess is more commonly known as RNG, the shorthand of Random Number Generator, referring to randomized luck or chance in (usually) games. However the Chinese raw uses 系统大神 “System God” or “the god that is the system,” so I used the other version of RNG, the Random Number Goddess. It means the exact same thing as Random Number Generator, though. ~Joui

**Random Number God seems to be the more popular term, so I’ve changed it to that. I’ve personally never heard of Random Number Goddess being used before, but I do worship the almighty RNGesus. ~Nom

Chapter 908: Watch from a distance a fight between tigers

Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had already switched to their alternates. In between, Steamed Bun Invasion spent some time switching his equipment over. When they accepted the event quest again, they unexpectedly bumped into None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head again.

At the same time, Ye Xiu also noticed another team.

Excellent Dynasty's team.

This team currently still had 53 stockings. This round would probably also be their first round today. From this team's composition, this team was undoubtedly Excellent Era's pro team. There was no need to question the strength of this team. Even if Wei Chen's team had a higher total stocking count than them yesterday night, that definitely didn't mean Wei Chen's team could claim superiority to Excellent Era's team. Of course, that only applied if Wei Chen wasn't being shameless. For someone like Wei Chen, lying through his teeth was way too easy.

"You guys sure did run into trouble this time!" Chen Guo had felt extremely pleased when Ye Xiu buried alive None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head last round. This round, she saw that Ye Xiu had once again encountered these two players. Just when she was excited, she saw there was also Excellent Era's pro team and immediately turned serious.

Wei Chen heard the news and turned his head. He saw the situation and said even more seriously to Ye Xiu: "What a good opportunity. Give them a good beating on my behalf."

Wei Chen’s words were obviously aimed at Excellent Era’s team.

Their three rounds today didn’t go as well as their three rounds had yesterday. They only acquired a total of 52 stockings total. If Excellent Era’s team had a bit of luck and obtained over 54 stockings, Wei Chen’s team wouldn’t be able to keep their spot as first place. Right now, this team was their only competitor. Even Wei Chen’s alternate team didn’t have such an exceptional record, making Wei Chen only feel more uneasy.

Their alternate team had switched equipment too, so the strength of their alternate team and the strength of their main team were pretty close. Yet they weren’t able to replicate their main team’s stocking total, showing that this event quest had many variables involved. Wei Chen’s main team had completed their three rounds today. Their stocking total wasn’t too incredible either, which was why they were so nervous. Seeing that Excellent Era’s team had come across Ye Xiu, Wei Chen was in high spirits.

"Yeah, pass me a cigarette." Ye Xiu said.

"Here here here, I’ll even light it for you." The current Wei Chen didn’t taunt Ye Xiu like he usually did and instead was very polite.

"What a coincidence." Ye Xiu said with a cigarette in his mouth, "I chose a Mechanic and I bump into Xiao Shiqin."

"With Boss Ye’s ability, a trifling Xiao Shiqin is nothing to be feared." Wei Chen said.

"Stop making so much noise. Go play on your alternate." Ye Xiu said.

"Yes yes yes." Wei Chen immediately returned to his team and continued instructing his team properly. The personality change was so fast that Chen Guo could only gasp in amazement.

"Steamed Bun, let’s do this! It’s starting." Ye Xiu shouted. Fifty players had finally gathered for this event. There were no other special newcomers. The system had begun counting down.

"Understood." Steamed Bun’s spirit rose.

"Let’s check the situation first." Ye Xiu said.

The two players entered the map and casually strolled around, waiting for the situation to develop. As for the other players, when they saw the list of other teams participating, they cried as if they had lost their parents. Bumping into just one freak team was enough, but they had actually encountered two. They didn’t know that the Mechanic, Listened Promise, and the Brawler, Rain, were actually another freak team using their alternates.

This time, the map was still snowy, but there was no heavy snowstorm that blocked their vision, nor was there was the

blinding sun. The map was a small village wrapped in silver white. The stockings could be on the streets, inside the buildings, or on the roofs. Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun weren't in a hurry to search for stockings. After wandering around, Ye Xiu found a particular roof and immediately headed towards there. Two minutes had already passed, yet there were still no stockings found. No one knew if it was because the other players had already been struck a blow and remained passive.

Ye Xiu's Listened Promise jumped onto that roof and the first system notification had appeared. The first stocking had been picked up by a normal player from a normal team. Then again, it had only been 20 days since the new level cap had been released. Those who could level to 75 definitely weren't ordinary. Unfortunately, their opponents were too strong this time. No matter how fast they leveled, they could only be considered ordinary.

When the first stocking was picked up, the system chat stopped remaining calm. After all, not everyone was passive though. For example, None Dare Attack and Lower YOur Head wouldn't remain passive when facing Excellent Era's team. They might treat them like a test of skill.

Notifications began popping up again and again. Of the ten stockings, five were quickly found. Excellent Era's team and the Lower Your Head duo still hadn't appeared.

Who knew if it was because the two freak teams were not making any moves boosted the morale of everyone else, a small tide of notifications crashed into the chat. Two stockings had been picked

up simultaneously. A fight had clearly broken out. Twelve stockings had spawned so far and seven had been acquired already.

Eighth, ninth, tenth……

It seems as if the various teams had awakened. Their progress suddenly increased rapidly. In the blink of an eye, the total stockings acquired went from seven to ten. Among these, Excellent Era's team finally revealed themselves. Through a non-combat way, they had found a stocking.

"None of them are in a hurry to act! How patient." Ye Xiu sighed.

Ye Xiu had tried the strategy of letting the opponent strike first before striking too, but that strategy didn't work for every situation. You needed to have a certain grasp of the location of the stockings, so you would have a certain level of control, but in their situation? Ten stockings were scattered among eight teams. The stockings weren't concentrated on a team, so striking first or striking last didn't make a difference.

Xiao Shiqin obviously wasn't so stupid as to not understand this simple line of reasoning. Ye Xiu reckoned that after he saw None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head, he adopted a wait-and-see strategy, or perhaps do the same as Ye Xiu in the past round and hunt down Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack.

However, how could Xiao Shiqin know that Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had just fallen for such a trap. This time, when they saw a formidable enemy, how could they so easily rush

to stand out from everyone else. With both sides restraining themselves, the situation became somewhat messy.

"Boss, we're still not acting?" Steamed Bun had been silent for a long time and asked.

"There's no hurry. If this situation continues, we'll at least be able to complete our mission of helping Old Wei snipe his competitor."

"Doing nothing and completing a mission! How brilliant!" Steamed Bun exclaimed in admiration.

"Of course." Ye Xiu said. His thoughts were obviously different from his conversation with Steamed Bun. Right now, it was a test of who had more patience. With Xiao Shiqin's experience and foresight, Ye Xiu reckoned that if he really needed to be patient, he definitely would, but the question was did his team really need to wait?

His team consisted of five All Stars. Waiting and seeing was simply just to save some trouble, letting None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head to help them hunt. If they were really afraid, then they would be laughed at. Five pro players in a team afraid of two players that had stood out from the pack through an event? If someone claimed it, that wouldn't be considered cautious or careful, that would be considered crazy.

So even though Excellent Era's team was being patient, Ye Xiu didn't think they had no plans.

As expected, they didn't wait for None Dare Attack and Lower Your Head to act first. Excellent Era's team was too lazy to keep wasting their time. A notification announcing that a character from their team had picked up a stocking opened their first attack. They couldn't have made too many preparations during their previous period of silence. As soon as they started their attacks, they instantly swept half of the acquired stockings on the field. They weren't like Happy and endured patiently from time to time. They were a team that once reigned over Glory. Being careful and meticulous facing some normal players would just be too shameful.

Excellent Era's team continued to plunder stockings, and the system continued to spawn new stockings. Those without stockings were fearless, but facing tyrannical strength, fearlessness didn't equate to victory.

Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun finally split up. They weren't looking for stockings, but for players. Ye Xiu wanted to know what Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were doing! No movements had come from them yet. Could they also be waiting? That would betray what Ye Xiu knew, after coming across them!

Ye Xiu guessed that these two definitely wouldn't give up so easily. Perhaps they also wanted to be the siskin behind the prey. Using this guess, Ye Xiu had a direction. If these two wanted to be siskins, they obviously needed to keep a careful watch on Excellent Era's movements. As for Excellent Era? They were attacking everywhere, following the movements of stockings closely.

After coming across a stocking, Ye Xiu didn't have his Listened

Promise pick it up. Instead, he found a hiding place and quietly hid, calling for Steamed Bun to come over. If a team came by and disturbed them, they would come out and kill them.

This stocking became bait. Finally, Ye Xiu saw who he wanted to see.

One of the characters from Excellent Era's team, Battle Mage Footsteps in the Wind, wandered to this location alone. After seeing this stocking, he went to pick it up without any hesitation. His confidence showed.

When Battle Mage Footsteps in the Wind picked up the eighteenth stocking, all twenty stockings had finally spawned. Two stockings still hadn't been found yet. Among the acquired stockings, Excellent Era's team had sixteen. As for the two that hadn't been found yet, Ye Xiu actually discovered that this stocking had already fallen into Excellent Era's hands. However, to extend the amount of time to get a better total, they intentionally tossed the stocking aside. If you paid attention to the system notifications and the number of stockings on a team, this method could easily be noticed.

Excellent Era's strategy was actually very simply. With overwhelming strength, they used this method to prolong the amount of time for the event and fight for as many stockings as possible. For them, how many stockings they got simply depended on how much patience they had.

Sixteen stockings probably weren't enough for them to be satisfied, but at this moment, there were already players who

responded.

Two figures suddenly came out from behind, forming a pincer attack onto Footsteps in the Wind.

None Dare Attack!

Lower Your Head!

Chapter 909: Mechanical Seeker

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack appeared at a very serendipitous time. It was clear that they hadn’t been facing this with a careful attitude. They had been lying in wait for the perfect time to strike. It was evident that these two weren’t arrogant enough to believe that they could win against the five members of Excellent Era, so they had kept an eye on this lone wolf member of their party, finally decided to strike.

"Heh, I knew that you two were up to no good. I was getting impatient, waiting for you to act," the Battle Mage, Footsteps in the Wind spoke up. The haughtiness in his voice made his identity as Sun Xiang obvious.

This guy had long since noticed that the two were following him, but didn’t find them worthy of his attention at all, still doing what he should and waiting for them to strike before dealing with them.

"We’ll make you pay for underestimating us!" Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were very prideful as well. They could definitely tell that the player behind this character was Sun Xiang, but they had no intentions of backing down. The tone of Sun Xiang’s voice made it obvious that he didn’t think them a threat, and that was something the two could not accept. They didn’t hesitate to mount a vicious offense.

The bullets that flew from the muzzles of their guns were like two beams, crisscrossing as they cut through the air towards Footsteps in the Wind. Sun Xiang let out a haughty laugh. Footstep in the Wind suddenly moved, using an accurate Z-Shake to dart

between the two streams of bullets, taking advantage of the gaps between each shot. In an instant, he had closed in on None Dare Attack, who was on the right.

Sun Xiang's finesse in his technique was beyond the two's expectations. They hadn't thought he'd be able to break through their pincer attack so easily, just by moving.

None Dare Attack hurriedly jumped away, shooting as she prepared an Aerial Fire to pull away. Lower Your Head followed, running as she shot and continued to cooperate with None Dare Attack's attacks.

However, even their stationary crisscrossing fire wasn't enough to suppress Sun Xiang, they were currently in movement, making it harder, and lowering the effectiveness.

"Random Firing!" Under these dire circumstances, the two moved in sync with a single call from None Dare Attack, simultaneously activating Random Firing and instantly increasing the amount of bullets that they were shooting. With that, Sun Xiang started to feel the pressure. He hadn't thought that the two could craft such a precise web with their firepower using such a hard to control technique.

"Not bad, seems like I'll actually have to take this seriously." Sun Xiang had immediately been hit by a few bullets, finding an excuse as to why he was unable to dodge the net of bullets. Footsteps in the Wind, swung his spear into a Dragon Breaks the Ranks, charging through the suppressive fire without care for damage. He even suddenly changed targets as well; originally having been set

on chasing down None Dare Attack, he suddenly did a double take and charged towards Lower Your Head with his Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

However, the two weren't close and Lower Your Head wasn't so slow at reacting either. By the time Footsteps in the Wind had arrived, spear in hand, Lower Your Head jumped back quickly, tossing a grenade at Footsteps in the Wind.

But Sun Xiang's hands were very fast and precise. Footsteps in the Wind swung out with his spear, using Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart. As it stabbed and destroyed the hand grenade in midair, its momentum didn't slow, flying towards Lower Your Head.

Seeing this, Lower Your Head knew that this strike wasn't something she could dodge with simple movement. She couldn't cling onto the gunner idea of "distance yourself" either. Lower Your Head decisively lowered her body, sliding under Footsteps in the Wind with a Slide Kick. Not only did this not distance her from Footsteps in the Wind, but it brought her closer of her own initiative.

This move was courageous, but not particularly unexpected. Footsteps in the Wind suddenly jumped up to avoid the attack; it was evident that Sun Xiang had been on guard against this possibility already. At this moment, the airborne Footsteps in the Wind suddenly flipped, head below feet and spear in one hand. His body pivoted abruptly, spinning as he descended.

Lower Your Head's Slide Kick hit thin air, her figure halfway in movement and about to jump up to pursue Footsteps in the Wind.

She was completely caught off guard by such a sudden attack.

Lower Your Head couldn't be blamed for being caught so off guard, even if it were Ye Xiu, it would be a new experience.

Dragon Flight!

This was a new, powerful level 75 technique for Battle Mages. Even the experienced Ye Xiu wouldn't know a lot about this technique. On the other hand, Sun Xiang was a player specializing in the Battle Mage class. As soon as his character reached level 75, he began to look into the new skills made available by Glory. This Dragon Flight was something he had played out in his head in all sorts of different ways. The current Lower Your Head had become a lab rat for testing out this skill in actual combat. Speaking of, with Excellent Era in the Challenger League, a lab rat of Lower Your Head's caliber was hard to come by.

This drilling attack didn't only strike with the tip of the spear. The energy brought about by the spinning of the character erupted with the last stab, bringing on a swirl of air that kicked up snow and dirt that made it hard to see the two characters. None Dare Attack, anxious to come to Lower Your Head's help, couldn't even see her target. She could only shoot randomly at the tornado of energy. If she could hit or not all depended on her luck.

The whirl of energy dispersed quickly and the two characters became clear soon enough. Footsteps in the Wind stood pridefully, holding his spear in one hand as Lower Your Head dangled from the end.

Seeing this scene, Lower Your Head seemed to have lost terribly, hanging from her opponent's weapon as if a sign off his victory. However, Ye Xiu knew that this was just a continuation of Footsteps in the Wind's attack, a Dragon Tooth that stabbed at the airborne Lower Your Head. So, at the moment of impact, it looked like Lower Your Head had been impaled, dangling from the spear. Footsteps in the Wind quickly retracted his spear, and Lower Your Head didn't fall immediately, but was hung, suspended in the air for a moment. It was obvious that it was an upwards attack that had caused this suspension.

"Go!" Sun Xiang yelled, thrusting out a Falling Flower Palm and throwing Lower Your Head out, right at None Dare Attack. Then, his Footsteps in the Wind used Lower Your Head as cover to swiftly run forward.

None Dare Attack moved to the side to get a better view and raised her guns to shoot. Footsteps in the Wind darted left and right, and soon enough None Dare Attack was within his attack range. His spear swung out at her, but when he stepped out, Sun Xiang suddenly noticed something strange underfoot, getting Footsteps in the Wind to look down and take a look. A Mechanical Seeker was climbing towards his legs.

Sun Xiang was shocked.

It wasn't that this skill was particularly scary, it was just that he hadn't noticed these two using this skill at all. The direction of his spear swerved, destroying the small machine on the ground. However, None Dare Attack took advantage of this tiny opening.

At such a close distance, she still chose to shoot, and with a headstrong skill like Gatling Gun, too. The heavy machine gun whipped out was practically pressed up against Footsteps in the Wind's chest, and a stream of bullets was fired wildly. No matter how strong Sun Xiang was, he couldn't avoid such a close attack. Footsteps in the Wind was blown back by the stream of bullets from Gatling Gun.

None Dare Attack didn't linger to savor the effects of this attack. Gatling Gun might be a cathartic skill, it was still a low level skill. It would be a waste if they used this chance to simply fire such a low leveled attack. After blasting Footsteps in the Wind by severals units, None Dare Attack cancelled the skill quickly, putting the heavy machine gun away, sniper rifle already in hand.

A single gunshot rang out.

This sort of distance, this sort of timing, None Dare Attack didn't even need to aim, firing as soon as the gun was raised, striking a headshot.

Sun Xiang obviously hadn't expected that his countering of that small Mechanical Seeker would cause so much trouble for himself. Thunder Snipe, that wasn't a skill with low damage. He never expected another gunshot after taking that headshot. Lower Your Head, who had been sent flying by the Falling Flower Palm had already landed and, seeing the chance given to her, raised her sniper rifle without even fully getting up and scored another shot right after None Dare Attack's.

Two headshots! Footsteps in the Wind's health and Sun Xiang's

heart jumped.

He couldn’t let his guard down again!

Sun Xiang warned himself like that, but Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack took this chance after the two snipes to start a stream of shots again. They didn’t try to pull away this time, but take the initiative to close in on him. The two had realized, against a creme la creme expert like Sun Xiang, always trying to "distance yourself" wasn’t a good idea.

They did need to keep a distance, but how much distance was the question. Because of how skilled these top experts were, too much distance meant more time for them to react and move, making all their attacks futile. So against a top expert, distance wasn’t always a good thing. You had to stay within a certain range. That was the only way to assure your effectiveness.

Pulling away wasn’t just for escaping, but to defeat their opponent.

The two who had suddenly been enlightened didn’t retreat, but pressed forwards instead, closing in on Footsteps in the Wind as they attacked. This action caused Sun Xiang to scramble to react. Bullets flying over from such a close distance, and coming from two characters as well, it wasn’t possible to dodge them all like he had done before. Even if he dodged the first shot, the second would soon follow suit, dodge the second and the third would arrive even quicker.

That was why at this moment, the one who wanted distance themselves wasn't the two gunners, but Sun Xiang's Battle Mage.

Eventually, he managed to take advantage of a slip up in Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's cooperation, jumping backwards quickly to get out of trouble. Who would've expected that just as he landed from the second jump, that he would step on a small Mechanical Seeker and was immediately thrown forward by the explosion.

"F*ck! Who the hell!" Sun Xiang immediately yelled out. Currently, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were both in front of him and he could see their attacks clearly. Neither of them had used a Mechanical Seeker. Someone must be messing with him from the shadows.

As Footsteps in the Wind was pushed back by the impact of the explosion, he completed a 360 degrees turn in midair, showing Sun Xiang's immense hand speed. However, he had found nothing in his look around, landing back in range of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's close and clustered web of firepower suppression.

"Despicable!" Sun Xiang cursed at the two.

"Cursing at people just because you can't beat them? Is that what the professionalism of gods is like?" Lower Your Head and and None Dare Attack were enraged, too, immediately retorting.

"Can't beat you two? F*ck, you two really are shameless," Sun

Xiang yelled.

"Die!" The two girls attacked even more furiously. Footsteps in the Wind was no longer in the control of Sun Xiang after being blasted by Mechanical Seeker, and despite his fury, he was put to an end by the two girls.

"What kind of person, really!" Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack weren’t delighted upon defeating their opponent, but were rather just angry.

"Me!" Yet someone actually answered them. The two were shocked, only to see a Brawler throw a fistful of sand over. The two subconsciously turned their views to avoid it, only to see a string of system announcements.

"Not good!" The two yelled simultaneously.

Chapter 910: Now I Can Be At Ease

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack turned around hastily. At the same time, they each threw out a Grenade towards where Footsteps in the Wind had just died. The dropped stockings should be there. Those guys who suddenly popped up must be moving towards that position to pick up the stockings.

Two gunshots followed, and the two grenades exploded while still in midair. An automatic pistol in a Mechanic's hand let out wisps of smoke. That Mechanic put away his pistol and quickly collected all of the stockings on the ground.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were shocked. The distance between the two sides wasn't far. It could even be considered close, but when the two threw out their Grenades simultaneously, both Grenades were blasted apart by the Mechanic.

Even if automatic pistols had the highest attack speed among all the guns, shooting down two grenades in succession during such a short amount of time definitely wasn't a feat a normal player could accomplish. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were both gunners. When they considered if they could do it, they weren't a hundred percent confident. However, this person didn't stop after shooting the two Grenades and picked up the stockings. Everything had been calculated.

Mechanic!

The mechanical box hanging around this character's waist revealed his class. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack immediately thought of one name: Xiao Shiqin.

If that player was a God, then those precise attacks wouldn't too surprising. However, the name above the Mechanic's head clearly showed that he wasn't Xiao Shiqin.

When they saw the Brawler standing next to him, they immediately recalled a certain duo.

This duo was the other two-player team besides them. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack hadn't thought much of this team, but both were two-player teams, so with neither side having any stockings, the scoreboard placed them next to each other regardless. When they checked the rankings, they had an impression of the names of these two insignificant characters. They looked at their names more closely. Weren't these two that duo?

It had only taken an instant for Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack to go from shock to recognizing those two players, but the extraordinary hand speed of those two players showed. The stockings dropped by Footsteps in the Wind had actually been picked clean in an instant.

The number of stockings dropped wasn't small because a string of system notifications appeared. It wasn't something that could be counted at just a glance.

Those two players picked up the stockings and ran like the wind. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack weren’t willing to let the matter drop and repeatedly fired their guns at the two.

"Wow! How awesome!" Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack didn’t know who said those words because the two were running and hiding. The two quickly checked the rankings to see how many stockings those two players had picked up.

8!

Sun Xiang’s Footsteps in the Wind had carried half of Team Excellent Era’s stockings, but he was caught by an ambush from Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack. He was still waiting angrily to revive. When he looked at the string of system notifications, he noticed that his stockings hadn’t picked up by those two gunners.

"They’re together!" Sun Xiang explained furiously to his teammates. If losing those stockings were painful, then losing those stockings in front of his teammates was clearly a hundred times more painful to him.

"First, those two Sharpshooters challenged me directly, then the other two hiding in the dark stole the stockings." Sun Xiang gnashed his teeth.

"Too despicable." The other Excellent Era players sighed. As for whether or not they were sincere, only they themselves really knew.

Xiao Shiqin refused to comment. He checked the names of those two players from the system announcements and searched for them on the team rankings. Then, he realized: "I say, they might be orioles lurking from behind!"

"Orioles lurking from behind?"

"Look." Xiao Shiqin explained patiently to Sun Xiang, "Those eight stockings were picked clean by those two. Even if the two sides made some sort of agreement, in that instant, those two became hostile."

"They really are despicable!" Sun Xiang shouted.

"Since the stockings are all on those two, then it makes taking them back that much easier for us." Xiao Shiqin said, "Do you have the coordinates for where you fought with them?"

"Oh, I have it." Sun Xiang wasn't completely stupid.

"Head out." Xiao Shiqin called out to everyone. After knowing the coordinates, they had a rough idea of where those two might be. Xiao Shiqin and the others split up and began searching for Ye Xiu's and Steamed Bun's whereabouts. As for Sun Xiang's Footsteps in the Wind, after twenty seconds, he revived and rushed furiously towards that area.

A battle was taking place in that area. With two gunners

participating, the place was filled with smoke. Under the pursuit of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had no way of escaping cleanly. They could only go back and fight. Mechanics and Summoners had quite a few similarities, but also a few differences. Mechanics had the long-range control capabilities of Summoners as well as powerful individual strength. After all, many of the mechanical tools used were to strengthen the Mechanic, unlike Summoners who completely relied on summons to battle. Mechanics were a class with many different playing styles. With skills such as Mechanical Punch and Drill Attack, their close combat abilities were also quite impressive.

However, Ye Xiu's Listened Promise didn't go and practice his taijutsu against those two Sharpshooters. He used the traditional Mechanic playing style, using long-ranged mechanical tools to attack his opponents, while frequently using Rotor Wings and Rocket Propellor to move faster.

Not long afterwards, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack began realizing the severity of the situation. The other side was no less skilled than they were. The two had yet to recover from their battle with Sun Xiang. Now, they had come across two skilled enemies. An evenly matched battle would end up in their loss. What's worse was that they couldn't suppress the enemy Mechanic. In fact, his playstyle of spamming Airdrops and Mechanical Seekers was extremely annoying. In addition, that Brawler was no joke either. All sorts of sudden and dirty tricks like Bricks, Molotov Cocktail, Inject Poison came up, making it difficult to defend against.

"Let's retreat first!" After the two talked to each other for a bit, they made this decision, unlike the vast majority of players who

refused to give up because they had nothing to lose. For this ambitious duo, dying and then waiting to revive was fatal to their leaderboard rankings. A target with eight stockings had appeared in their line of sight. If they died, they would need to search for them again. How could that be so easy?

They couldn’t beat them, so they withdrew. The two felt like that would be very easy. They didn’t have any stockings, while the other two had eight stockings on them.

The two immediately relaxed their attacks, intentionally leaving gaps. If they retreated, the two didn’t need to run away in a hurry. The other side had no need to fight with them, so if they left some openings to let the other side escape, it should be more than enough.

Who would have thought that as soon as an opening appeared, not only did the other side not retreat, they treated this opening as a huge mistake.

"They’re crazy!!"

The two were shocked at their opponents’ abnormal decision. This opening left them with no retreat. Now their opponents had grasped this opportunity and turned it into a match point.

"Haha, having learned the mistakes from those before me, I think it’s more reliable to just send you back to the revival point." Ye Xiu said. His Mechanic Listened Promise had charged at them full force under the protection of the Air Drops and Mechanical Seeker. This

was the craziest form of attack for Mechanics. They stopped becoming control characters like Summoners, turning their own body into weapons instead and entering combat along with other tools.

Drill Attack!

Listened Promise waved his left hand and attached a machine from his mechanical box onto his arm. Then, his drill bit spun rapidly. His character also shot forward rapidly.

It was an attack from three sides. Steamed Bun's Rain had come to pincer them as well. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were beaten up. One was caught by the Air Drop's explosion. The other was Strangled by Steamed Bun. Then, Listened Promise's Mechanical Punch struck. Blood flew out incessantly. Following afterwards, Rain used the Level 75 Brawler skill, Street Riot. Lower Your Head wanted to rescue her partner and nearly got caught up in the attack too. Without any way out, she could only do her best.

Lower Your Head directly closed in, attacking while using Sharpshooter taijutsu skills.

"Gun Fu! Not bad!" Ye Xiu praised in astonishment. Gun Fu wasn't the name of a skill, rather it was when a Sharpshooter engaged in taijutsu and didn't only rely on taijutsu, but also blended in Sharpshooter gun attacks as well.

This playstyle didn't sound very complex, but in reality, combining gun arts and taijutsu together to engage in melee range,

yet able to produce such high DPS was absolutely a pro level already. When normal players tried, they could at best increase their damage output by a few percent.

When Lower Your Head's Gun Fu came out, Ye Xiu could tell with a few glances that it was quite impressive. This girl certainly possessed the skills to be a pro.

"But it's still a bit lacking!"

His Mechanic, Listened Promise, suddenly sprouted Rotor Wings and flew high into the air. Not waiting for Lower Your Head to retaliate, he fell back down. This escape and attack, rise and fall, disrupted Lower Your Head's rhythm. It wasn't a serious mess up, but for Ye Xiu, it was more than enough. When Listened Promise landed back down again, under the cover of a Grenade, he stealthily threw a Mechanical Seeker robot onto the ground.

Mechanical Seeker's damage wasn't very high, but it had a low cooldown. Mechanics would practically maintain one or even two to three Mechanical Seekers throughout the entire battle. But Lower Your Head didn't notice it and continued firing at Listened Promise.

Explosion. Gunfire……

Neither side retreated and began fighting to the death. However, Ye Xiu had only started trading blows after disrupting Lower Your Head's rhythm. What's more, his Listened Promise had more health. How could he lose?

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack finally fell. The were gloomy and sullen after their deaths, especially when they heard the other side express his gratitude after killing them: "Now I can finally be at ease....."

Chapter 911: Very Bold

Now I can be at ease...

After hearing these words, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had to admit, these too were much more bold than they had originally thought. They hadn't run off, and instead risked losing their eight stockings in order to hunt down and wipe out two people without stockings. This wasn't something that normal players would do.

To be blunt, normal players wouldn't have this type of confidence in their abilities, and their mistake was viewing these two as normal players. Would people who came in a pair to a team competition lack confidence?

The two were sent to the revival point as they thought about this and the second second countdown for revival began ticking.

"As I expected, you came."

Yet before the two had the time to do anything, a voice rang out. They turned their views, and immediately saw a person they had seen not too long ago: Footsteps in the Wind.

They had been killed in around the same area, so it wasn't unusual that they would be sent to the same revival point. However, it had been over a minute since Footsteps in the Wind had been killed, but this guy was still waiting here. If it wasn't that he had died many times and accumulated a longer revival time,

then he had to have been waiting here just for them, and his words pointed to the latter.

"No way," Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were immediately disdainful.

Waiting at the revival point meant that he wasn't after stockings anymore. Did this guy seem to actually be waiting here just to take revenge for killing him just now? He was a god of Glory in the pro circle, yet still acted so pettily?

"I'm waiting here just to confirm something," Sun Xiang said in delight.

"It seems like you two and the other two really aren't working together, as expected," Sun Xiang continued.

"You don't say." Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack rolled their eyes. Some things that others needed to think about were simple and obvious to them, so they weren't at all impressed by Sun Xiang's triumphant attitude.

"That's not a very good attitude to have," Sun Xiang seemed to not have anything better to do. "Because I might just decide at have you two stay here for another 40 seconds."

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were really depressed. Their personalities wouldn't allow them to take this lying down. So what if it prevented them from getting stockings? It was just an

event reward, not something they absolutely needed to have. Yet for the two of them, this was something very important, something they had to compete for.

That's because they were using this event as a staircase to fame. Their records yesterday were very impressive, but if they slipped up a lot on the second day, they would be something good that didn't last*.

Having been pushed to a double zero by Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion in the last round, they were already fated to be incapable of achieving the same glory they had achieved yesterday. In the current round, they unluckily met a strong opponent again. If they ended up with a nil again, then they would only be able to get a third of yesterday's score today. This would definitely affect the impression that powerhouses had of them and that was something they didn't want.

When it came to this, the two were very rational. They didn't want another blank for this round.

"What do you want?" Lower Your Head asked, while keeping an eye on the time. If their negotiation went badly, they wanted to be able to grab an advantage in taking the initiative. Footsteps in the Wind definitely didn't have the countdown, so he could only count it down himself. It wasn't possible for him to get it exactly, so they could grab the upperhand using this detail.

"Good, that sort of tone is much better, hahahaha," Sun Xiang said, having Footsteps in the Wind turn and leave. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were both stunned. This idiot was

superficial enough just to waste time here because of their tone of voice?

By the time the 20 second countdown was over, Footsteps in the Wind was long gone. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack ran in the same direction as Footsteps in the Wind, still disdainful towards the god.

They wouldn't be so bold this time, because it was a fight between three sides. If they struck first, then it would give the third party an opening to take down both them and the second party. However, among these three sides, there was a side that held an absolute advantage over the others. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's duo had fought Sun Xiang to a standstill. If the entirety of Excellent Era gathered together, the two would have to admit that they couldn't take on such a powerhouse, no matter how confident they were in their abilities.

Being direct wasn't going to yield any results. They had known this from the start and that was why they had stayed silent and hidden for so long, waiting until Sun Xiang's Footsteps in the Wind was alone to strike. Now, they needed another similar chance. The best chance they had was to strike at the other pair was right after they had managed to make a narrow escape from Excellent Era.

Don't die too quickly…

The two rushed forth as they kept an eye out for system announcements, afraid that a string of announcements of stockings being claimed would jump out.

"We haven’t found them here."

"They aren’t here."

"They aren’t here, either."

In Excellent Era’s group, Xiao Shiqin received a string of reports from the others. Their entire team had split up, including the Cleric, to find the two person group as soon as possible. They weren’t afraid of other normal players. Currently, they were only running around, not battling. Even if they were alone, they would still be fine.

"They’re not anywhere there..." Including Xiao Shiqin himself, there were four people searching and spreading out in a spiral. This was the most they could manage with four people. Yet, they still hadn’t found anything. Was it that their targets were just that lucky, or... that they were prepared for a search like this?

It had now been a full minute since Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had revived. That meant that it had been over a minute since the two had finished their battle and began to run for their lives. The two’s movements should be within the current manageable range of their search. However, if another minute passed, the four of them wouldn’t be able to keep up with the range of movement they had...

Sun Xiang’s Footsteps in the Wind didn’t wait at the revival point just out of idiocy like Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had

thought. The reason he waited there was to get a better grasp of their timing. With a more clear grasp of their timing, they could better calculate the distance in which the two could have travelled. This way, their search would be more effective. Now that they had the exact timing, they had a better grasp of their target's range of movement as well. It was just that they didn't have enough time to arrange a search in a more specific area. Now that their spiral formation wasn't yielding any results either, they would have to increase their range to continue.

An increase in the area searched without a change in manpower meant that there was more room for their targets to run and a higher chance to successfully escape. Should they continue like this or…

Xiao Shiqin fell into deep thought. The everchanging pro league battlefield had long since created a habit of making split-second decisions in him. His contemplation only lasted three seconds before he came to a decision.

Circle back inwards!

This was the message Xiao Shiqin sent to the other three. The three who received this were stunned for a moment. They had already been prepared to expand their search outwards, but now they were going to cut back inwards? Having obtained the exact time that their targets had to run, they could calculate their approximate distance from the center; they just didn't know the direction, so that's why they were moving outwards in a spiral.

Based on the amount of time, their targets were already outside

of the range of their spiral formation, given that they had run in a straight line. If they shrunk their range instead of pushing outwards, wasn't that just turning their back on their opponents?

"Let's take a risk; they might not not moved at all!" Xiao Shiqin then sent such a message.

The three were stunned.

If their targets never moved, then if they continued in their spiral formation, they would only get further and further. However, someone who dared to linger with eight stockings on them had to have guts of steel!

The three were surprised even as they followed Xiao Shiqin's orders, beginning to shrink their formation inwards. As the perimeter of their spiral shrunk, the area did as well. Even if they couldn't prevent it, they could still be certain of the direction of any character that escaped this spiral. However, this time, Excellent Era's team found that they might be able to finish this battle inside their formation. Their circling inwards eventually revealed two figures to them.

Mechanic Listened Promise and Brawler Rain had come. These two really hadn't left; they really hadn't moved from their original place at all.

The original place was referring to the center of their formation. Of course, it wasn't that precise. It ended up that they were closer to Excellent Era's Striker, Shen Jian.

"I’m going to engage them. You guys hurry," Shen Jian sent into the party chat.

"Have you found them already?" The first one to reply in excitement was Sun Xiang who had yet to arrive.

"Go!" Xiao Shiqin didn’t hesitate. At this point, their opponents would definitely have seen them if they weren’t asleep. There was no point in hiding anymore. Sending the closest person up to stall for time was the optimal solution.

Shen Jian’s Striker moved quickly and jumped forward to block the two escapees.

"I really can’t help but praise you two. You really have guts," Shen Jian said as he sent a thumbs up emoji.

"Being praised by you... feels really weird..." His opponent said with a chuckle.

Shen Jian startled in front of his computer. This voice, this tone, wasn’t this that guy?

Just in this moment of shock, Shen Jian was Bricked.

"Holy crap! How did that hit?" Steamed Bun didn’t seem happy to have managed to hit the other so accurately with a brick, evidently

shocked at how easily the brick managed to hit its target. Shen Jian quickly came back to the present, having been bricked, was glad that the brick had hit his face, so he wasn't dizzied. Seeing the Brawler Rain closing in and attempting to take advantage of the situation, his figure blurred as he sent an Emperor's Fist right at the attacker.

"Ah! He suddenly got stronger!" Steamed Bun knew that this skill was powerful and yelled as he dodged.

Boom!

The suddenly stronger Striker was swallowed up by smoke. Ye Xiu had long since used a skill when talking. Shen Jian's attention had been solely focused on Steamed Bun after his moment of absent-mindedness. He was distracted, and Ye Xiu managed to get in a frontal sneak attack. A Hand Grenade arrived with a bang, and then an Air Compressor was thrown out and with a ping, the poor Striker was blasted into the distance like the uncorking of a champagne bottle.

"Tsk tsk, leaving so soon!" Steamed Bun was rather disappointed.

"Let's go, too!" Ye Xiu called out, immediately getting the hell out of there.

Chapter 912: No Hurry to Run Away

"What's going on?" The Excellent Era players were collectively alarmed. Wasn't he supposed to be blocking him? Why was he the one sent flying? Xiao Shiqin wasn't at the correct angle, but who could be more familiar with a Mechanic than him? He immediately deduced that Shen Jian had been blown away by an Air Compressor.

"It's Ye Qiu!" Shen Jian typed out while his character was still flying through the air.

"Ye Qiu!" Everyone was astonished. What a coincidence! To think they would actually bump into him.

"Steady!" As soon as Xiao Shiqin heard Ye Qiu's name, he became even more calm. It was too easy for Excellent Era to lose their cool when facing Ye Qiu. It was a huge problem for the current team, no, the entire club. Just look at Shen Jian. As soon as he met Ye Qiu face to face, he had been sent flying. How could that happen to a pro player? He had clearly been distracted for a moment when he discovered that he was facing Ye Qiu. As a result, Xiao Shiqin reminded himself that he must stay calm if he encountered Ye Qiu.

He was just about to give another command and was about instinctively order them to stop him, but Xiao Shiqin was afraid that his teammates wouldn't be able to keep their calm, so he changed it to steady.

"Ye Qiu! Hurry up and stop him!"

Xiao Shiqin may not have given the command to stop Ye Qiu, but Sun Xiang did it on his behalf. Sun Xiang was still on his way over from the revival point, but as soon as he heard Ye QIu's name, he hated how he didn't have eight Teleports, so he could arrive instantly.

"There's no hurry. Let's take it slowly." Xiao Shiqin hastily said.

"Don't let him escape!" Sun Xiang continued to shout.

On Excellent Era's side, apart from Shen Jian's Striker, there was Zhang Jiaxin's Cleric and Wang Zhe's Sharpshooter. Along with Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, the four had surrounded Ye Qiu. It was just that Shen Jian's Striker was a bit closer. Once Shen Jian's Striker was sent flying, the formation seemed to widen instantly. Xiao Shiqin and the other two quickly contracted their encirclement. After Shen Jian's Striker fell to the ground, he teched it with a Quick Recover and quickly jumped away.

Air Compressor had a very powerful Blow Away effect, but its damage wasn't high. Shen Jian pulled himself together and prepared to block Ye Qiu. It turned out that he didn't need to worry. Ye Xiu's Mechanic and that Brawler had already pounced on him.

"This is..." Shen Jian said he was going to block them, but when he took a look at his opponents, was that still classified as blocking? The other side had come to kill him!

Seeing the other three's positions, fighting a 1v2 for a short while couldn't be avoided. Shen Jian originally had confidence in dragging out the 1v2 long enough for his teammates to arrive, but after knowing that one of the two was Ye Qiu, he immediately became nervous.

Can I do it?

Shen Jian was already doubting himself.

When Xiao Shiqin saw the actions of the other side, he immediately understood their intentions. The other side weren't set on escaping. If they could kill off Shen Jian's Striker in the passing, they wouldn't mind doing so.

Shen Jian had stockings on him. Their team's strength was more than enough to sweep the field for these event quests, so unlike normal player teams that needed to concern themselves with either pooling their stockings onto one person or splitting their stockings evenly among everyone, it didn't matter who picked up the stockings. Their final stocking count was all that mattered.

So at this moment, Xiao Shiqin was certain that Shen Jian had stockings. He had no impression of how many stockings Shen Jian had. The other side wasn't in a hurry to run and planned on attacking Shen Jian. Their goal was obviously those stockings on him.

"Too bold!" Xiao Shiqin thought to himself. Shen Jian was a pro player and part of the main roster for a powerhouse like Excellent

Era. Even if he lost, it wouldn't be too quick. Surviving until the three rushed over to rescue him should be a very easy task. He wasn't going to die in a few seconds like a normal player, right?

In the end, Xiao Shiqin wasn't able to understand the emotions tumbling around in Shen Jian's heart. He had undying faith. Now, trouble had come and their first exchange shocked Shen Jian.

Slide Kick?!

Ye Xiu's Mechanic, Listened Promise, had initiated with a Slide Kick. Shen Jian couldn't understand. Slide Kick was a gunner skill pre-job advancement. All four classes could learn it, but Mechanics usually used it as a movement skill or to widen the distance between themselves and their opponents, but using it to initiate a fight and close the distance? He had never heard of it being used in such a way! He was a Striker, an extremely powerful class in close quarters. Mechanics had some level of close combat capabilities, but compared to a Striker, it was too illogical, no?

Ye Xiu was very experienced facing Strikers. In the Glory scene, if he claimed to be second in terms of experience, no one would claim first. How could he not understand such obvious reasoning?

So was this a trap?

Was this a new playstyle?

Or perhaps he was being looked down on?

Shen Jian thought too much. By the time he finished thinking, Ye Xiu's Mechanic, Listened Promise, had slid to his Striker's feet. Ye Xiu tossed a Mechanical Seeker robot from his mechanical box and it landed by his Striker's feet like a brick. The seeker part of the skill was completely ignored. Ye Xiu directly had it explode on the Striker.

Bang!

Shen Jian's Striker staggered from the explosion. Mechanical Seeker's power wasn't too great. Whether it could knock the target down depended on the situation. With his Striker standing firmly on the ground, it wasn't enough to sweep him off his feet.

But Ye Xiu's attacks didn't stop there. His Mechanic, Listened Promise, raised his hands and followed up with a Machine Punch. Two gun shots followed. The combo finally begun.

Shen Jian's brain was still whirring!

What's this? It seemed like Ye Qiu's Mechanic was using a Gun Martial Arts style? But a Mechanic's close combat skills weren't entirely close combat. They weren't as agile as Sharpshooters. Could a Mechanic perform this maneuver as well? The chain of attacks just now wasn't very tight?

Shen Jian was still a pro player. He subconsciously made some deductions. He saw that Ye Xiu's combo wasn't linked very well and instinctively moved. His Striker used a beautiful Whirlwind

Kick. Sure enough, it directly interrupted the enemy Mechanic's combo.

Shen Jian followed up with a Reinforced Iron Bones. This skill increased his defense immensely for 20 seconds, but usually, Strikers liked to use it when they planned on bursting the opponent. Because apart from increasing his defense, it also gave him 20 seconds of Super Armor.

With Super Armor, his character couldn't be knocked down, knocked into the air, knocked back, interrupted, and so on. Under these conditions, he could forcefully lengthen his combo. It had a vulgar nickname: Rape!

In reality, Super Armor wasn't invincible. The character would be immune to status effects like being knocked down and being knocked into the air, but the character would still take the full amount of damage. As a result, the nickname, Rape, was only one way of looking at it. Sometimes, the character would lose more health than the opponent. However, the Striker skill Reinforced Iron Bones also increased his defense immensely and gave a Super Armor effect. It made this class' Rape much more valiant. Every Striker liked to establish their dominance by using this skill.

Shen Jiang obviously didn't have any intention of showing off and immediately felt that using Rape to fight a Mechanic for a short amount of time couldn't be a better choice.

After he activated Reinforced Iron Bones and made his first strike, Shen Jian suddenly saw his character's health deplete. The Super Armor had suddenly disappeared and changed into a Bleed

effect.

Inject Poison!

Shen Jian reacted.

The other side had a Brawler! This despicable and dirty class had a skill like Inject Poison that could negate an opponent’s Super Armor.

He had just activated Reinforced Iron Bones, and yet the other side immediately used Inject Poison. If the other side hadn’t planned for this to happen, who would believe it?

The Super Armor was gone, but the increased defense from Reinforced Iron Bones was still there. However, his character no longer had the aura of a tyrant. His punch had been intercepted and nullified by an Airdrop. The enemy Mechanic and Brawler began attacking him full-force. Shen Jian struggled to survive. He saw an opportunity and used Cloud Body to escape, when he suddenly heard Ye Qiu’s voice: "Steamed Bun, move one step to the left."

Move one step to the left?

Such a detailed command was rarely seen on a pro team. If a battle had to be micromanaged to the smallest detail, then apart from the commander, was everyone else just a marionette?

Shen Jian was astonished! It was only after his Striker started moving with Cloud Body did he realize what that one step had done.

Steamed Bun's Brawler moved one step to the left and just happened to bump into his Cloud Body……

Strangle!

Steamed Bun had been prepared and took advantage of it. His Brawler, Rain, lifted his head and reached out to grip the enemy Striker's throat. The Striker's Cloud Body was blocked and was interrupted. Shen Jian had been a step slower, but his timing had been prompt. His Striker leaped backwards to dodge this Strangle. He raised his fists, ready to counterattack, but then he heard Ye Qiu shout: "Emperor's Fist! Don't go forward!"

Shen Jian's heart turned ice-cold. His hand stiffened over his keyboard and he didn't know what to do because in that instant, he was just about to use Emperor's Fist.

He knows me too well!

Shen Jian's Striker turned his head and saw this unfamiliar Mechanic character. In his head, an image of Ye Qiu and his smiling face appeared.

His habits. His weaknesses. This former captain knew it like the back of his hand. It wasn't an understanding that could be gained

from watching lots of his past fights and fighting against him. It was an understanding slowly formed from playing together for large amounts of time.

"Toss sand towards me!"

"Have Inject Poison ready!"

"Tiger Flips the Mountain!"

Ye Xiu's pointers were mostly to warn Steamed Bun. He didn't need to tell himself. His actions also took advantage of Shen Jian's habits and weaknesses. A pro player of the main roster of a powerhouse was completely suppressed. Xiao Shiqin had thought that it was impossible for Shen Jian to die as quickly as a normal player, but it was currently happening. What's more, it was faster than just Ye Xiu fighting a normal player 1v1 because this was a 2v1.

"Shen Jian died!" A notification telling them that one of their teammates had died. The other players on Excellent Era had no choice but to accept reality. Afterwards, three system announcements popped up.

"Not bad! Three stockings. It looks like our efforts weren't in vain!" Ye Xiu nodded his head and called out to Steamed Bun. This time, they were running away for real.

The phrase used here, 霸王硬上弓, means forcefully doing something; nowadays, the meaning of the word has extended to mean rape (forcefully conducting a sexual act). The author described the nickname as vulgar, so it's been translated as rape.

The origin behind the phrase is pretty interesting. Legends have it that Xiang Yu the Conqueror was someone with boundless strength. Back then, people had to use their feet to draw the bowstring back, but he could forcefully draw the bowstring with just his arms. Hence, 霸王硬上弓 literally means Xiang Yu forcefully pulls back the bowstring.

Chapter 913: To Chase or To Not Chase

Without Shen Jian in the way, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun easily escaped. However, they had now completely revealed their identities to Excellent Era's team members. They had escaped, but escaping cleanly wouldn't be so easy now. Xiao Shiqin and the other two team members were following closely behind. At the same time, Sun Xiang knew which direction they were heading in and was trying to intercept them.

The map had a total of 20 stockings. Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had stolen 11. They instantly became the leaders on the scoreboard. Such an abrupt rise left even other players feeling satisfied.

Of course, those other players didn't have any pressure on them, so if they really did meet anyone with stockings, they would certainly give it a try no matter how powerful you were.

Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun kept on running. Xiao Shiqin's group chased after them from behind. As they ran, they ran into quite a few other players.

These players saw that not one of these characters didn't belong to a team with stockings. Who cares if you were running at the front or the rear. Whoever was easier to target would be the target!

As a result, there were people attacking Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, and there were people attacking Excellent Era as well. Normal players didn't pose a threat to either side, but neither side was willing to stop to fight with these normal players. As Ye Xiu and

Steamed Bun ran and Xiao Shiqin's group chased, more and more players gradually joined the pack. All of them had been stumbled upon along the way. Even if they failed to stop them, they didn't give up and continued to give chase.

Normal players couldn't control their stamina as well as pro players could. As everyone continued to run, the normal players started to lag behind. However, there would always be other people making up for them. This situation lasted for a full five minutes.

The route that Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun and took was too random. If not, Xiao Shiqin would have predicted their pathing and sent people to intercept them. However, the two were running too carefreely. If they themselves didn't know where they were going, how could anyone hope to predict their pathing?

Unable to make any predictions, Xiao Shiqin could only update Sun Xiang and Shen Jian with their coordinates. With their coordinates constantly changing and without conforming to any sort of patterns, having Sun Xiang and Shen Jian catch up to them became quite troublesome. In the end, they just became two other pursuers chasing from different directions.

It was true that Xiao Shiqin's group couldn't anticipate their targets' movements, but such randomness made it a competition of speed. Normal players who couldn't control their stamina well might fall behind, but for pro players, no one was much better than the other in terms of fundamental skills. As a result, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun couldn't throw off Xiao Shiqin's group, which was why it ended up with everyone running around for five

minutes. Then, a system announcement appeared. The 20th stocking had been picked up.

Who knew which corner of the map the 20th stocking had been spawned, so that no one was able to find it until now, but after someone had picked it up, all 20 stockings had an owner. The system finally began counting down from 120 seconds.

According to Excellent Era's usual strategy, if their total stocking count didn't meet their expectations, they would drop a stocking to stall for time, but in their current situation, Xiao Shiqin suddenly felt his heart thump.

No one would stop them from dropping a stocking, but the problem was that they had so many players following them. If they dropped one, someone from behind would pick it up immediately. Very little time would be bought. As for dropping it and then picking it up, this apparent hole in the rules had been specially patched. The system would not fall for that trap.

"This is also Ye Qiu's scheme!" Xiao Shiqin felt annoyed. No wonder the other side just kept running aimlessly. It seemed like they were already satisfied with their 11 stockings this round and agreed to let the round end here. They might approve, but Excellent Era didn't! Could they catch up to those two in two minutes?

Let alone whether they could catch up, even if they did, Xiao Shiqin wasn't confident they could end the battle within the 2 minute time limit.

"Should I find somewhere to drop a stocking?" His teammate Zhang Jiaxin understood their current predicament.

"It seems like that's all we can do." Xiao Shiqin said.

"Okay, I'll be going then." Zhang Jiaxin said. His Cleric immediately split off from the other two and ran somewhere else.

The players following behind saw their targets split up. Which side had the stockings? According to common sense, that Cleric was charging out unaccompanied, so he probably wasn't the one protecting the stockings, but what if this was a reverse psychology trap?

This question was never-ending loop. They were still running and didn't have time to think carefully. Some believed it to be a reverse psychology trap, while others didn't. Thus, the group of players split up as well.

Those who continued chasing Xiao Shiqin's group did so mainly because Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun were too grandiose. So as long as they still had the stamina, they would keep following closely. Zhang Jiaxin's goal was to find a place with no one around to drop his stocking. He obviously wouldn't be so honorable. He lured a bunch of pursuers and ran around. After running along a route that he had planned, he quickly lost his pursuers.

After Zhang Jiaxin ditched his pursuers, he needed to find a remote area to throw his stocking. He couldn't throw it

somewhere easy to find. Otherwise, the amount of time gained from it would be pointless.

Zhang Jiaxin hadn’t thrown his stocking yet, when Xiao Shiqin suddenly noticed something strange.

Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun had been running quite vulgarly the entire time, but they seemed to have suddenly switched strategies.

"Watch them closely!" XIao Shiqin reminded Wang Ze, but when he gave his warning, he suddenly noticed that something wasn’t right!

Excellent Era originally had five players. After running around for so long, right now weren’t he and Wang Ze the only ones who would be fighting against Ye Qiu?

"Wait. This isn’t good!" Xiao Shiqin thought of this and immediately called out to Wang Ze.

"What’s wrong?" Wang Ze’s Sharpshooter had been moving with Aerial Fire the entire time. Rhythm was important for Aerial Fire, and he had been maintaining it perfectly. He felt rather sad to stop when Xiao Shiqin told him to wait.

"This isn’t right." Xiao Shiqin said.

"What’s not right?" Wang Ze said.

"If we continue chasing, it'll be troublesome." Xiao Shiqin was quite confident in his deduction. With Ye Qiu's boldness, would he be afraid to fight a 2v2?

Seeing how Shen Jian had instantly died, Ye Xiu's existence must cause a huge amount of psychological pressure on Excellent Era's players. They were two people, but in Ye Qiu's eyes, they might only be 1.5? Or 1.2?

"But if we don't chase them, we'll be caught." Wang Ze looked ahead. Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun were gradually getting farther away. When he looked behind, the various teams were gradually getting closer.

After being reminded, Xiao Shiqin also looked back and suddenly felt his head hurt.

In their eyes, there was Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun, but in the other players' eyes, their targets were him and Wang Ze. If they continued chasing, they might fall into Ye Qiu's trap. If they didn't chase, they needed to figure out some way to escape from the other players. Even though the pressure wasn't huge, it would require time. During that time, did Ye Qiu have anything in store for them? Even if he didn't, that amount of time would be enough for him to disappear without a trace.

The more difficult the choice, the quicker the choice needed to be made. Xiao Shiqin knew this and after a quick calculation, he finally clenched his teeth: "Continue chasing!"

Ye Qiu wasn’t the only one with courage. Xiao Shiqin was able to lead a mediocre team like Team Thunderclap to the playoffs every season. Their journey definitely hadn’t been through extreme caution. Their achievements had come with risks that paid off. And the person who made these risky decisions under huge pressure was Xiao Shiqin.

In comparison, how could this trifling event count for anything?

XIao Shiqin made his decision. He no longer hesitated. His Mechanic could also use Aerial Fire, but now that he knew that he might run into trouble with Ye Qiu up ahead, Aerial Fire would be too reckless considering that he would only be able to see behind him and would be unable to pay attention to what was up ahead. Xiao Shiqin immediately began running with his two legs. On the other hand, Wang Ze continued to move using Aerial Fire. With Xiao Shiqin, they would have their eyes on the front and back, allowing them to see the entire situation.

"Around the corner! Adjust your line of sight."

Up ahead, Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun went around a corner and temporarily disappeared from everyone’s view. It was a commonly used tactic to get away from pursuers, but the two had rarely done so previously. If Xiao Shiqin had known they would do this, then he could observe the surrounding terrain and make some predictions. Right now, he still needed to guess a bit, but more importantly, he needed to be on guard.

The awareness by the two players were on point. When they turned the corner, they were prepared. Both characters held their guns out. Wang Ze's Sharpshooter opened the path and leaped out. It didn't matter if there were no opponents or not, he fired randomly. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic flew into the air with Rotor Wing and coordinated with Wang Ze, but when they rushed out, they saw the other side hadn't set up an ambush. They were still running for their lives! This was also the advantage of using the terrain to escape. The ones escaping didn't need to worry about ambushes, but the ones chasing needed to. Guarding against an ambush wasted time. They might be guarding, but there might be nothing to guard against.

Xiao Shiqin wasn't inflexible. He glanced at the terrain. Their Excellent Era had come here before. This Master Tactician was very keen with the terrain and quickly outlined what choices the other side could make. He quickly notified the team. If the others could quickly come to the rescue, that would be the way of the king. If they could fight a 5v2, why fight a 2v2? This was Xiao Shiqin's philosophy. If he had to fight on equal terms, then the mediocre Team Thunderclaps wouldn't have been able to obtain such accomplishments.

"Got it!" Sun Xiang, Shen Jian, and even Zhang Jiaxin, who had gone to drop a stocking, replied in the team chat.

Just when Xiao Shiqin's heart steadied. Two figures leaped out from the right. Those two figures didn't give a greeting and directly attacked them.

Lower Your Head.

None Dare Attack!

Chapter 914: I'm a Cicada, You're a Shell

Where did these two come from?

A coincidence? Or Ye Qiu’s schemes?

Xiao Shiqin was more willing to believe the latter, because this timing was just too serendipitous. These two barriers had suddenly appeared just at the most inconvenient time.

Of course, Xiao Shiqin wasn’t afraid of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, it was just that they had no time to waste on these two sockless characters. If it were any other normal players, Excellent Era’s players could easily break through them and leave them in the dust, but these two?

The two sides opened fire.

Four characters were all gunners, three Sharpshooters, one Mechanic. Their battle were a slew of flying bullets, almost like a shooter game. The two sides never closed in on each other, running as they shot at each other. Xiao Shiqin wanted to shake them off as soon as possible, fighting a battle of skills as he talked.

"We have six pairs of stockings here, and those two have eleven," Xiao Shiqin began bluntly, striking at the core of the argument. The distribution of stockings was like so: eleven were with Ye Xiu’s group, while Xiao Shqin and Wang Ze’s characters had six between them. Zhang Jiaxing’s Cleric had two and another normal player team had one. Six versus eleven. The difference in significance was

obvious.

"But they're always two people, while you guys are rarely two," Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack also replied with numbers.

The usual Excellent Era was a five man team. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack didn't dare to face them head on, so they wanted to take the chance to snatch these stockings first. Ye Qiu's pair would always only be a pair, so it wouldn't make a difference when they decided to face off.

Hearing this, Xiao Shiqin could be certain that this wasn't a coincidence. They came to take advantage of Xiao Shiqin and Wang Ze's lack of backup. Someone was definitely feeding them information, and this person was definitely Ye Qiu. This was because only they, being at the lead, could predict where they were going and could give an accurate report.

"We've fallen into one of his schemes!" Xiao Shiqin was depressed.

"What should we do?" Wang Ze asked.

"Don't get surrounded, let's fight as we run!" Xiao Shiqin turned his view to see a following of normal players in pursuit, and instantly felt even more helpless. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were onto them and the players in pursuit were, too. Ye Qiu was a cicada shedding its shell, and treated them like that shell.

"Wang Ze and I have been blocked. We're leaving Ye Qiu up to you guys," Xiao Shiqin informed the others helplessly in the party chat. After having several exchanges with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, Xiao Shiqin had a good understanding of their skill level. If they really wanted to break through their barricade, it wasn't like they didn't have a chance. However, if these two charged over, they wouldn't be able to easily wipe out or shake them off. If they continued being pursued by these two and Ye Qiu decided to turn around to catch them in a tricky situation, then they probably wouldn't survive. To be truthful, Xiao Shiqin believed that this was exactly what Ye Qiu was planning.

So, Xiao Shiqin suppressed his impulsive side, fighting and retreating alongside Wang Ze and decisively not pursuing Ye Qiu.

Ye Xiu had, of course, taken note of Xiao Shqin's decision, and was a little disappointed. Xiao Shiqin's guess was correct. Their ultimate goal was still to take the chance to steal stockings. Just as the last pieces were falling into place, Xiao Shqin didn't fall for it. Ye Xiu was disappointed, but this was Xiao Shiqin. If it were Sun Xiang, then he probably had long since charged forth and gotten pincered by the four.

Xiao Shiqin's pair didn't actively chase after them and Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun didn't go back for them either. This was because there were still other players over there and if they returned, everyone's attention would swap over to them, the characters with eleven pairs of stockings. So they could only watch and wait.

Sun Xiang and Shen Jian had gotten to the places Xiao Shiqin had given them in accordance with his calculations. They looked

around their prepared areas, but never saws Ye Xiu's pair.

"They don't seem to be on this path," Shen Jian reported.

"They haven't come here, either," Sun Xiang added.

This guy!

Xiao Shiqin felt cold sweat beading on his head again, making a quick 360 degree turn to have a quick look at his surroundings.

Ye Qiu hadn't retreated along his calculated paths. Was it because there weren't any more pursuers so they didn't need to use the same path, or was it because these two had already turned back and were lying in wait for a chance to strike?

Considering Ye Xiu's bold and gutsy personality, Xiao Shiqin guessed that it was the latter. He probably wanted to snatch benefits from their tricky situation and see if there was a chance to steal the stockings....

"Gather here!" Xiao Shiqin hurriedly told the others. They couldn't continue on like this. They needed to gather their forces again.

"Be careful, Ye Qiu might be nearby," Xiao Shiqin warned Wang Ze.

Gunshots thundered.

The battle between Xiao Shiqin and Lower Your Head's pairs was still going on strong. The two sides fired even as they continued to move at a high pace. At first, Xiao Shqin's pathing and movement was used to shake off some of their pursuers. However, needing to be careful of Ye Qiu, they could use these players to their advantage, so Xiao Shiqin wasn't impatient to shake them off, but let them hang around.

"As expected, this guy is a tricky opponent!" Ye Xiu, who really was lying in wait nearby, saw through Xiao Shiqin's plan, but had no way of dealing with it. In a situation where each side understood what situation the other feared, they could only watch and wait for an opportunity to strike. There was no other solution.

By this time, Zhang Jiaxing had long since thrown down a stocking and ended the 120 second countdown. This was all part of Xiao Shiqin's orders. He quickly headed back over.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, who had always been outstanding, experienced the strength of pro players again, not long after their beating at Ye Xiu's hands in the last round.

Xiao Shqin and Wang Ze didn't have any trouble keeping up with the sisters even with the harassment of the many normal players. Eventually, Excellent Era's players Sun Xiang, Shen Jian, and Zhang Jiaxing arrived one by one. Among them, Sun Xiang was the most vicious. His charge over had knocked down multiple normal players. When he got closer to Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, he had even less hesitation.

The strength of Excellent Era's party, having gathered, multiplied instantly. With a few rounds of vicious offense, the normal players started dropping like flies. Their number advantage seemed nonexistent. If this continued, they would be wiped out.

If it wasn't for the fact that barefooted people didn't fear wearing shoes, the players would've dispersed a long time ago. Despite this, many people got bored of this meaningless task after a while of being beat.

They couldn't be bothered to continue, but they couldn't be bothered to leave either, so they all became spectators. In the end, the only people who were still fighting were Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack.

These two girls didn't dare to face the five members of Excellent Era on their own, so they had resorted to following and hiding. Now, in this situation, they didn't really want to continue and began to break away.

Excellent Era couldn't be arsed to continue engaging the two either. It was only Sun Xiang who took a few steps in pursuit, but that was when a system announcement popped up: Player Listened Promise has collected the 10th Christmas Stocking.

"F*ck!" Zhang Jiaxing almost spat blood.

After dropping the stocking, he had hurried over. Yet it wasn't

long before someone came to collect it and, how coincidental, it was Ye Qiu.

Seeing the 120 second countdown start up again, Xiao Shiqin realized something and was immediately frustrated enough to slap his own forehead.

"I was careless! Again," Xiao Shiqin lamented.

"What?" the others weren't as quick to understand.

"Ye Qiu and the others were nearby, so they saw you coming back," Xiao Shiqin directed his words at Zhang Jiaxing.

"Ah?" Zhang Jiaxing was stunned, seeming to have realized something, but not completely.

"With a clear understanding of which direction you came from, and then combining that with the timing of when you dropping the stocking, they can calculate where you dropped it." Xiao Shiqin said.

"F*ck!" Zhang Jiaxing really did look like he was about to cough blood this time, his entire face had gone red.

"Quickly, drop another stocking," Sun Xiang said. He wasn't at all satisfied with their current score, especially after realizing that they were up against Ye Qiu this round. He didn't want to lose, not at all.

There were still players watching them from the sidelines. Though they didn’t come to bother them anymore, they couldn’t throw the stocking here. Excellent Era’s party quickly left. 120 seconds wasn’t very long, but not very short either, so the group moved quickly, shaking off normal players even more quickly, but they soon realized that they had two unshakeable tails.

Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack.

"These two, we should’ve dealt with them just now!" Sun Xiang said in anger. This time he was very on point. Excellent Era really shouldn’t have let them go just like that. However, if they wanted to settle this now, they wouldn’t have enough time. If they really wanted to deal with them, they would have to throw away a stocking to stop the countdown. Even so, these two were Sharpshooters and didn’t need to close in to fight. It would be easier for them to run. It was easier to run away and these two weren’t bad tactically. If they ended up splitting up, that wouldn’t be good.

"You two, I’m sure you understand the current situation," rules were dead, but people weren’t. Under the situation in which they couldn’t change the rules, they could only talk it out. The two sides were ten body units apart, yelling to be heard. Xiao Shiqn began to discuss things loudly with the two. "If we don’t throw down a sock this time around, this round will end quickly, but your current actions make me doubt that you’ll let us!"

"If we don’t, are you willing to accept defeat?" Lower Your Head yelled back, voice clear and crisp. Just from the voice, it seemed

like this was a pretty lady.

"We, at least, still have seven pairs, but you have none. I doubt you'll be willing to accept that, right?" Xiao Shiqin asked.

Refers to a chengyu meaning a crafty escape, about the cicada escaping from its shell, with the cicada as the escapee and the shell as the situation it escaped from

As in those who had nothing to lose didn't fear the chance to get something

Chapter 915: An Expert

"Do you think we can accept just letting you free to steal stockings?" Lower Your Head replied, "Or do you plan to say that you'll share a portion of your stockings with us if we cooperate?"

Going by Lower Your Head's tone, it was clear that she didn't believe that they would do this. As for Xiao Shiqin, was unable to respond due to their tone. While on the battlefield, he had no trouble using deceiving and cunning tactics against his opponent, but for something like this, he found it hard to make false promises.

As for using stockings to bribe the two? Too little, and they wouldn't think it was worth it; too many, then why would they still need to go after Ye Qiu? There was no way to implement this realistically, yet Xiao Shiqin couldn't bring himself to deceive them either.

So under the watchful gaze of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, Excellent Era's members completed a trade, distributing some stockings to those without anyone before the five split up, each going their own way.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were flummoxed. Their opponent had five people who all had stockings. Any of them could throw away one. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were only two. They would have no way of being certain who would drop the stocking.

But after a moment of thought, the two suddenly realized: under these circumstances, did they have to be certain of who would drop the stocking?

The two Sharpshooters quickly picked someone and chased after them together.

While Excellent Era operating as a group, the two could only watch on. Now that they split up voluntarily, would Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack still feel pressure engaging them as a pair? Of course not! These two even dared to challenge Sun Xiang. How could the two be afraid of challenging the members of Excellent Era as individuals?

They set their sights on Shen Jian. The two knew that the person they were onto would definitely not drop stockings, but this time they were aiming to steal the stockings and not just pick up what scraps they could get.

At first, they were afraid that their opponents might see through their intentions, feigning hesitation in an attempt to hide their plans, but when they saw Excellent Era split up, they suddenly started to put all their effort into chasing them down.

The countdown was still ticking. Excellent Era seemed to have decided to wait till the last second to throw a stocking away. However, the two sisters didn’t care anymore. They only cared if they could catch up to Shen Jian and strike.

Their control of stamina usage was equally skilled. At first, the

two sisters had a hard time making up for the distance they had gained while hiding their intentions and pretending to have been shaken off. It was a good thing that they hadn't let Shen Jian out of their sight. The two Sharpshooters combined Aerial Fire with Swift Run, pulling closer to their target. By now, the countdown had stopped and the number of collected stockings returned to 19.

The two sisters weren't certain if it was Shen Jian's Striker that threw away the stocking, but they had a clear view of the path the Striker had gone on. If he dropped anything, it would be on this path, so long as they kept chasing, they would be fine.

Searching as they chased, they quickly confirmed that Shen Jian really hadn't dropped any stocking and the distance between the two sides shrunk significantly. Shen Jian had noticed his two tails, too, and decisively had his character come to a stop, turning to meet the two.

"As expected of a pro player, he's very confident!" To Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, it looked like this guy had confidence in fighting one on two against them, stopping to wait for them. They didn't hesitate either, raising their guns as soon as they were in range.

Bang!

Yet, the first gunshot didn't come from their chamber.

Bang! Bang! Bang bang!

The two hadn’t even begun to attack before they were attacked by repeated fire. Having experience on the battlefield, the two quickly figured out where the bullets were coming from and turned to look at each side. Xiao Shqin’s Mechanic and Wang Ze’s Sharpshooter had arrived to flank them.

Looking behind them, Sun Xiang’s Battle Mage was as bold as ever, charging forward as if he were a bullet himself. The opponent’s Cleric didn’t even position himself in a place where he could cover everyone with his healing. This was an offensive positioning, prepared to buff their own attacks.

"It’s a trap!" The two immediately realized.

It their plan, but now they realized that their opponents had long since guessed what they would do and made such an arrangement to trap them.

Where were the dropped stockings? They had no clue.

Stealing the stockings from Shen Jian? That , too, had become an impossible task. What was important was if they could escape from Excellent Era.

The answer seemed to be negative....

Five against two, a perfect trap, completely surrounded. If they still couldn’t crush two players with no pro match experience under these circumstances, then Excellent Era wouldn’t be worthy

of being called a powerhouse in the pro league.

"Don’t cause any more trouble," Xiao Shiqin said this like he was giving a piece of advice, but it sounded like a threat to the two. And then, they were sent to the nearest revival point.

The two sisters were depressed!

Excellent Era’s encirclement had completely wiped the floor with them. They had finally truly witnessed the power of pro players. However, it was because of this pro team that their future had been stained. Two consecutive stockingless rounds would make their score today look terrible, and if their efforts were viewed as just a sudden burst of luck, then their futures were in jeopardy.

"What should we do?"

"At the very least, we can’t let them get away scot-free!"

Knowing that getting a good score in this round would be exceptionally hard, the sisters were just about to give up and simply cause the others as much trouble as they could.

Thus, Ye Xiu’s Mechanic Listened Promise received a message from Lower Your Head: "Let’s work together!"

"Oh?"

"We can work together against Excellent Era, four versus five," Lower Your Head said.

"And then?" Ye Xiu asked.

"We can take their stockings first, anything else and we'll just cross that bridge when we get there," Lower Your Head replied.

"Haha, I like your 'cross that bridge when we get there'."

"Let's band together and defeat our biggest adversary first!" Lower Your Head said.

"Ok, do you know their current location?" Ye Xiu asked.

"They just left coordinate 124, 45," Lower Your Head reported.

"Hm, their current target is definitely us. So, we should find a place to set up and ambush and just lie in wait," Ye Xiu said.

"You're right."

"Then, come to 186, 151."

"See you there," Lower Your Head replied.

Near coordinates 186, 151, Lower Your Head and None Dare

Attack soon saw Mechanic Listened Promise and Brawler Rain upon arriving. They didn’t hide themselves at all, boldly standing in the open and looking around, waiting. Seeing the two rush over, the two characters turned one after the other and walked towards them.

"You’re planning an ambush here?" Lower Your Head carefully scanned the terrain. There were a set of ruins buried under the white snow. It wasn’t clear as to what they used to be, but if they dusted the snow away, they could find many scorch marks. It seemed to have been devoured up by flames, and now it was covered by snow.

"In our four man team, there are three Gunners. There’s plenty of cover here, which is good for a ranged encirclement. However, we can’t play an endurance match against Excellent Era because we don’t have any healers, so we need to find a way to scatter them and quickly deal with them individually. This terrain is much more suitable for that," Ye Xiu said.

"En..." Lower Your Head felt that what Ye Xiu had said was very reasonable, unable to find anything wrong with it.

"We can analyze the problem of their direction of approach from the coordinates you gave us just now. Their target is me, so this gives us a starting point. What they definitely know is the point where I collected the stockings that they dropped. Calculating our movements from there, your possible pathings are..."

Ye Xiu began to analyze with eloquence, bringing up a ton of coordinates and analyses. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack

listened, half lost.

"So, I think they're most likely to come from the North to this point, a little to the East, and pass through this area," Ye Xiu concluded from his mass of analyses.

"Who are you, really?" Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had long since started looking at him with shock.

"An expert," Ye Xiu replied.

"..."

"Now, we'll make the arrangements for our positioning for this ambush and the possible pathing and movements we'll force a fight. I know you two are very in sync with each other, but right now, you have to remember that we are four, so you have to think from the perspective of a four man team. You might not be able to adapt to it immediately, but do your best to overcome it. When needed, I'll warn you guys," Ye Xiu said.

"..."

After a while, they finished their tactics meetings. It wasn't too in depth, but very obviously used the terrain to its fullest. Soon enough, they all stood at their starting positions. Steamed Bun's Rain was a melee character, yet he wasn't set at the front of their formation, but lying in wait in the deepest area. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, who were never seen apart had been

separated by Ye Xiu. None Dare Attack was hidden a little deeper, while Lower Your Head was at the very outside with Ye Xiu's Listened Promise.

They each hid in their respective positions, quietly awaiting Excellent Era's players. Lower Your Head turned her view and saw Listened Promise playing with his automatic handgun. She knew this was just a repeated action done out of boredom.

One minute, two minutes, three minutes...

Time passed and, actually, in this time, stocking ownership had been changed twice, but this was all between those small normal player teams. Excellent Era still hadn't arrived.

"Hey..." Lower Your Head couldn't help but speak up, watching Listened Promise silently playing around with this repeated animation.

"What?"

"You aren't afraid of the possibility that we are tricking you into meeting us and planning to steal your stockings when we have the chance?" Lower Your Head said.

"Nope," Ye Xiu said.

"You trust us so much?" Lower Your Head asked.

"I’m don’t trust you," Ye Xiu said, "I’m just simply not afraid of you two."

Lower Your Head paused before realizing this asshole was saying that he was confident in their ability to defeat the two sisters, and that was why he wasn’t afraid that this was a scheme.

In this moment, Lower Your Head really wanted to take out her gun and just murder this guy.

Chapter 916: Ambush

Lower Your Head's cursor swayed about Listened Promise's head. It looked like her character was repeatedly aiming at him. If she clicked, even an immortal wouldn't be able to dodge at this distance.

I'll just give him a scare! It's just a game, so it's not like he would die from a headshot.

Lower Your Head agreed to deal with Excellent Era together first. She wasn't a petty person, who went back on her word. However, at this moment, she really did have these mischievous thoughts. Listened Promise didn't turn his head, but his voice could be heard: "Stop messing around. They're almost here."

"How did you know?" Lower Your Head was astonished.

"From my analysis of their search route, it's about time for them to arrive." Ye Xiu said.

"I was asking how'd you know I... was doing that....." Lower Your Head said.

"Hm? You were doing what?" Listened Promise's character turned around.

Lower Your Head felt extremely embarrassed. She realized that Ye Xiu's "Stop messing around" was just a reminder before the

battle began. She thought he had some ulterior motive and accidentally took a general comment as a personal attack.

"It’s nothing! Let’s focus!" Lower Your Head adjusted her camera. She didn’t look at Listened Promise and looked ahead.

"Make sure you’re hidden." Ye Xiu said and didn’t say anything more. His Listened Promise raised his automatic pistol and quietly stood there, paying attention to what was ahead.

Lower Your Head felt like it was the calm before a storm. When she thought of how Excellent Era had killed the two of them previously, she still had some lingering fears. The strength of a pro team wasn’t as simple as the sum of the individual players. Their team was just a temporary alliance. Let alone not having the tacit understanding and the tactical coordination of a pro team, they were even lacking a player, an irreplaceable healer class too. Thinking of the incoming challenge, Lower Your Head suddenly became somewhat nervous. Her confidence and pride had started to waver after facing a pro team.

"What are your thoughts on our chances of winning?" Lower Your Head couldn’t help but ask Ye Xiu.

"Pretty high." Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Lower Your Head said.

"Because we have more people." Ye Xiu said.

"How do we have more people!" Lower Your Head almost cried out loudly.

"Are you thinking that all five of them are moving together? I don't think so. They're probably using the most efficient way to search for us. Their plan is to split up, find the target, gather together. Then, after making ample preparations, they deal with us in one strike." Ye Xiu said.

"Uh...." Lower Your Head couldn't make any arguments. Ye Xiu's words were very logical.

"So it shouldn't be the entire team passing through here. It should just be one player maybe two. The others definitely won't be too far away though. Their searching won't be random. It will definitely be planned, so even if we have the numbers advantage, we can't be careless. If we miss this opportunity, we'll need to face their entire team." Ye Xiu's aid.

"If we face their entire team, what happens?" Lower Your Head asked.

"You two protect us and then we'll take the stockings and run. How does that sound?" Ye Xiu said.

Lower Your Head's cursor suddenly flashed to Listened Promise's head. This time, it wasn't the back of his head, but at his forehead.

"Calm down and think about it. What's important isn't your or me, but the stockings. If we can keep our stockings, we'll have the advantage. So letting us protect the stockings and escape is the smart choice. You can't expect us to just hand over our stockings to you two and sacrifice ourselves valiantly to let you two escape, right?" Ye Xiu said.

"Okay..." Lower Your Head lowered her gun. She agreed that Ye Xiu was right.

"Good. Then let's stop chatting. The other side could be here at any moment. Our voices will expose us. If you want to say anything, type it out." Ye Xiu said.

"...."

The calm before the storm continued. This time, the moment they were waiting for finally came.

A Mechanic and a Cleric stepped into this area. It was Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing. The two characters would look around from time to time, naturally to check any hiding places in their surroundings. At this moment, Lower Your Head felt a bit of admiration for this Listened Promise. His prediction was completely on point. This hiding spot was absolutely perfect too. If those two were just casually glancing around, they definitely wouldn't be found by them.

Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing were searching around, but they clearly didn't think the other side would hide so meticulously. The

two stepped closer and closer to Ye Xiu's trap. Lower Your Head had already raised her gun. All she needed to do was click to attack. But at this moment, the Mechanic suddenly stopped moving. His gaze shifted towards them.

"Attack!" Ye Xiu immediately said.

Xiao Shiqin might not have seen them, but his intuition was very sharp. His glance in this direction might just be an instinctive move, but this move was enough for him to discover their hiding place, so Ye Xiu made his decision. They stopped hiding and Lower Your Head attacked.

A gunshot broke the silence.

Lower Your Head had been waiting for this moment to come, but this sudden change made her react a half beat too slow despite Ye Xiu's warning. Her Thunder Snipe didn't achieve the desired effect. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic rolled away.

Bang!

None Dare Attack's attack closely followed. As the two attacked, they flew out and surprise attacked the enemies.

"Hm.... it's you two again....." Xiao Shiqin sounded rather helpless. As for Zhang Jiaxing, their helplessness made him irritated: "You two just never stop!"

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack didn’t answer and continued attacking.

"Did you really think we can’t deal with you?" Zhang Jiaxing was a Cleric, but his battle spirit was hoisted high like a powerful combat class. He seemed to want to lead the charge.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were sighing at Listened Promise’s plan. They had four players, but they weren’t going to come out all at once. The two of them would first attack, giving the misperception that they were the only two enemies. Then, the other two would wait for a good opportunity and catch the enemies off guard. It was clearly more threatening than four people swarming the enemies all together.

The two didn’t need to think too much. They just fought with their opponents like they usually did. Listened Promise and Rain would seize the right opportunity on their own accord.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had backup, so facing these two, they attacked with confidence. Zhang Jiaxing was like a combat class in the beginning. His Cleric looked like he was about to charge at them, but their assault made him shrink back. He cursed, "These two girls are really fierce," and then obediently took the role of a support class.

Xiao Shiqin was obviously the target of his support. Xiao Shiqin’s Mechanic shouldered the responsibility of attacking the two Sharpshooters. He seemed to have lost his cool and directly pounced on None Dare Attack.

Only a highly skilled player would understand that Xiao Shiqin's simple and crude move was to close the distance with None Dare Attack and to pull apart the distance from Lower Your Head. It was a method of disrupting the coordination between the two's pincer attack.

However, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had extraordinary synergy with each other. This move didn't seem to be too useful. Their attacks continued to suppress their target. But Xiao Shiqin had set his heart on completing the charge. He had a Cleric supporting him, so he could bear to take some damage. Simple and efficient. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic utilized several skills to quickly close the distance with None Dare Attack.

Both sides were gunners, and the two entered a close quarter fight. In this situation, the duo couldn't coordinate with each other. As a result, Lower Your Head might as well turn her gun away. She let None Dare Attack fight with Xiao Shiqin, while she fired at Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric.

Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric was left on his own, but just because he was alone didn't mean he would be thrashed around, even more so since he was a pro player. He might be inferior in trading blows with the opponent, but self-preservation was a compulsory course for healers.

Seeing that Lower Your Head had made this decision, Zhang Jiaxing sneered. She felt like that girl didn't know the difference between heaven and earth. Did she think she could instantly kill him and then calmly help her partner face Xiao Shiqin?

"It looks like I should let you witness the power of a Cleric!" Zhang Jiaxing shouted. His Cleric raised his staff. Then, he heard an explosion. His character's camera shook violently. Zhang Jiaxing knew that he had been ambushed, but Lower Your Head was in front of him. Where did that attack come from? Zhang Jiaxing immediately steadied himself, when he heard a voice from behind.

"Healers can have murderous intent, but a healer with too heavy of a murderous intent cannot be a good healer."

Zhang Jiaxing turned his head.

It wasn't his character that turned around, but Zhang Jiaxing himself.

There was no one behind him!

He instantly snapped back to reality. Ye Qiu wasn't in their team anymore. There was no way he could be standing behind him preaching.

By the time he turned his head around, his character's camera shook extremely violently. In the amount of time it took for him to turn his head, he had suffered even fiercer attacks. While stabilizing his camera, Zhang Jiaxing found his attacker: Listened Promise. Mechanic, Listened Promise. Ye Qiu's alternate account. So it really is him!

"Why are you here!" Zhang Jiaxing shouted. This time, his character directly flew out. It wasn’t just Listened Promise here, but Rain as well. The Brawler, Rain, had dashed to him and started beating him wildly.

Xiao Shiqin had noticed the situation. The first thing he did wasn’t to rescue Zhang Jiaxing, but to use a skill to get away from None Dare Attack and Aerial Fire backwards. Seeing this scene, it looked like Xiao Shiqin was planning on leaving Zhang Jiaxing to die, while he ran away for his life.

Lower Your Head and the others were very surprised by it, but it was within Ye Xiu’s expectations. His Listened Promise had already moved ahead to block him.

The actual phrase (山雨欲来风满楼) is the wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountains. I didn't want to write that all out because it sounds kind of weird to have the adjective being like 75% of the sentence, so I just translated it something close. It works a lot better in Chinese.

Chapter 917: Finished

Xiao Shqin had his Mechanic slow to a stop in helplessness. Ye Xiu's guess was correct. They currently had six pairs of stockings, all here with him and Zhang Jiaxing. The reason for this was to prevent the others, who were all searching for Ye Qiu alone, from being destroyed two on one and losing all their stockings.

As for Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing, they were together, decreasing the ground they could cover, but this was to protect the stockings. If the two met Ye Qiu, it would be two on two, giving them a chance. Even if they couldn't win, their reinforcements would've probably arrived before they were defeated.

However, Xiao Shiqin had never considered the possibility that Ye Qiu would have allied with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack. Two against four wasn't much different from two against one. Even if these four weren't as in sync as their pair, Ye Xiu's tactical arrangements made up for it. Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing had thought they were only dealing with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, so when Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun's characters jumped out, the two Excellent Era players suddenly seemed full of openings. Xiao Shiqin decisively decided to retreat, instantly realizing that there was no chance they would be able to last until reinforcements came. Yet that was when Ye Xiu saw through their intentions and Mechanic Listened Promise blocked their retreat, declared them to have all the stockings and struck without hesitation.

They couldn't run anymore. They could only stall for time.

Xiao Shiqin's reaction was also extremely fast. His character immediately backed away, rushing to help Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric.

As a Cleric that wasn't very good at directly fighting, going against two characters alone and getting closed in on meant nothing good, even for a pro player. Zhang Jiaxing was struggling and straining to hold on, his energy from before when he said he was going to let go and fight Lower Your Head completely gone.

Xiao Shiqin wanted to come and help, but how could Ye Xiu let him go so easily? Listened Promise used skills to rush forth as None Dare Attack provided ranged support.

"Which do we kill first?" Lower Your Head asked loudly. She felt like focusing fire to get rid of one first was important at a time like this.

"Mechanic, the stockings are all on him," Ye Xiu yelled back.

So shameless!

This thought popped into Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's head at the same time. It, of course, wasn't because Ye Xiu had told them to kill the one with the stockings first, but because when Ye Xiu yelled this, he also rapidly typed a message to the two: Cleric.

If it wasn't for how Ye Xiu had told them to keep a lookout for messages during the battle beforehand, the two wouldn't have the

time to bother checking. So even checking messages was a part of his scheme?

The decision to focus fire on the Mechanic made Xiao Shiqin unwilling to drop his guard even a little. Yet, just as he geared himself up for a fight, the four characters all turned to fire their skills at Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric.

A trap!

Xiao Shiqin quickly recovered from his surprise. Though falling for this trap was a thing of the moment, even the smallest of details could mean the difference between victory and defeat in a match between experts. Zhang Jiaxing had thought he could have a break upon hearing that the opponent planned to focus their fire on Xiao Shiqin. He would've never have guessed that what was coming was a round of even more furious attacks. He didn't have any chance to use any skills that needed casting, throwing out all the instant emergency skills. However, could that possibly be enough to defend against the focused fire of four different characters? By the time Xiao Shiqin had recovered, his Mechanic's help wasn't enough anymore. He wanted to run, but Ye Qiu's Listened Promise was always standing at just the right angle to prevent that.

The call for reinforcements had long been sent, but watching the current progression of events, it didn't seem like they would last till reinforcements came. Xiao Shiqin was relatively clear on where the other members of Excellent Era were. Estimating the time it would take them to arrive, his mood fell further.

Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric passed away just like that, and, as expected, there were no stockings on him. Ye xIu had been correct. Clerics easily became the target of focused fire and, in a pair, it was harder to keep a Cleric protected, so the Stockings were better given to the other person. Under the support of a Cleric, breaking through an encirclement or surviving danger was much more manageable.

It was unfortunate that this was only if the two sides had a more equal number of people. With the current two versus four, this wouldn't work. There were more than enough people to suppress the Cleric, and their stronger torrent of skills could immediately destroy a character.

With the Cleric down, Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic was still struggling to hold on. He had wanted to find a chance to escape, but in this moment, Ye Xiu's team of four were practically right up against him, surrounding him. It didn't seem to matter if they were Sharpshooters or Mechanics, as if they had all become melee characters.

Xiao Shiqin wanted to cry. He didn't know what sort of agreement Ye Qiu and Lower Your Head's pair had come to, but seeing these actions, it probably wasn't a very harmonious one. They hadn't even killed him and they were already preparing to steal to snatch the stockings.

Xiao Shiqin only hated the fact that this was a game. If this was reality, he would take a pair of stockings and throw them as far as possible, possible giving him an opening to escape. Yet in the game, dropped items fell at one's feet, totally unrealistic.

However, he didn’t have any more ideas, so he could only try it out.

As he was being beaten up, Xiao Shiqin took the chance to throw out a pair of stockings.

Dropped items would end up at your feet?

This time, Xiao Shiqin didn’t even have the chance to see that happen. The stockings had just left his hand, heading towards the floor, when they were somehow collected.

"Holy crap!"

Xiao Shiqin couldn’t help but curse. He had hoped to create an opening with that! Yet it seemed like the four surrounding him probably wouldn’t have even noticed if it weren’t for the system announcements.

System Announcement, Listened Promise has obtained one pair of stockings...

"What?" Lower Your Head had obviously seen the System Announcement and cried out in surprise. Her tone was bewildered, but she quickly understood what had happened, feeling very disappointed and quickly sparing some of her attention on preparing to catch stockings.

But her thoughts were too naive.

The two sisters kept their eyes on Xiao Shiqin's health bar, awaiting that eruption of drops at the end. Yet Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun erupted first. What had erupted from them wasn't stockings, of course, but skills. AoE skills.

The two sides weren't on the same team, and you couldn't team up in the middle of an event either, so there was no immunity to damage given. They had been careful of that during the battle. In this moment, a person who threw out an AoE didn't only damage Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, but also the two sisters' Sharpshooters.

Boom!

The explosion created by Ye Xiu's Listened Promise managed to blast the two sisters to one side. It was only then that the two realized what had happened. There was no need to explain how frustrated they were. As they were blown away by the blast, their bullets all shot towards Listened Promise, but this attack wouldn't change the situation. With Listened Promise and Rain each unleashing a torrent of skills, Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic was killed and Christmas stockings fell like rain. Listened Promise walked in a circle, collecting them before they even hit the ground. The systems messages flashed like crazy.

"Let's go!"

After that, they turned and ran, not bothering with Lower Your Head's pair any longer. The two sisters wouldn't give up so easily,

running after than like crazy.

However, Ye Xiu wasn't afraid of the two, he was just on guard against Excellent Era arriving. That was what would truly be troublesome. And if Excellent Era's people came now, there wouldn't be anyone to work with them anymore. The two sisters would definitely join with Excellent Era to kill them.

It wasn't easy to shake the two girls off. What they were even more afraid of is if the two sisters joined forces with Excellent Era and reported their positions. If Excellent Era came, then that would be a whole other can of worms.

So, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun never turned to fight the two girls. They just kept running like headless flies. That way, even if Excellent Era found out their current position, they wouldn't be able to figure out their direction so they couldn't arrange a blockade. If they just ran, then the situation would be the opposite to what it had been before. So long as they didn't engage in combat, stalling for time was no problem.

What Ye Xiu was hoping for now, was that the last uncollected pair of stockings would gain an owner soon.

Currently out of the 20 pairs, Ye XIu and Steamed Bun had 18 pairs. One pair belonged to a team of normal players and another pair was the pair that Zhang Jiaxing had dropped the second time, uncollected as of yet. Quite a bit of time had passed. The more time that passed, the chance of the stockings being collected became higher. Ye Xiu was just hoping for that moment.

So, after running for about a minute, the time had finally come.

The last pair of stockings was collected by another team of normal players. With all 20 pairs collected, the countdown began, but this time Excellent Era had no way of forcing the countdown to reset.

Don’t drop them again!

At this point, Ye Xiu didn’t have any thoughts to get the two pairs of stockings. He only hoped that the round would end quickly, without any more mishaps.

Ye Xiu had planned for the worst case scenario, but what actually happened wasn’t as bad as he expected. Xiao Shiqin, seeing how Ye Qiu had taken all the stockings, could guess that the alliance over there had come to an end, and initiated contact with Lower Your Head.

However, his offer to work together was rejected by Lower Your Head.

Excellent Era was a five man team. Joining forces with them would inevitably result in a situation unfavorable to them. Yet it seemed that joining forces with Listened Promise’s pair would also result in nothing good. However, at the very least they would still hunt the two down, running after them. If it was Excellent Era, they would probably only be able to look on from afar…

Ye Xiuu obviously could think of this sort of reasoning, but for safety and stability, he planned in accordance to the worst case scenario. He and Steamed Bun continued to run and the 120 second countdown didn’t reset again. Finally, the countdown was complete and Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack gave up, helpless. They sent a message to Listened Promise, not taking the result lying down: "You’re vicious!"

"So so," Ye Xiu responded.

"You’re really skilled. Are you a pro player?" Lower Your Head’s pair finally began to suspect. Even a god like Xiao Shiqin had been beaten to the point of helplessness. This wasn’t something you could accomplish with mechanics alone.

"Er, if we’re currently fighting in the Challenger League, does that make us pros?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Challenger League? Which team?"

"Happy!"

"Which Happy?!"

"The Happy that talked to you guys before."

"You you you..."

"Yup, that’s me... So? Aren’t I amazing?" Any interest in joining our team?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Go kill yourself!!" The two sisters yelled.

Chapter 918: Challenger League Ninth Round

The two girls failed to get a single stocking two rounds in a row. They were obviously feeling terrible, and felt especially worried about whether this would affect their future. And now, after knowing that the outcome of these two rounds were closely related with Ye Qiu, the two girls couldn't keep their cool.

Going onto his alternate and pretending to be a pig to eat the tiger, what's with this guy?

The two girls complained and angrily blacklisted Ye Xiu's Lord Grim and Listened Promise. They used to have a decent impression of Listened Promise. Even though this guy stole away all the stockings in the end, they had managed to ally together and cheated a powerhouse team like Excellent Era. That feeling of satisfaction filled up the hole from acquiring zero stockings, but after finding out Listened Promise's identity, the feeling of satisfaction disappeared and what replaced it was a feeling of being cheated. Twice too!

When they checked the Christmas rankings, the two of them still stood out from the regular crowd. However, after two rounds of no stockings, they only stood out by a tiny bit now. Their stunning performance on the first day couldn't be seen at all today, especially in contrast to the leading teams.

As for Excellent Era's team, once this round passed, they were doomed to be unable to surpass the second place team of Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion.

Seeing the placings for those two, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack gnashed their teeth furiously.

The timber has already been turned into a boat though. They could no longer replicate their splendor from the first day. The two were more worried whether the various teams would notice this fall and change their minds, making them value every invite extended to them even more.

In reality, the amount of time for them to consider the offers wasn't very much.

There were only two transfer windows per year in the Glory Pro Alliance. One was the summer transfer window, lasting for the entirety of July and August. There was plenty of time, and it also took place during the transition between the previous season and the new season. Most transfers occurred during this transfer window.

The other was the winter transfer window, which took place in December.

By December, about a third of the season would be completed. Initially, when December became the winter transfer period, the Alliance didn't yet have 20 teams. There weren't as many matches in a season, so back then, December was actually the midway point of the season. As the number of teams increased, the number of matches increased, and December moved closer and closer to the beginning of the season. The Alliance once thought of moving the

winter transfer window to January, but the teams felt like having an early transfer window in December was quite nice,

because there usually wouldn't be any extremely pre-planned important transfers during this period. There were more emergency transfers. For example, if they found out that a new player transferred during the summer window didn't fit the team, a transfer might be put in place during the winter window. Or if a player suddenly got injured and couldn't continue playing for the rest of the season, the team might transfer a different player over to replace him. Then, there were also retirement announcements like when Ye Xiu had left the team. That would naturally need someone transferred over as a replacement. For teams, these types of transfers were obviously better earlier on in the season. That way, there would be more time for teams to adjust and fix any issues regarding the roster.

As a result, the discussion on whether to move the winter transfer window to January kept getting dragged on. At least, for season nine, the winter transfer window was still in December. This season's December was similar to the vast majority of winter transfer windows. Just like the winter cold, there were more teams that traded rather than bought.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack weren't pro players yet. They were transfers that could freely sign a contract, but it wasn't necessary for them to sign during the beginning of the transfer window. It was 12/26 and there were still five days left until the transfer window closed. If they wanted to join a team earlier, then they needed to make their decision within these five days. The two originally had a lot of confidence, but after fighting against Excellent Era's pro players, they realized actually fighting them

was very different than seeing them play in matches. In addition, their performance on the second day was terrible. They started to worry that delaying their decision might bring them trouble. If they didn't make their decision in this winter transfer window and waited until the summer, would they still receive this many cordial invitations?

It was time to make the decision that would affect their future!

The two girls logged out of the game and carefully considered their future as pro players.

On Ye Xiu's side, Listened Promise and Rain had only completed one round of the event. They naturally continued with their second and third round. They didn't coincidentally encounter Excellent Era these two times, but with Excellent Era not getting a single stocking in one of the rounds, their end total for today instantly became ugly to look at.

"Hahahaha, you did beautifully! Seeing your performance, I'm becoming more and more confident in our chances of victory against Team Excellent Era." Wei Chen was obviously the happiest about this outcome. Excellent Era's performance today was equivalent to having one less round. Wei Chen's only chance of losing to them was if his team also gave up on a round.

"Our first place on the team rankings is already set in stone!" Wei Chen laughed delightedly.

"It's too early to be excited, no? I'll have to trouble you to open

your eyes." Ye Xiu said.

"What? Did something happen?" Wei Chen shouted. He immediately looked at what Ye Xiu was pointing at. Ye Xiu wasn't pointing at someone else's team, but rather his own Lord Grim and Steamed Bun duo.

In the round with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, they ended up with a grand slam. Their total stocking count naturally wouldn't be low. Excellent Era's team had been thrown back, but the two of them were closely chasing Wei Chen's team. It was possible that if Wei Chen's luck was poor tomorrow and Ye Xiu's luck burst out and got another grand slam, first place might just go to the duo.

"Don't be stupid." Wei Chen said gravely, "Seeing how a grand slam rewards each player, from my understanding, the final ranking rewards will be the same. Us getting first place will get us five rewards, but you guys would only get two. I'm sure even you can do such simple arithmetic."

"Hahahaha." Ye Xiu gave a hollow laugh. He got up and looked at everyone: "Everyone go to sleep early today. Tomorrow, finish up all the quests in the morning. We still have a match tomorrow night."

"It's just an trivial match. As long as we don't forget to go, what's there to worry about?" Wei Chen objected.

Ye Xiu wasn't sure what to say towards this attitude.

Apart from Team Everlasting, Team Happy had only encountered normal teams. Against these teams, if Ye Xiu stressed how they couldn't be careless, it would be a bit overboard.

12/27 was the final day of the Christmas event and the ninth round of the Challenger League.

14218 teams had registered for the Challenger League. After eight rounds, only 40 teams remained.

The ninth round would determine the final 20 teams. These 20 teams would be split into four groups. Each group would have five teams, and these five teams would compete in a round robin style tournament. The two teams in the lead would enter the playoffs. The final winner of the playoffs would be the champions for this season's Challenger League and they would be the team entering the Pro Alliance.

Starting from these 20 teams, the Alliance would organize an offline tournament for everyone. These offline tournaments would have some sponsorship support, as well as media broadcasting. Teams that reached this point would have the qualifications to have a share of the profit.

For normal player teams, reaching this step was already considered a huge success, but having reached this step, many of them would begin scouting other teams and dream of entering the pro scene. Any team that could make it to this step certainly had some real skill. However, their strength could only pale in

comparison to a powerhouse team like Excellent Era.

The ninth round was the final test before the offline tournament. What was most important in passing this test? It was obviously luck.

No matter how outstanding you were, if you drew Excellent Era, your journey would end. However, among the 39 teams, there had to be one team, including Happy, that would draw Excellent Era, and because there were fewer teams, the chances of drawing Excellent Era at this stage was the highest.

In the end, a different team sadly drew Excellent Era. Happy could now relax. Meeting Excellent Era early and getting eliminated wouldn't happen. Because in the round robin, even if they were placed together with Excellent Era in a group, the top two teams in the group would qualify for the next round, so there would be a seat for Happy regardless.

As for meeting Excellent Era later, that would only happen in the finals at the end of the Challenger League. This conformed with Happy's hopes. What they planned naturally wouldn't be thwarted beforehand.

On 12/27, Happy cleared their Christmas quests early. Wei Chen's team ended up sitting at first place. In the individual rankings, first place actually belonged to Mo Fan's Deception. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, and Tang Rou's Soft Mist followed afterwards. Then, it was their alternates. All of them were at the very front with considerable achievements.

The rewards wouldn't be given today though. The presents from the stockings, as well as the ranking rewards, would be given out after today ended and the event concluded.

Everyone in Happy had been through this before. They wouldn't lose their cool because of these rewards. After finishing their quests, everyone began preparing for their match tonight.

Their opponents tonight was a normal player team called Team Crack. Ye Xiu had looked over a few of their matches before. After confirming it, he concluded that tonight's match shouldn't pose any problems for Team Happy. On the other hand, Team Crack was crestfallen. When they drew their opponents, they were initially cheering because they didn't meet Excellent Era, but after seeing Happy's name, their cheering stopped.

Team Happy was no longer a team that was taken lightly. They had been covered on Esports Home several times already. Even though many still believed that beating Excellent Era was beyond them, if they themselves had to go on stage, they had no choice but to admit that they had no chance against Happy.

That night, in the ninth round of the Challenger League, Team Happy beat Team Crack; their entry into the offline knockout tournament was decided.

Around the same time, Team Excellent Era also crushed their opponents and was now locked into the offline tournament as well.

"What a pity.... Wouldn’t it be great if they had been eliminated here?" Chen Guo felt regretful.

Ye Xiu smiled. Their match with Excellent Era would eventually come.

Chapter 919: Distance

On the 27th, the Christmas event came to a close. The stockings they collected could finally be exchanged for rewards, and many players were awaiting midnight on this day.

Though the members of Happy tried to maintain a good schedule, special moments like this needed special attention. With all these stockings, how could they sleep well without getting their rewards as soon as possible?

Teams, main accounts, side accounts, all with a whole stack of stockings; not even they bothered to count how many they had in total. It didn't matter, because as soon as midnight arrived, everyone brought at least two accounts and began to squeeze over to login and claim their rewards.

Nothing could compare to the traffic at a peak time like this, when the rewards would all be given out from a specified time onwards. Since there were so many people, it was inconvenient to have an NPC just for collecting rewards, so this time, the method of exchanging rewards was very simple: open the inventory, click on the stockings to use and immediately Santa Claus would whistle by on his sleigh, dropping the rewards directly into your inventory.

So, at exactly midnight, the world of Glory was full of stocking redeeming players, and the sky was filled with Santa Clauses flying across the sky or hovering there. It was a miracle that no accidents occured. Then all sorts of sparkling rewards fell from heavens. Many players subconsciously ran to catch them and snatch them,

but this was just something like a cutscene. The falling items would fall directly into the inventories of the players, so no one could steal them.

In that instant, the system messages began to flash like crazy.

In this event, 50 people would share 20 pairs of stockings, so that made it, at most, a 40% chance to win a reward, not very high, so the rewards given were pretty generous. From the TV, it could be seen that purple equipment weren't worthy of getting a TV announcement. Purple Equipment seemed to be rather common among these rewards. The only rewards that would get on TV were Orange Equipment, skill books, or very precious materials.

If even purple equipment weren't worthy of getting on TV, then it was obvious that things like experience books, money bags, blue equipment, food, and potions would meet the same fate. Even an event with generous rewards would still mostly give out trashy rewards. With only 40% of people getting rewards, most players were already eliminated. So, those who were able to obtain stockings wouldn't receive rewards that were too trashy. People who got these trashy rewards were probably loathed by lady luck.

For Happy's members, they had so many stockings, that, as they clicked on them one by one, the Santa Clauses above their heads lined up like a train, an impressive sight.

Ye Xiu and co couldn't help but count the items that popped up in their inventories. With so many rewards, they also had many more higher-grade rewards.

They didn’t notice it much, but the other players were burning with jealousy at seeing the words flash across the system messages channel.

However, from the list of their rewards, skill books seemed especially rare, and this item couldn’t be traded away, so only people who obtained it could use it. What was quite the tragedy was, even with all these stockings Happy had, they only managed to obtain four skill books, three with 20 points, and one with 10. Two were even on their side accounts, which was even more heartbreaking.

As for the things like materials, it was given to Ye Xiu to keep for now. Currently only him and Wei Chen had the ability to research materials. As for Orange equipment, those gained using stockings didn’t care what class you were, giving them out at random; the quality of the items also varied greatly. However, equipment could always be traded or sold, and everyone was all a part of the same team, the family, so a Battle Mage getting a Brawler’s equipment wasn’t a problem. They just had to trade. What was disappointing is when they obtained equipment for classes that their team didn’t have, but were still beautiful and high grade. It was depressing.

The Orange equipment Happy had gained from the stockings reinforced their strength further. However, what was more exciting was the rewards from the leaderboard placings.

These rewards weren’t random at all, just like the grand slam rewards, and high quality Orange equipment was given out according to each character’s class.

Every person who obtained equipment practically shivered with excitement. This equipment was crucial to upgrading the level of their equipment, but what was unfortunate, was that these rewards would be announced on TV, causing jealousy among players as well as revealing the equipment to their adversaries. It couldn't be used as a hidden ace like silver weapons could on the battlefield.

With this event, Happy's equipment had all seen great improvement. Before level 75 Silver equipment completely replaced level 70 Silver equipment, level 75 Orange equipment would bring a strange period of balance to the pro circle.

During this period of time, the gap between the characters of strong and weak teams would shrink greatly. This was because character strength was largely dependent on equipment and the difference between strong and weak teams relied primarily on the difference in the number of level 70 silver weaponry they had equipped. Level 75 Orange equipment was about the same level as level 70 Silver equipment. So, for many teams with level 70 Silver equipment, level 75 Orange equipment wouldn't bring much improvement to them. Instead, it was the teams with less level 70 Silver weapons that would see huge improvements from the level 75 equipment. This was how the gap between them would be closed.

It was yet unknown if any weak teams would be able to rise up during this special period of time. However, the situation in the alliance would be affected for sure, if history had anything to say about it. How would the teams fare this time? Starting from January, everything would become clear.

The competition in the Alliance still wasn't any of Happy's business. However, they certainly benefited from this special period of time. The gap between them and Excellent Era had been closed by this. As for how things would be when they met on the field, that would depend on how many pieces of level 75 Silver equipment Excellent Era would be able to create before they fought!

Ye Xiu had an in-depth understanding of Excellent Era's strength in all categories. For Silver equipment development, Excellent Era had never been weak. The account that was currently considered the strongest character, Battle God One Autumn Leaf, was the best proof.

"Who knows, maybe facing off against Excellent Era now would be best..." Ye Xiu mumbled to himself, "Now, the earliest we can face them would be in over a month's time, and by then that guy would have probably already come up with several pieces of equipment. It's been so many years, he had always been prepared. Speaking of, I do kind of want to see how One Autumn Leaf will end up after this update..."

As Excellent Era's ace, Battle God One Autumn Leaf's equipment would definitely be the most important for Excellent Era's level 75 Silver equipment upgrades. Yet, the people behind this went unseen. What players saw was the players behind the accounts, the soul they gave to those characters. As for the heroes that provided the stats, they were rarely noticed.

The person Ye Xiu thought of then was like that.

Guan Rongfei.

He was a core member of Excellent Era's tech team, a crazy Glory fan, a genius that stayed behind the scenes. Who knew how many of Excellent Era's Silver equipment had been his workmanship? With him at Excellent Era, they didn't need to worry about level 75 Silver equipment at all. He had made designs on improving the current equipment long before this update. For people like this, their current focus was probably just on researching and going through the new materials. And, with his years of experience, that wouldn't be hard. So long as he had enough materials. After all, new updates, new materials, it would all be added in accordance with the current structure of Glory; it wouldn't be completely new. A lot of things could be figured out through experience with similar things. For them, getting a hang of new additions wasn't hard.

The existence of this person limited Ye Xiu's optimism about using the update to close the gap between Happy and Excellent Era, but he wouldn't talk about this with the others for now. Everyone had amazing morale right now, so there was no need to rain on their parade so soon!

Today was the day for the players to happily collect rewards for their stockings, and also the start of a new round of matches in the pro circle.

After the three event days, the equipment of the pro teams had gone through a complete makeover, especially the weak teams.

The stockings from Ye Xiu's side had all been acquired through their own efforts, but these teams? They relied on the players in their guilds to gain more stockings.

However, players had to get used to new equipment. The pro teams had only gotten their new equipment on the day of the match. Whether they should use the equipment immediately or not was a question of much debate. Most teams chose stability, picking new equipment carefully. However, there were also many teams that had been poor for so long that suddenly obtained equipment that could be better than the strong teams, and impatiently switched their equipment out.

For example, Team Heavenly Swords.

Loulan Slash and the others were now proper pro players, very rarely coming to the game to play. In the Christmas event, their characters didn't appear at all, also relying on their guilds to accumulate rewards. Their spoils weren't bad in the end. They swapped their equipment as soon as possible, having worried about equipment for a long time coming.

Speaking of, Heavenly Swords regretted buying out Team Everlasting a little with this new update. Level 70 equipment and materials were a little outdated now, but back then Heavenly Swords had bought this, treating it like the ultimate equipment and materials treasure chest. However, this problem was an inevitable and natural occurence in the pro circle. The members of Heavenly Sword didn't really have anything they could complain about except to think themselves unfortunate. It was a good thing that even outdated equipment was an important part of

development. Without this old equipment, how would they get to the ultimate upgrade?

In this round, Team Heavenly Swords switched their equipment like someone who had just won the lottery, and their mood had influenced their performance, causing them to perform at their peak in that round. They even managed to win a flawless victory against their opponent, taking all 10 points!

For Team Heavenly Swords, this was a historical victory and their entire team was celebrating. Of course, they would also go and share this with all of their friends.

"Did you see our match!?" It was then that Lou Guanning messaged Ye Xiu excitedly.

TN Jouissance: Mistake in math here by Butterfly Blue... He says that only 40% of players, at most, can get rewards because it was 20 pairs of stockings split among 50 players, but that's only for a single round. So long as each character can play 3 or more rounds, "at most" 100% of people will be able to get a reward. "At most" assumes that a) all players play as many rounds as possible to maximize the total amount of stockings spawned and b) stockings are split among people so that as many people as possible get a pair of stockings (so on a 1:1 basis at first, one player one pair of stockings). So if in a single round the stocking to player ratio is 20:50, then only 40% would get a stocking. But in 3 or more rounds, there will be more pairs of stockings than players, because the total number of players in the event doesn't change, but the number of stockings increases threefold, making the ratio 20*3:50 = 60:50. That means more stockings than players. So, at most (meaning that each person gets one stocking), 100% of players can get rewards (since we can't over 100%), if three or more rounds are

played. But, tbh, this doesn't affect the plot, so who cares.

TLDR by NomYummi: 9 rounds - 180 stockings possible - 50 players - there are more than enough stockings for each player to get one stocking, so "at most", 100% of players will be able to get a reward

Chapter 920: A New Branch of All Stars

"Oh? How'd it go?" Ye Xiu's reply revealed that he didn't watch Heavenly Sword's match. The matches had just ended. If you watched the stream, then you would be watching the most popular match. Heavenly Sword's match didn't belong in that category.

"Perfect win!!!!" Lou Guanning couldn't suppress his excitement.

"Oh, how amazing!" Ye Xiu praised sincerely. A perfect win wasn't easy to achieve, even if it was a match between a top-tier team and a low-tier team. There were too many factors that determined the outcome of every match. Gods performing poorly or coming across unexpected accidents could always happen.

A perfect win didn't necessarily mean that team's strength was vastly superior, but there was no need to doubt that the players on the winning team performed exceptionally well.

"Hahaha, it feels too great." Lou Guanning had become more and more professional. A perfect win didn't make him believe that his team had become a salted fish that turned over. However, he still took pleasure in the boost of morale that had been brought by it.

"Keep working hard. If you can keep up that performance, you'll certainly be noticed." Ye Xiu said.

Speaking of which, because Heavenly Swords had promoted themselves too ferociously before, the expectations placed on them had been too high for them to meet. Before the season began, the

predictions placing them at tenth was the greatest proof of these expectations. However, it turned out that Heavenly Sword's actual strength was all talk and no action. They kept on wavering around the relegation zone. They weren't any different from the other new teams that joined every season. This match gave them a grand ten points. For weak teams, which found it difficult to acquire points, but easy to lose points, it was a grand victory similar to a gift of charcoal in snowy weather. Only this kind of victory fit with Heavenly Justice's initial claim.

"Yes yes, definitely. There's still something else, God!" Lou Guanning continued.

"What is it?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Next week is All Stars." Lou Guanning said.

"I know." Ye Xiu said.

Glory's All Stars Weekend took place on the first weekend of the new year. This year was no exception.

This year's All Stars will be managed by Tiny Herb. We and Tiny Herb are both in City B." Lou Guanning said.

"Yeah, I know that."

"God, are you interested in coming for a visit!" Lou Guanning came out with the main subject for this conversation.

"Oh?" Ye Xiu wasn’t sure what the intent was. Even though the 24 All Stars were the highlight of the show, in reality, it could be considered a festival for all pro players. Although no one in Heavenly Swords would be voted in as an All Star, they would certainly appear at the All Stars Weekend event.

"Hahaha, we can all have a good time together! If there’s time, you can come over to our Heavenly Swords and give us some pointers." Lou Guanning said.

"Oh, so it’s like that? Let me ask my boss!" Ye Xiu said.

"Your entire team can come. Everyone is invited!" Lou Guanning said boldly.

"Sure sure sure, thanks!" Ye Xiu wasn’t too polite because he knew that this type of invitation was a trivial matter for Lou Guanning. If he was too polite, it might seem like he was treating him as an outsider rather than a friend.

Immediately afterwards, he told everyone in Happy about this.

"All Stars? Boring." Wei Chen snorted disdainfully at first. It was mainly to show that he was once famous in the scene. An event that numerous players hoped to participate in wasn’t something he cared much about anymore.

Mo Fan was even less so. When he heard Ye Xiu talk about All

Stars, he didn’t even lift his head.

Wu Chen had never been chosen as an All Star, but he had once been a pro player, so he had participated in the All Stars before. He wasn’t too interested as a spectator. If he wanted to watch, the stream was good enough.

Qiao Yifan may be invisible, but he had been with Tiny Herb for a year. He had seen the big stage before and had also participated in the All Stars Rookie Challenge. The current him was also improving steadily. He didn’t feel too strongly about a fun event like All Stars.

As for Tang Rou, she had gpme last year and even went on stage. She had a deep impression of it, but it was just a deep impression. With Tang Rou’s personality, how could she be too interested in an event, where being showy was more important than real combat.

Then, there was Chen Guo and Steamed Bun.

Chen Guo was a standard Glory fan. If she had time, she would buy a ticket to join in on the fun. How could she refuse this kind of opportunity?

Steamed Bun? No one knew if he understood what was going on. He simply rubbed his chin and mumbled: "All Stars? That sounds exciting."

From this, it was very obvious who would be going and who

wouldn’t.

But because Chen Guo wanted to go, Tang Rou was dragged along. Chen Guo even wanted to invite Su Mucheng to come.

Excellent Era’s All Stars hadn’t been forgotten by fans, but because they were part of a relegated team, they didn’t even have the qualifications for an invitation to All Stars, let alone getting voted to participate.

Being unable to participate in the All Stars Weekend was humiliating for Excellent Era, but even if they were invited to go, Excellent Era would still feel humiliated. It was simply emphasizing their special status as a relegated team. What was the difference between that and a slap to their face?

In the end, what remained unseen was deemed clean. During All Stars, Excellent Era was completely sealed off. Su Mucheng was still a member of Excellent Era, so it wasn’t convenient for her to just leave.

As a result, Ye Xiu, Steamed Bun, Chen Guo, and Tang Rou journeyed to City B. Lou Ji resided in City T, which was fairly close to City B. He said that if he had the chance to, he would also attend.

An Wenyi actually wanted to go very badly, but as a university student, January meant that final exams were imminent. An Wenyi wasn’t a genius like Luo Ji. Practicing Glory every day used up a lot of his time. Only cramming in the following few days

would allow him to pass his exams. Without any guarantees for a pro career, how could the calm and rational An Wenyi so easily abandon his studies? As for if he could really become a pro, no one needed to worry about what choice he would make.

Happy's schedule next weekend was planned out. As for the pro scene, they began making preparations for All Stars.

The polls to select the 24 All Stars had begun. It could be found in the game and on the website. The only thing needed to vote was a Glory account card. Each card was limited to one vote. The polls had opened as soon as the opening match of the season began. The players that used their votes didn't use this opening match as a reference. Instead, they picked their All Stars based on the latter half of the previous season and the playoffs. As a result, the All Star rankings corresponded with what players thought of a pro that year.

When this year concluded and the first day of the new year began, the polls would be closed. The 24 All Stars chosen didn't need to be announced. Players could just look at the rankings and check.

Usually, the company would put out a promotional video for the 24 All Stars as fast as possible. This year was no exception. On 1/1, the first day of the new year, the promotional All Stars video quietly appeared on the Glory website. Players spread the news.

Zhou Zekai stood at first place without any contest. After Samsara became the champions last summer, everyone pretty much predicted this outcome. The popularity of Samsara's vice-

captain Jiang Botao also shot up too. He was fifth in the polls, beating out numerous Gods.

In second, third, and fourth was Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi, and Han Wenqing, the residing Gods of the three powerhouses. Their fame and popularity practically guaranteed their status as All Stars until they retired.

At sixth place was the ace player of Team Wind Howl: Tang Hao.

Tang Hao's vote count wasn't too far from the ones ahead of him, but he wasn't a champion like Jiang Botain or a fan-favorite like Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi, or Han Wenqing. As a player that had just transferred in over the summer, while Tang Hao won numerous new fans from his new team, he also lost a lot of his fans from his former team. Even so, by relying on his incredible performance in the latter half of last season, he won the support of more and more players and officially rose to the ranks of the Gods.

After Tang Hao, it was the two Master Tacticians in the Alliance, Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou and Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie. Although the two played critical roles in their teams, because the two weren't flashy attackers, their popularity was always much lower. It was similar to how the forward was always more popular than the backfielders in football.

These two were the dividing line. The votes for the All Stars after them had a lot fewer votes. Those who could become All Stars could be named Gods, but there were differences in the popularity between Gods. Among the remaining All Stars, many were frequent visitors to the All Stars, but they were still missing

something in comparison to the top Gods.

Among these All Stars, the most discussed player was Zhang Jiale.

After coming back to the Alliance a year later, this God had been affected by his year of absence. In addition, Zhang Jiale joining Team Tyranny had been extremely controversial. There were still posts talking bad about him in the forums. Zhang Jiale's popularity was greatly impacted, even if he still used the famous Spitfire, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. His popularity wasn't the same as it had been last year. He went from a top God on the rankings to the middle of the pack. However, it was only in terms of popularity. His decision to join Team Tyranny had been proved correct through the team's matches. After a year of absence, he quickly became comfortable with the competitive environment with the help of his experienced teammates. The current Zhang Jiale didn't seem to be any different from when he had retired. His decision to retire was once again criticized angrily, but it didn't affect him at all.

Amid both praise and criticism, Zhang Jiale steadily advanced forward. During the summer, Tyranny had undergone a huge transformation. The team fought together for about a year and was currently in first place. They were on their way towards having the greatest regular season in all of Glory history. They already made history with four of their players being among the 24 All Stars. This had never happened before in Glory history.

However, these four were long-time All Stars. Apart from Zhang Jiale, there was nothing new about the other three. Everyone was

more interested in the new faces among this year’s All Stars.

Chapter 921: Four New Faces

The team that brought the most new faces to the All Stars was Team Tiny Herb.

Xu Bin, transfering to Tiny Herb and now operating Deng Fusheng's Knight Angelica, had performed spectacularly in the past season. A player that always performed well had finally gained enough popularity upon entering a powerhouse team, reaching an All Star level.

Another was Gao Yingjie. The renowned young prodigy from Team Tiny Herb that grew up under careful guidance. He had missed his opportunity to receive the Best Rookie award, but after becoming a part of Tiny Herb's starting roster, was immediately elected as an All Star. The performance of this prodigy had satisfied the expectations that other people had set for him. He had performed as was expected of a core player of a team, developing the composure of a general. He was also of the same class and team as the God Wang Jiexi; the votes obtained under such circumstances were very stable.

This was because fans often gave votes to the player they supported and liked the most. Since Glory fans were usually Glory players, the classes they liked limited the players they liked to some extent.

Gao Yingjie was on the same team, and had the same class as Wang Jiexi. The votes for Tiny Herb and Witches had to be split between them. The difficulty in getting into the All Stars was higher than usual.

Lu Hanwen was also in a similar situation to Gao Yingjie.

Lu Hanwen was called the greatest discovery of the season. As the youngest pro player in Glory history, he was eye-catching from the moment he stepped onto the stage. His mechanics weren't fully developed yet, and he didn't have much experience, but his passion and energy on the field was something many Gods didn't have.

If you had experts analyzing and voting, Lu Hanwen probably wouldn't be able to enter the All Stars. However, the players that participated in the All Stars were chosen by the fans, so there was much less rational analysis. The votes didn't mean you were strong, but it represented the support and love, expectations and well-wishes you gained. Lu Hanwen had gained that from the player base, and thus became an All Star.

Another new face belonged to the new champion team's Grappler player, Lu Boyuan.

Lu Boyuan had performed amazingly in the playoffs last season, leaving a deep impression in everyone's minds. After obtaining the championships, he had naturally gained a lot of popularity. During the summer transfer market, Samsara paid a hefty sum to buy the All Star Grappler from Tiny Herb. However, at the start of the season, everyone found that Lu Boyuan was still using Samsara's account, Grappler Chaotic Cloudy Mountains, and soon they also discovered that the Silver Grappler equipment belonging to Flying Drops was now equipped to Chaotic Cloudy Mountains. Samsara didn't seem to care for the popularity of the All Star level Grappler account, Flying Drops.

This action meant the fall of an All Star account and roused hatred from the fans of Flying Drops. Chaotic Cloudy Mountains had, inevitably, lost a portion of its supporters, but no matter what, Lu Boyuan and his Chaotic Cloudy Mountains had still received enough votes to become a participating member of the All Stars, becoming the new Grappler All Star.

The aforementioned four were the new faces appearing in this season's All Stars. Apart from them, the others were all players that had participated at least once before. The players who had already gained fame had a steady fanbase, so it was rather hard for them to fall out of the rankings in a fanbased vote like this. Especially for some gods, their fans' support would be enough to bring them to this stage even if they had performed extremely poorly or barely appeared.

Out of the 24 voted in, the one in the most awkward position would be Hundred Blossom's Zou Yuan. It was already Zou Yuan's second time being voted to participate in the All Stars, but in reality, with his skill, his fame, and even his performance, he would probably never see such high popularity.

Last year, he had been voted in because of the God-level account he was using: Spitfire Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. The fans voted for his account and pushed him onto the All Stars stage. As for this time? With Zhang Jiale joining Tyranny upon his return, and then Tyranny bought Dazzling Hundred Blossoms for him, many people were seething with anger. So, throwing their votes at Zou Yuan's Blooming Blossoms became a way to vent that anger for them.

With this special circumstance, Zou Yuan was once again voted into the All Stars, but he didn't feel lucky at all. Apart from awkwardness, all he felt was still awkwardness.

Actually, the four new faces in this round's All Stars was because of a special reason.

The All Star player Deng Fusheng's retirement created an opening amongst the All Stars, but the one who made the most contribution was Excellent Era, the entire team had been relegated to the Challenger League, leaving three usually stable spots open for the taking. And, behind these empty spots, was a huge amount of ownerless votes. Deng Fusheng's votes were easily relocated, since most of his votes came from Tiny Herb fans anyways. So, all they had to do was give their votes to Xu Bin, who took Deng Fusheng's place, or another member of Tiny herb. It was a little more awkward for Excellent Era though. With the entire team out of commission, Excellent Era fans had no place to put their votes. In the end, they would just give these votes to whoever else that they liked, or their rivals who they didn't like... So,it was reasonable that eye-catching rookies like Lu Hanwen could skyrocket right into the All Stars. In this season, the number of neutral votes was a little too many.

In the end, this season became the season in which the All Stars lacked the most classes.

Glory had 24 classes, and there were 24 All Stars, what this meant was rather obvious. However, since the very first All Stars, there had never been one where all 24 classes were present. The most tragic class was the Summoner, in which there had never

been an All Star player. Comparatively speaking, the last All Stars had a rather even distribution of classes. Only Summoners and Paladins were missing, while Ghostblade and Brawler each had two All Stars.

In contrast, the current season's All Stars had 5 duplicate classes.

Li Xuan and Wu Yuce's Ghostblades were obvious, always being voted in. Apart from these two, two powerhouses Tiny Herb and Blue Rain had also made contributions, giving duplicates for Witches and Blademasters respectively.

Then there were the Brawlers, recreating the situation from last year. Tang Hao and Lin Jingyan were both voted in again, but this time Three Hits had become Tang Hao's character, and Lin Jingyan held the character Team Tyranny had built for him, Brawler Dark Thunder.

Yet, the resentment that festered between the last pair of class duplicates had a much deeper impression on people than the Brawler pair. What a coincidence that this pair had an interesting relationship with Tang Hao and Lin Jingyan, too.

This was because Tang Hao came from Hundred Blossoms, and Zhang Jiale was currently Lin Jingyan's teammate in Tyranny. Now with Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, he had returned after a year, clashing directly with his and Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' successors, Zou Yuan and Blooming Blossoms.

What would happen between them in this season's All Stars?

Those busybodies had long since become restless to know. It was unfortunate that these four could no longer go up against each other through the Rookie Challenges anymore. Whether they would face off or not, that was something no one knew.

The All Star Weekend would bring all of these pro players and accounts together, and amongst them ran all sorts of tension.

Enemies on the field, friends off the field.

This was easily said, but there weren't many who really managed to achieve it. Especially those who transferred away due to their old team's displeasure, how many of them could act as if nothing had happened when facing their old teammates?

No one would be as crude as to extend this to a PK off field, but on the field, it was normal for people to use matches to relieve this stress. And this sort of cathartic action made the matches much more interesting for the spectators.

Everyone was eager for the issue of Esports Home that was published before the start of the All Star Weekend, wanting to read up on all the drama that was hopefully about to occur. And so this year's All Star Weekend begun under the excitement and noise. Team Happy, represented by Ye Xiu, Steamed Bun, Chen Guo and Tang Rou, arrived on that day at B City.

With their plane unfortunately delayed, the four accepted Lou Guanning's escort arrangements. A car came to pick them up and took them directly to Tiny Herb's stadium. When the person

responsible for leading them inside was still trying to figure out how to actually do that, Ye Xiu had already lead them into the building, obviously familiar with it. However, when it came to finding their seats, Ye Xiu wasn't too familiar. He rarely sat in the audience seats before.

The seating that Lou Guanning had gotten them was, of course, top notch, much better than the three that Chen Guo had bought last year. Because of their delayed flight, the opening show of the All Star Weekend was over by the time they got there. The first order of business had begun already: the Rookie Challenge.

In this season, the Hologram Projection technology had been completely integrated into Glory matches. After half a season, the audience had completely gotten used to and fallen in love with this new method of viewing. The viewing quality had seen great improvement, and the ticket sales for each team's home matches had hit a new high. The All Stars were no different, also using this sort of technology.

By the time Ye Xiu's group had managed to find and sette in their seats, the first match of the Rookie Challenge was already over. The four who only cared about finding their seats didn't even know who had been fighting who.

The onstage commentator was already announcing the player for the second match.

It was the most eye-catching rookie of the season, Lu Hanwen that was up next. It had only been half a season, but this youngest-ever pro player rookie seemed to already be viewed as Best Rookie;

that was Blue Rain's Lu Hanwen.

Blue Rain and Tiny Herb were archrivals and the current season's All Stars was played on Tiny Herb's home turf, so the treatment Blue Rain players would get was evident. However, when this 14 year old pro player stood on the stage, the Tiny Herb fans weren't mean enough to boo him. The applause was a little scattered though.

The host knew that Lu Hanwen was a very popular figure of debate, so he chatted with him a little more than usual. Lu Hanwen was as open as always, saying what came to him and bringing up the mood.

It was only at the end that the host asked what everyone cared about most, "Then, Little Lu, who are you going to challenge today? Let me take a guess, is it your senior from your team, God Huang Shaotian?"

"Nope." Lu Hanwen shook his head.

"Oh, then who is it?" The host had been confident in his guess, so he was surprised upon hearing this.

That was when Lu Hanwen took the mic and turned to the pro player stands. "Tiny Herb's senior Liu Xiaobie, let's settle this once and for all!"

Chapter 922: Changed Beyond Recognition

Lu Hanwen had amazed numerous people within the first half of this season. In this year's Rookie Challenge, he had once again shocked everyone. Many people had guessed the same as the host and thought that Lu Hanwen would challenge his own tema's Huang Shaotian. It was similar to how many rookies chose to challenge the God, which they admired the most. While the event was supposed to be a challenge, perhaps it was considered more as paying respects.

But Lu Hanwen had chosen Team Tiny Herb's Liu Xiaobie. It was quite puzzling. Team Blue Rain and Team Tiny Herb were rivals, but what was the relationship between Lu Hanwen and Liu Xiaobie? Lu Hanwen's most admired Blade Master couldn't be Liu Xiaobie, right?

Or maybe he was saying that Liu Xiaobie was weak, so he called him out to get a win over him? That wasn't paying respects to your favorite senior player!

No one knew that the relationship between the two had started during the summer break. At that time, the two were helping out their respective guilds and encountered each other while fighting for wild bosses. Lu Hanwen had been using his Flowing Cloud account. However, he wasn't become an official pro player for Team Blue Rain yet, which had astonished Liu Xiaobie.

As for Liu Xiaobie, even though he was using an alternate account, who else but a pro player had such skill? Once Lu Hanwen started fighting with him, it wasn't hard to guess that he was Liu

Xiaobie.

Lu Hanwen had won that match in the end. His win was somewhat despicable though. It had originally been a 1v1 duel. After all of their mana had been depleted, they fought using only normal attacks, but Lu Hanwen relied on a Cleric's "Prayer Wish" to restore some of his mana and cleanly finished off Liu Xiaobie, who only had a sliver of health left.

In theory, it should be Liu Xiaobie challenging Lu Hanwen for revenge, but this kid was the one to challenge Liu Xiaobie instead, giving him another chance to pay back his debt. This move surprised even those who knew about their relationship.

There were a few people who knew about their duel in the game. The players from Team Blue Rain and Team Tiny Herb didn't need to be mentioned, but there was also Team Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie and Lin Jingyan who had been present, as well as Ye Xiu's group; they had watched the duel that day.

Liu Xiaobie left his seat on Team Tiny Herb's side after being picked and went up onto the stage. The question for why so and so was picked as an opponent was a question asked thousands of times before, but this time, everyone truly wanted Lu Hanwen to give an explanation.

"Ha, it's nothing really. I just really want to beat senior Liu Xiaobie." Lu Hanwen's reply didn't explain anything.

"Oh? Why do you say that?" The host pestered him.

"Because every time I've fought with him before were never true duels." Lu Hanwen said.

Over half of the season had passed. Team Tiny Herb and Team Blue Rain had certainly fought against each other at least once. In that match, did Lu Hanwen ever clash with Liu Xiaobie? Many people had thought of this question when he picked Liu Xiaobie, but no one had a definite answer. This time, everyone felt like it must have been something that had happened off stage, so they tried even harder to recall whatever they could. However, no one thought that it was because of what happened in the game.

Seeing that Liu Xiaobie had gone on stage, the host obviously had to go greet him. After some small talk, the main subject came: "Would the two of you like us to provide the characters?"

"No need?" Lu Hanwen said.

Liu Xiaobie shrugged his shoulder, indicating that he didn't care.

The host was very excited. From an audience's point of view, they wanted to see the players use their own characters to fight each other.

"Then let's welcome the contestants for the second match of the Rookie Challenge: the youngest player in the history of Glory, Team Blue Rain's Lu Hanwen, versus the hand speed master Team Tiny Herb's Liu Xiaobie!!" The host shouted loudly and both players went to their respective seats on stage.

They swiped their cards and picked the map. The host quickly went off stage. The projection of the map burst to life. Neither of the two wasted any time, and the match soon began.

Liu Xiaobie's Blade Master, Flying Sword, and Lu Hanwen's Blade Master, Flowing Cloud appeared on the opposite corners of the map.

Don't look at how Lu Hanwen's Flowing Cloud was younger, in terms of equipment, Flowing Cloud was no weaker than Flying Sword because Team Blue Rain had the strongest Blade Master, Sword Saint, Troubling Rain. This meant that their team had the best tools to create Blade Master equipment. Under this kind of environment, building, another Trouble Rain wasn't impossible to create. However, on Team Tiny Herb, Blade Masters weren't their core class, so the resources invested into it were slightly less.

Even so, Flying Sword was only a tad bit weaker than the most powerful Blade Master in all of Glory. Flying Sword was one of the top Blade Masters too. His Silver weapon, Chasing Spirit, had a fairly normal name, but it was a top-tier Silver weapon reputed as one of the Ten Famed Swords of Glory. It had a 5% chance of hitting twice. No one but Team Tiny Herb knew about this weapon's special effect and why the weapon was called Chasing Spirit.

Lu Hanwen's Flowing Cloud had a total of ten pieces of Silver equipment. This number was equal to the Sword Saint's Troubling Rain. His Silver weapon, Flame Shadow, was a greatsword with extremely high attack and extremely long range, but those were all

general trends for greatswords. The unique part of Flame Shadow was its weapon effect. It had a 5% chance of adding a Flame Shadow buff to the attack, increasing the damage dealt by 30%. It was a buff that purely increased the damage inflicted.

The commentator quickly introduced the two Blade Master characters. After the countdown ended, the two rushed forward. The commentator had yet to finish talking about the two characters when the two came across each other. The commentator had no choice but to stop reading aloud information on the two characters and began commentating the fight.

Because it didn't appear to be a match of paying respects to the senior, the winner of the match was important. This type of confrontation naturally drew in a lot of attention.

Liu Xiaobie didn't hold back facing this rookie. He wanted to strike first, taking advantage of his Chasing Spirit's higher attack speed. Flowing Cloud with his greatsword didn't wait to take a beating. Practically at the same time that Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword closed in with Triple Slash, a Sword Slash was drawn in a circle.

When greatsword users Sword Slashed, their attack wasn't as fast, but their range was greater. Flying Sword was enveloped by this Sword Slash, but the hand speed expert Liu Xiaobie didn't back down and ate the strike head on. His Flying Sword's Triple Slash struck diagonally, and his character deviated to the right, narrowly dodging the greatsword's sword wind. Following afterwards, Flying Sword threw out the third strike of Triple Slash and closed in on Flowing Cloud.

Ding!

The ringing sound of two swords clashing echoed. Lu Hanwen quickly reacted. Flowing Cloud retracted his sword and raised it up to Guard, blocking Flying Sword's third strike.....

This ringing sound seemed to be the opening to the prologue. Following afterwards, ding ding sounds exploded repeatedly like popping popcorn. The two characters revolved around each other and kept on attacking each other. Their initiations and retreats happened in an instant. The battle had only just begun and the intensity had already reached its peak. The battle of hand speeds was just getting started.

The applause was like thunder. This type of confrontation showed the incredible technical skills of the two players, which was extremely fun for normal players to watch. It was what the audience liked to see the most. Everyone wanted to be a hand speed expert. They placed nearly as much importance on hand speed as they did on the other elements required to be considered an expert. On one hand, hand speed was without a doubt a fundamental aspect of an expert, but it was also because an expert with high hand speed could produce this kind of a beautiful fight!

The two were extremely fast with their attacks. Some players couldn't even keep up with what was going on. The screens suspended in the center of the stadium kept on playing slow-mos of their confrontation. Sword light flew and blood splashed wildly. The health of the two characters slid down, and gradually, a slight divide could be seen. Flying Sword's health was just a tiny bit

higher than Flowing Cloud's.

Liu Xiaobie was considered an extremely talented player. This talent referred to his hand speed. This was analogous to an athlete, who was born with an extremely outstanding body. These innate constitutions couldn't be achieved through blood and sweat. This was pure talent.

People always had high hopes on talented people. Liu Xiaobie was one of these talents. Although Team Tiny Herb already had three All Stars before he came, they still placed a lot of importance on him. However, his performance during his two seasons of play were rather disappointing. He had talent, but he was improving too slowly to match his talent. In comparison, among the players who joined the Alliance that same year, two had become Gods.

One was Sun Xiang, who had come out of a lower-tier team. He swept away all those in his path and became a God. Then, he transferred to Excellent Era and inherited the Battle God One Autumn Leaf, becoming the successor of the first God of Glory, Ye Qiu.

The other was Tang Hao, who was similar to Liu Xiaobie. He had come from Team Hundred Blossoms, which managed to reach the finals three times. No one dared to underestimate such a formidable team. Tang Hao didn't have such attention-grabbing talent like Liu Xiaobie. He also didn't show any incredible performances in his first rookie year. Just when he was considered an average pro player, he grasped Zhang Jiale's retirement; while Team Hundred Blossoms had lost their core player, he quickly made an impression on everyone's minds through his incredible

play. He transferred to Team Wind Howl this season, inheriting the number one Brawler, Demon Subduer, and becoming the core of the team. With the support of strong teammates, it was all uphill from there.

On the other hand, Liu Xiaobie had come from a top-tier champion team like Team Tiny Herb and had enviable talent, but after two seasons in the pro scene, apart from people having a deep impression of his astonishing absolute hand speed, he didn't leave any lasting, spectacular plays.

No one was was willing to just be mediocre. This summer, Liu Xiaobie was determined to improve. While others went to relax, he continued to work hard and even went on a crusade in the game. Hard work always paid off. This season, Liu Xiaobie's performance was outstanding. In the All Star rankings, he was 25th place, but he was less than a hundred votes away from Zou Yuan in 24th place.

As for Zou Yuan getting into All Stars, that was because of his special background and the special circumstances. He was supposed to have a spot at the All Stars.

Lu Hanwen was a new rising star this season. The two had already fought against each other over the summer. This time, in the All Star rankings, Lu Hanwen placed 18th. For a rookie, it was an incredible achievement.

But would that make Liu Xiaobie think he was inferior to him?

No way!

The outcome could only be known after asking the sword in his hands!

Chapter 923: Liu Xiaobie's Goal

The two sides were fighting against each other furiously when Lu Hanwen's Flowing Clouds suddenly leapt up, turning and drawing his sword. The afterimage of the sword flashed past in a blur, and the dust and mud around Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword was thrown up before the attack even landed.

Falling Blossom Form!

The skill that Lu Hanwen was using was, impressively, one of the new Blade Master skills added after the level 75 update.

It had only been a month since the update had been released. If you counted the time it took to get a character to level 75, then it had been an even shorter time since these techniques had been learned. Normal players would impatiently start spamming these skills wherever they could, but pro players couldn't be so careless. It was ok if they tried it out when playing for fun, but in an official match, who would dare to use a skill they weren't totally familiar with? A skill that they hadn't fully integrated into their playstyle was a skill that could become a fatal opening.

The All Star Weekend obviously didn't count as an official match, and the wins and loses there didn't truly count. That was why in the last two matches, the participants had all used the new skills, and seemed rather familiar with them too. Pro players adjusted to these new additions and changes much faster than normal players would. However, since they wanted a full understanding of the skill and how to use it, they would be more careful about it.

For a match that was more a show than anything, it was fine to use a few unfamiliar or incomplete styles and techniques. However, Lu Hanwen and Liu Xiaobie's match felt a little different from the moment Lu Hanwen had sent out that challenge. After all, who would say "Let's settle this once and for all" in the Rookie Challenges?

As expected, the two gave it their all once they started, like they were fighting in an official pro match, and neither of them had used a new skill.

Yet in this moment, Lu Hanwen surprisingly used Falling Blossom Form. The skill was activated by Flowing Clouds, pulsing sword energy arising from his broadsword Flame Shadow and streaking through the air towards Flying Sword.

"Ah! This is Falling Blossom Form! A new level 75 skill. The new skills have yet to be used until now in their fight. It can be seen from this how seriously they're taking this match. Yet, now, a level 75 skill has finally appeared from Lu Hanwen. He really is like a newborn calf that doesn't fear a tiger*! All those who cared to follow news about Blue Rain, about this pro player, probably all knew that Lu Hanwen is the one who would boldly use a new skill in the first match after the new update. In the entire pro circle, he was the only one. So, that's why we say he's an amazing young man, always managing to do the unexpected..."

The commentator spoke very quickly, but no matter how quickly he spoke, he still had too much to say. By the time he had finished his ramblings, Flowing Clouds and Flying Swords had already

finished several exchanges.

It didn’t stop at Falling Blossom Form.

After Falling Blossom Form, Meteor Form, and Piercing Form were unleashed, both level 75 new skills. Glory didn’t limit the number of new skills for each level stage to one, especially not after the level 55 update. This was because, from this point onwards, every new stage meant a whole new chapter of the game, so the contents had to be as abundant as possible. One skill was just too little, so there were often several new skills that were released together. For Blade Masters, four new skills were added for the level 75 update, all with "form" in their name. Falling Blossom Form, Meteor Form, and Piercing Form were all skills from the most recent update. Lu Hanwen used these new skills to mount a new round of offense. Though the commentator hollered over this excitedly, but from the situation, it seemed that the three new skills didn’t have much of an effect, no help in getting Lu Hanwen the upper-hand.

"Ah!"

The commentator yelled out again. After Lu Hanwen’s three Forms, Liu Xiaobie’s Flying Swords quickly counterattacked with a skill of his own, and that skill was the only Form that Lu Hanwen had yet to use: Curving Wind Form!

Flicking the tip of his blade, the sword energy didn’t stab forwards viciously, but instead swirled to the tip of the blade from its surroundings. The force of the energy blew the dust and earth, swirling into the air, displaying the power of the skill.

Lu Hanwen seemed to sense the danger, hurriedly getting Flowing Clouds to turn and defend. However, he was still a little too late. The backwards moving sword skill somehow attacked from behind Flowing Clouds, striking him as he to block.

Thus, the effect that this attack had wasn't to blast its target away, but instead to pull its target towards the attacker.

Flowing Clouds, his body being thrown forward against his will, threw out his sword, just managing to parry the strike that Liu Xiaobie had sent out.

Applause rung out in the stadium. Lu Hanwen, back turned to Flying Swords, had managed to parry so accurately as he turned Flowing Clouds around. What was marvellous? This was it!

This parry surprised even Liu Xiaobie a little, but it wasn't enough to mess up his plan of attack. Long before he had struck out with Curving Wind Form, he had thought through his next actions. If his first strike didn't hit, he still had others. Liu Xiaobie's APM suddenly jumped. Just because he wanted to improve in other aspects didn't mean that he would neglect this talent of his. Hand speed, that would forever be his ace! Seeking improvement in other areas was, in the end, simply just to better the use of his best talent, allowing him to utilize his hand speed to the fullest.

He might not yet be able to complete a whole match at this level of APM without mistakes, but a short period of time like this, after

two years of cumulative experience and a summer of intense practice, was something he had complete confidence in!

"Ah!!"

Amongst the shocked cries from the crowd, resplendent light from his blade lit up the battle. Liu Xiaobie, who had once set out on a path he shouldn't have, had come out of his cocoon anew. Last season, he had gained the title of King of Dueling, proving himself fiercely. He didn't slow after his success either, after a summer of intense practise, half a season of ablution, today's Liu Xiaobie was even stronger than last season!

He didn't care about an award like King of Dueling; he was aiming for something even higher.

Sword Saint!

This was an unofficial title, but one that everyone else acknowledged, the true Glory title for the best Blade Master.

That was Liu Xiaobie's true goal. Lu Hanwen? He was a great rookie player, but he wasn't the one Liu Xiaobie was aiming to succeed.

Formless Phantom Blade!

The powerful skill was unleashed.

Talking about pure DPS, none of the new level 75 four Forms of fencing dealt as much damage as Formless Phantom Blade. That was why Formless Phantom blade was still the Blade Master's strongest DPS skill, and with the update in level limits, there was more room for skill strengthening as well, once again increasing the damage of Formless Phantom Blade.

However, what was surprising wasn't that.

"Fifteen blades!!" With the commentator's yell, all of the audience raised their heads to look at the big screen. With the holographic projection technology, the screen used for live broadcasting was no longer used for that purpose. Instead, it was used to replay the best moments of the battle, some shots of the audience, and the statistics and data of every match... Of course, there was also the conversations some players had during matches. This was something the audience loved, but couldn't be projected by the holographic projection technology. It wasn't like they could just put speech bubbles above the heads of the characters, that would just ruin the 3D effects.

Now, looking up at the screen, what everyone saw was the statistics for Flying Sword's Formless Phantom Blade under Liu Xiaobie's performance.

Fifteen blades!

This was how many combo hits the skill could make based on the player's mechanics. Before this, the highest record made by the

pros of the alliance was only thirteen and Liu Xiaobie had instantly raised that record by two blades. This was something he managed through his hand speed alone. There was no other way...

After a period of shocked silence, the audience suddenly erupted into thunderous applause. Many people were even so moved that their tears were close to flying out like a whirlwind. This was Tiny Herb's home turf, after all, so no one supported their players more than them. Fifteen blades created by Formless Phantom Blade, not even Huang Shaotian could do that, right? However, their player Liu Xiaobie had managed to do so; during this match where a Blade Master from Blue Rain had challenged him, he had completely managed it.

Lu Hanwen's Flowing Clouds finally fell to Formless Phantom Blade's last blade. He had gained everyone's attention when he got on the stage, but throughout this match, the spotlight moved off of him. This Rookie Challenge had helped Liu Xiaobie's popularity soar. Even though Lu Hanwen was a rookie, he was still an All Star player, but the fifteen blades of Formless Phantom Blade was a reality. Whoever didn't accept it, then they could come and challenge it themselves!

"Amazing!" Even Ye Xiu couldn't help but praise this limitbreaking show of mechanics, applauding.

"I wonder how many blades I could get... I'll try with a Blade Master after I get back," Tang Rou mumbled.

"And you? If it were you, how many blades could you achieve?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

"That would depend on the situation," Ye Xiu replied.

"Your limit!" Chen Guo said.

"Never tried." Ye Xiu shook his head.

"I've tried, seven blades for me..." Chen Guo sighed.

"With your skill, there's no need for you to brag, right?" Ye Xiu responded.

"Do you want to die!" Chen Guo was depressed. She had been careless, saying something like that in front of Ye Xiu.

Steamed Bun, on the other side, was shaking his head.

"What's up, Steamed Bun? Can you make more blades?" Chen Guo asked with a smile.

"I don't like the way the number fifteen sounds," Steamed Bun sighed.

"..."

The match came to a close with Liu Xiaobie's amazing explosion of skill claiming him victory. The applause from the audience

didn’t stop. Such an exciting Rookie Challenge was rare.

The projected image was fading, but it didn’t flash off suddenly, but faded slowly from the outside inwards. It was the All Star Weekend; of course it would be a little more grand.

Yet it was then that Flying Swords, having yet to leave, threw out his arm, his silver weapon Chasing Spirits stabbing forth swiftly. Everyone was still puzzling over this action when the scene faded and Flying Swords disappeared.

An observant few seemed to have realized something and looked in the direction that Flying Swords had stabbed at. The big screen, too, replayed the action made by Flying Swords and then the scene switched to place the sword had been pointing towards.

Team Blue Rain, Huang Shaotian!

Chapter 924: Listless

The cameras zoomed in on Huang Shaotian. Everyone in the audience could see it on the screens above. The crowd immediately exploded into an even greater uproar. Countless Tiny Herb fans began shouting and whistling, intensifying Liu Xiaobie's challenge towards Huang Shaotian.

On the screen, a teammate nudged Huang Shaotian and then pointed in the direction of the screen. Huang Shaotian smiled and waved his hands at the cameras.

The crowd roared. This guy probably didn't know what was going on, did he? Was he not watching the previous match?

Huang Shaotian was very confused by the crowd's reaction until the teammate next to him said a few words to him. He suddenly understood what had happened and stared at the camera with a smile. He continued smiling.

The cameras couldn't focus on Huang Shaotian the entire time! It seemed like he didn't care, so the cameras turned away in disappointment. The instant the cameras turned away, Huang Shaotian's two hands quickly shot up and gave Liu Xiaobie the middle finger.

"Ah! Hurry up and go back!" The director of the broadcast shouted violently.

The cameras quickly focused on Huang Shaotian again. Everyone

watching the All-Star Weekend once again saw Huang Shaotian smiling. His smile was no different than before. Everyone was puzzled. Was the stream lagging?

"This guy is too crafty!" The director felt very depressed. Flipping someone off was very uncultured. If the live stream had caught it, Huang Shaotian would certainly be fined by the Alliance, but in their current situation, as long as no one reported this incident, even if the Alliance knew, they would turn a blind eye towards it.

Without the cameras on him, there were only a few people who could see him giving the middle finger. This was Team Tiny Herb's home stadium, so it was filled with Team Tiny Herb fans. When they saw it, they went into an uproar and created quite some noise. Those who didn't know what was going on were very puzzled and naturally turned to ask others about it. As a result, news of Huang Shaotian giving the middle finger to Liu Xiaobei was spread by mouth, and the uproar in the stadium grew louder like a rising wave. Practically no one cared about when the next Rookie Challenge match would be taking place at this point.

The stream's commentator was still carefully commentating the next match of the Rookie Challenge, but his heart felt so stifled that it hurt. Such a magnificent scene had actually been missed by the cameras! What was going on onstage was very ordinary. It was an exhibition match where the younger generation paid respects to the older generation. In the end, the senior God won. He gave the junior a word of encouragement and the junior expressed that he would take this opportunity to learn from his senior……

"How boring….." The commentator was about to fall asleep, but

even if he felt bitter inwardly, he could only falsely raise his spirits and talk very excitedly about his admiration for this match.

The broadcasting team was the most sullen out of everyone on the first day of All Stars. There had been such fat, juicy material, but the scene of the crime wasn't caught by the cameras. In hindsight, there had been numerous measures that could have been taken. For example, they could have talked to the Alliance to see if they could give Liu Xiaobie special authority to issue a challenge. It was the All Stars anyways. The matches were just for fun, so more easter eggs couldn't hurt.

Unfortunately, everything only came to light post facto. The event had lost its immediate value. It could only be embellished into a good report afterwards. Various titles, such as The Challenge of the New Generation, quickly sprouted in the minds of many reporters.

In the following Rookie Challenge, another good piece of material was supplied.

Team Wind Howl's Zhao Yuzhe challenged Team Misty Rain's Chu Yunxiu. When asked his reason for the challenge, his reply was: I want to be the number one Elementalist.

"Kids nowadays have such drive!" Ye Xiu sighed.

Zhao Yuzhe wasn't as brash as Tang Hao last year, who had claimed that the junior would succeed the senior, but the intent behind his words was very obvious.

"Good! How ambitious!" The host shouted loudly, "Then, please welcome Team Misty Rain's captain, Chu Yunxiu, to the stage!"

Amidst the applause, the commentator seized this opportunity to use this as a topic to talk about: "I'm sure everyone still remembers that in the Rookie Challenge last year, the two year veteran Tang Hao shocked everyone with a "the junior succeeds the senior" and defeated Lin Jingyan in the end, replacing him not only in name, but also in reality, as the number one Brawler. He transferred to Team Wind Howl this summer and took Lin Jingyan's position. Now let's look at Zhao Yuzhe. He's also from Team Wind Howl and Tang Hao's teammate. Could his challenge have been influenced by Tang Hao's move last year? After Zhao Yuzhe won Best Rookie last year, he continued to perform spectacularly this season. His position in Team Wind Howl is stable, and his team's achievements have been quite impressive too. He's a player with a bright future!"

During this introduction, Chu Yunxiu had already gone down from his seat and onto the stage.

There weren't many female pro players in Glory. Only Chu Yunxiu and Su Mucheng had been able to squeeze onto the All Stars list. Su Mucheng wasn't eligible for All Stars because of Excellent Era's relegation this year. At the moment, Chu Yunxiu was the only female player among the 24 All Stars.

Chu Yunxiu was also from the Golden Generation. She had been a pro player for many years and had assumed the role of team captain. It wasn't easy to make her lose her calm. When the

cameras zoomed in on her, she didn't seem to have any peculiar reaction towards Zhao Yuzhe's impolite challenge. She shook hands with Zhao Yuzhe and received a few questions from the host. Everything seemed very normal. The host harbored evil intentions and wanted to deepen the conflict, but she easily neutralized all of his attempts.

How oppressing!

The broadcast team once again felt stifled.

When Liu Xiaobie pointed his sword at Huang Shaotian, it felt like a tempest was about to come. A black cloud rolled out, and then nothing happened after that. This time, Chu Yunxiu's calmness made Zhao Yuzhe's challenge, which had already been less brash than Tang Hao's challenge from last year, appear even more like it was a stick hitting cotton.

Why? Why couldn't this year's Rookie Challenge produce any highs?

The broadcast team was quite depressed. They forgot that the previous Rookie Challenges rarely had any highs. It was just that last year, there had been several very abnormal and significant challenges in a row, raising the expectations for this year's Rookie Challenge.

For this year, Liu Xiaobie pointing his sword at Huang Shaotian and Zhao Yuzhe's challenge to take the top seat was already quite exciting, but it just couldn't compare with last year's.

"Mm, both sides are ready. The match will soon begin. This match will be the same as the match with Lu Hanwen and Liu Xiaobie. Both sides will be using their own pro characters. On the left side of the map was Zhao Yuzhe's Howling Fire. On the right side of the map is Chu Yunxiu's Windy Rain. Uh... Chu Yunxiu is the only female player among the 24 All Stars this time. She doesn't seem to have any peculiar reaction to this unfriendly challenge from her junior." The commentator introduced the scenario.

"Haha, many of our friends watching knows very well that even in important matches like the playoffs, Chu Yunxiu always remains this calm. This kind of attitude isn't anything strange." The commentator's co-caster, the honored guest Li Yibo, said a few words. As long as it was an important match, Coach Li would always be there. For an exciting event like the All Star Weekend, the number one guest commentator would of course be sitting.

Those who used their heads would realize that his evaluation of Chu Yunxiu actually contained some hidden implications. He was criticizing her lack of passion for the game, which was why she would frequently be unable to hold on during important matches. It was one of the huge problems that had plagued Team Misty Rain.

After the match started, in the public chat, Zhao Yuzhe typed out a helpless expression: "Senior, I hope you'll treat this match seriously!"

"Haha. I will." Chu Yunxiu replied out of politeness.

"After a brief exchange in the chat, the two sides have now drawn closer to each other." The commentator continued.

"Hm... everyone, look. Zhao Yuzhe's Howling Fire isn't going directly at her. He's taking a rather roundabout path. It looks like Zhao Yuzhe is truly serious about this match....." Li Yibo said.

"Yeah... employing tactics to move around isn't commonly seen in All Stars, no?" The commentator said

"Indeed. I remember last year that neither Tang Hao nor Sun Xiang employed tactics to move around. They just directly clashed with their opponents instead." Li Yibo said.

"Coach Li, what do you think this means?" The commentator asked.

"This... it means Zhao Yuzhe cares a lot about this match..." Li Yibo said, while glancing at his co-caster. Old friend, could you please be a bit more attentive. I just said that it seems like Zhao Yuzhe is serious about this match, yet you asked me again. Are you testing my ability to phrase things in a different way?

Zhao Yuzhe, who was employing positioning tactics to move around, obviously didn't come out as soon as Windy Rain appeared in his line of sight. Chu Yunxiu's experience was abundant. She immediately realized this point, so she decided to stand still, waiting for Zhao Yuzhe's Howling Fire to come out.

"This... mm, turning being on the defensive into taking the initiative. It’s not a bad solution...." Li Yibo said.

The commentator felt like kneeling down and bowing to Li Yibo. Anything that he said had substance. Li Yibo’s explanation for Chu Yunxiu’s action was reasonable, but in reality, she didn’t care enough about this match, so she was probably just too lazy to fight for the initiative against Zhao Yuzhe.

Chu Yunxiu’s Windy Rain just stood there. Zhao Yuzhe’s Howling Fire quietly sneaked closer to her from the side. A pro player shouldn’t be so easily ambushed. Even Zhao Yuzhe felt like it was too boring. What a tragedy! His opponent just had to be this God. If it had been anyone else, his opponent wouldn’t be so passive, right?

I guess I’ll just end it beautifully.... Seeing that Chu Yunxiu didn’t seem to be interested in fighting seriously, Zhao Yuzhe decided to kill her with some beautiful combos, but right when he started planning out how he would go about doing that, Windy Rain suddenly turned around. She pointed her staff and made the first move.

"Ah?" The commentator had been listless the entire time, but now he was suddenly so astonished that he was at a loss for words.

"Chu Yunxiu strikes first! What a fierce attack!" Li Yibo was more clear-headed. On stage, Windy Rain’s spells launched one after the other. A huge area-of-effect explosion devoured Zhao Yuzhe and

brought him into a perilous situation.

"This this... could it be that Chu Yunxiu's initial attitude had been a set up?" The commentator was astonished. Seeing Chu Yunxiu's offense, it didn't seem like she didn't cared about the match.

"Tsk tsk tsk." In the audience seats, Ye Xiu clicked his tongue repeatedly.

"What is it?" Chen Guo asked.

"I heard that Chu Yunxiu is in a bad mood today." Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Chen Guo said.

"It's probably because today is the last episode of 'My Unusual Girlfriend'.... She had to miss it...." Ye Xiu said.

"AH?!" Chen Guo didn't know how to describe what she was feeling right now.

Chapter 925: There's No Next Time

My Unusual Girlfriend was the TV drama that all the big TV channels had been broadcasting over the past three weeks, topping the viewing charts and sweeping over the crowds. Chen Guo wasn't a huge fan of this sort of things, but she did know about them. However, the Captain of Team Misty Rain, Glory's Number One Female Pro Player, would deign to allow the fact that she couldn't watch the finale when it came out to affect her mood? It seemed ridiculous to Chen Guo. Could this be described as letting your concerns mess with your head?

Yet knowing that this made Chu Yunxiu's current state of mind easy to analyze. Her thoughts weren't even present, so she hadn't been in the mood to react to Zhao Yuzhe's taunt at all. As for her sudden fierce torrent of attacks, it was just a cathartic release of her frustrations at not being able to watch the finale live, not because of Zhao Yuzhe's provocation. If you were to think this was a tactic of hers to mess with your head, then you were simply thinking too much.

The sudden surge of attacks had clearly taken Zhao Yuzhe completely off guard. A blanket of Elementalist skills raged across the map, almost unavoidable. Chu Yunxiu's mechanics were refined, and she was extremely familiar with the Elementalist class, allowing her to predict most of Zhao Yuzhe's countermeasures. This made Zhao Yuzhe feel as if he was trapped in the palm of her hand.

He had hoped that Chu Yunxiu would take this seriously, but then she had turned out to be unenthusiastic, disappointing him greatly.

Yet now his opponent had suddenly become bold and unrestrained with her attacks, to the point where Zhao Yuzhe wasn't prepared for it at all. Zhao Yuzhe wanted to cry!

"How dirty..." That was Zhao Yuzhe's thoughts about Chu Yunxiu's actions. He would never be able to guess that it was because she couldn't watch the finale of a popular drama.

It took Zhao Yunzhe everything he had to escape Chu Yunxiu's torrent of attacks and by then, Howling Fire's health had gone down by approximately a fourth. It wouldn't be easy to turn the tides in this situation, but Zhao Yuzhe still made an effort to readjust him state of mind. If he managed something that was harder to do, then it would prove his worth even more, right?

However, Chu Yunxiu's performance was at its peak after her fierce offense, pursuing him relentlessly and attacking him viciously. Zhao Yuzhe had wanted to avoid this barrage for now, but who would've expected that Chu Yunxiu would be bursting with it? The buff from not being able to see the finale seemed to be continuous.

"Ai, it seems like Zhao Yuzhe is struggling to turn the tables..." Even Li Yibo dared to comment like this during a livestream. The scales of victory were already tilted too far to one side. Zhao Yuzhe eventually fell, frustration and refusal to accept this defeat boiling within him. With only a year and a half of experience in the pro circle, he still wasn't very mature, walking down from the player stands with a face filled with rage. The broadcasting showed both the players in various scenes.

The winner, Chu Yunxiu, didn’t seem very happy about her victory either. She seemed as listless as she had been when she had gone on stage. So, the camera took more shots of Zhao Yuzhe, revealing his anger to the audience in full.

Zhao Yuzhe didn’t want to accept this! He felt that Chu Yunxiu was playing too dirty. All this effort because she was afraid to lose? Yes, he had to make the audience understand it: Chu Yunxiu was terrified to lose to him; he was already a threat in the eyes of Glory’s best Elementalist!

Seeing a shot of himself on the big screen, Zhao Yuzhe knew that this broadcast was going live to tens of thousands of viewers, hurriedly composing his expression into something less revealing. As he walked onto the stage, looking at Chu Yunxiu, he was a sea of calm.

"That was a good strategy, senior!" Zhao Yuzhe took the mic, not even waiting for the host to speak before initiating conversation with Chu Yunxiu. He did his best to act professional and retain his smile, but he was obviously too inexperienced to keep this up with ease. Compared to Huang Shaotian’s peaceful smile at the camera when he was planning to flip people off, Zhao Yuzhe strained a hundred times as much to keep his smile. This was made evident just by looking at the closeup of him. Zhao Yuzhe could tell, as well, and found it strained. He tried to adjust the way he curled his lips up, but only managed to make his expression look even more strained.

In comparison, Chu Yunxiu was much more of a veteran. She

smiled casually and said, "It was so-so!"

"This was my own fault for not being careful enough. Seeing how listless you were just now, I had thought you weren't going to be serious about this match!" Zhao Yuzhe pointed out Chu Yunxiu's strategy, but was subtle about it, just like how his challenge was; he didn't raise much of a stink over it.

"So long as you're on the battlefield, you should always give it your all," Chu Yunxiu said. This was definitely an exemplar civility.

"Yes, I need to learn from you, senior. No matter when, I have to give it my all," Zhao Yuzhe replied.

"Good luck!" Chu Yunxiu nodded.

Zhao Yuzhe was quite good at being tactful. Anyone who was observant enough could still easily understand his implications. Yet Zhao Yuzhe still wasn't satisfied. What he had managed to explain so far was only that he hadn't been able to play to the best of his ability because he was caught off guard, but he had yet to say what he really wanted make known!

Seeing Chu Yunxiu already turning to return to the player stands, Zhao Yuzhe hurriedly called after her, "Next time I won't fall for your trap, senior!"

Yes! He had fallen for a trap! Zhao Yuzhe made sure to make

these words as clear as possible. He wanted everyone to notice this and then realize how much Chu Yunxiu feared him, even needing to trick him to obtain victory.

Chu Yunxiu had already returned the mic to the host by then, but the mic was just for amplifying their voices for the entire audience to hear. If it was just an interaction between the two onstage, this distance didn't make the mic necessary. Hearing Zhao Yuzhe hollering, Chu Yunxiu turned around. The host could tell that this would be a potential selling point, and Knight Charged to Chu Yunxiu's side, holding up the mic for her as he saw she was already opening her mouth to speak.

"Next time?" Chu Yunxiu seemed a little confused, "You're a second year, right? Can you still enter the rookie challenge next year?"

"Ah?" Zhao Yuzhe was struck dumb by Chu Yunxiu's reply. That was completely off topic! He was just saying this out of courtesy; how was "next time" any sort of keyword? Yet Chu Yunxiu had caught this little loophole to retort, making Zhao Yuzhe unable to formulate an immediate response. Seeing that he had little reaction, Chu Yunxiu turned and continued to walk off.

"What was that about?" Zhao Yuzhe actually scratched his head in confusion in this shot of him. He wanted to fire back a few words, but heard the host saying the closing lines for the round, thanking the two players for their spectacular match and whatnot. Zhao Yuzhe couldn't continue to cling to the stage and refuse to leave, so he could only return the mic and end this time's plan for rising higher.

The two’s match held loud thunder, but not much rain*. Zhao Yuzhe didn’t raise too much of a stink about it and Chu Yunxiu’s attitude was peaceful as well, nothing like the tension in last year’s Rookie Challenges.

With these two sent off stage, the event continued. Now there was only one round left. Usually, it would always be a player from the hosting team who would come out to challenge someone at the end, but Team Tiny Herb only had one player who was eligible for the Rookie Challenge, Gao Yingjie. However, Gao Yingjie had already participated in the Rookie Challenges last year, so he couldn’t go again. So, this All Stars broke the tradition, and the player the host announced was Team Heavenly Sword’s Lou Guanning.

"Oh..." This still caused quite a ruckus among the audience.

First, Team Heavenly Swords was also based in B City, and with their skill, they hadn’t achieved the level of becoming archrivals with Tiny Herb, residing in the same city, so, being from the same city, the Tiny Herb fans would give Heavenly Swords some attention as well.

In addition, Lou Guanning was a rather legendary figure. First, he had been a very famous RMB warrior in game, but no one would’ve thought he would go so far, even to create a Pro Team and advancing into the Pro League. A normal player who got to this point was at the top of the top.

"That guy is pretty popular, huh?" Chen Guo commented.

"Haha." Ye Xiu laughed, not commenting. He had been in contact with Lou Guanning for quite a while now, and they were becoming closer and closer. However, he hadn't thought that the first time he would see the other was through this: on the big screen was a closeup of Lou Guanning, walking onto the stage.

Talking about his appearance, he wasn't particularly comely, but he wasn't unsettled at all, being under the gaze of so many people, walking down step by step casually.

Lou Guanning was still considered a Rookie in the pro circle. The current battle records of Team Heavenly Swords didn't meet expectations, either, nothing to be proud of. However, his composure when walking down was even better than Glory's current First, Zhou Zekai.

Of course, Zhou Zekai's calm was mostly because of his personality. However, Lou Guanning's steady demeanor portrayed that he was someone who had witnessed pomp and ceremony before. He wouldn't feel nervous at all in this sort of situation.

The rebroadcast and live host were both introducing Lou Guanning's legendary gaming career. It should be known that this player's identity and position was a little special. He wasn't just a member of a team, he was also the boss of one. With this, even if Team Heavenly Sword's performance didn't meet expectations, his position was a extraordinary compared to the other pro players.

On the stage, receiving an interview, Lou Guanning was like a fish in water. Much stronger than Zhao Yuzhe, who had to practice repeatedly just to cover his emotions up with a smile.

"Hey, do you think he'll challenge you?" The surprising thought suddenly popped into Chen Guo's head.

"Me?" Ye Xiu pause for a moment before shaking his head. "He won't. He isn't someone who doesn't know what's appropriate. If he really wanted to challenge me, then he would tell me first."

"That's so boring!" Chen Guo was rather eager still, but what Lou Guanning then said crushed her hopes for this drama. Lou Guanning wanted to challenge Yu Feng, the current number one Berserker.

Transferring from Blue Rain to Hundred Blossoms and becoming their core player. Yu Feng had fell into a slump with Hundred Blossoms, and some even predicted that they would become the second Excellent Era.

However, as the season progressed, Team Hundred Blossoms got their feel back and their performance began to improve. The combo of Yu Feng's Blossoming Chaos and Zou Yuan's Blooming Blossoms were syncing up more and more, gaining more and more popularity and support from the normal players. There was no doubt that Yu Feng and Blossoming Chaos would be voted into the All Stars this time. As for Blue Rain, his spot in the main roster had been filled in by the rookie Lu Hanwen. Though there was a new Berserker player to control Brilliant Edge, he wasn't on the field much and his performance wasn't particularly eye-catching, so he

didn’t really have the competitive abilities required by the voters to participate in the All Stars. The title of the First Berserker followed Yu Feng, returning to Hundred Blossoms.

Chapter 926: The Five Members of Heavenly Swords

The commentator liked players with a story behind them. That way, they didn't need to rack their brains trying to think of something to say to introduce them. While he introduced Yu Feng's situation, Yu Feng went on stage, greeted Lou Guanning, and shook his hand.

Lou Guanning's reputation as a money warrior made everyone subconsciously imagine him as an arrogant and despotic upstart. Quite a few people were hoping that his arrogant request to challenge Yu Feng would end up with him being slapped fiercely in the face.

However, Lou Guanning behaved gracefully and looked happy to chat with Yu Feng. He was only a small character in the pro scene, yet standing alongside an All Star and God, his aura didn't lose out to the other side one bit. From this point of view, no one would think that this was, in fact, a Rookie Challenge.

Rookies weren't experienced and didn't have much knowledge about how to act on stage, so even when Zhao Yuzhe challenged a God so ambitiously, his aura still felt weak.

But for Lou Guanning? He was a player from a newly-promoted team. He wasn't a God like Sun Xiang or Tang Hao, nor did he have the same energy as Lu Hanwen. He stood on stage very normally, but no one felt like he was any worse compared to Yu Feng.

His confidence couldn’t have come from his own strength. After all, half a season had passed, and those who paid any attention to him knew very well what level of skill Lou Guanning was at.

"An owner is truly amazing!"

All sorts of whispers stirred within the crowd. They clearly recognized that Lou Guanning was no ordinary rookie.

As a result, there was no anger or provocation in this confrontation. It didn’t have the usual fan to idol mentality. Though Lou Guanning clearly explained that his reason for challenging Yu Feng was because Yu Feng was his favorite player, it wasn’t that sort of flattery that many new players had towards the Gods they admired. It stemmed from his admiration and appreciation towards Yu Feng. The audience misperceived it. They were wondering if he was going to follow up with an "Are you interested in joining our team?"

Lou Guanning didn’t end up saying such an inappropriate question. The two went up on stage and used their own characters for the battle. They entered the map and began fighting.

The battle was intense. Their blades dripped with blood. This was the Berserker fighting style though. Because their skills would be awakened after dropping below 50% health, some players even intentionally took damage to achieve more explosive damage output. Berserkers were a class that personified the strategy of killing one thousand enemies by sacrificing eight hundred allies, and were considered the number one class in terms of manliness. At the same time, they were also the most difficult class to heal

because, for many Clerics, they sometimes didn't know whether the Berserker was actually getting hit, or if he was intentionally letting himself get hit in exchange for stronger attacks. Unable to make a clear conclusion, the Clerics didn't know what to do. As a result, sometimes Clerics would be yelled at for healing and yelled at for not healing.

Every Berserker hoped for a healer that understood their intentions. Every healer hoped that their team didn't have a Berserker. If the team did, they hoped that the Berserker wasn't a brave hero who liked to take damage to power up.

The battle between Yu Feng and Lou Guanning was intense, but the experts could see that both sides were holding back.

Yes, as the God being challenged, Yu Feng held back. As the challenger and rookie, Lou Guanning wasn't going all out either.

Yu Feng won the match in the end, but Lou Guanning had lost the match and won the war.

After the match ended, both sides went off stage and continued to chat with each other. The two then left the stage together. The Rookie Challenge on the first day of the All Star Weekend ended with such a friendly match.

The event ended. The pro players easily left the stadium through their own private exits. Ye Xiu and the others could only squeeze out of the stadium with the rest of the crowd.

The exiting was bustling with noise. When they finally got out of the stadium, Chen Guo heard her cell phone ringing. She took it out and took a look. She had eight missed phone calls all from one person, Lou Guanning.

"Hey, Little Lou!" Chen Guo picked up the phone and spoke coarsely. She had seen Lou Guanning's grace in the final match of the Rookie Challenge. Speaking of which, Chen Guo had also been someone who thought of money warriors as arrogant upstarts. After interacting with Heavenly Swords, she slowly changed her view. Now that she personally witnessed Lou Guanning's poise on stage, her initial impression of him had now been completely overturned.

Although Lou Guanning was Glory's most famous money warrior, the other side had both skill and style too. Chen Guo felt like she was losing to Lou Guanning as a boss! When she picked up the phone, she anxiously reminded herself.

"Ah! It's me. Did you guys come out yet?" Lou Guanning asked.

"We're out. What's up? Is there something going on tonight?" Chen Guo tried to be more proactive.

"Ha, let's go out for a late-night snack! Go out from Tiny Herb's main entrance, cross the skyway, and you'll see a tea restaurant*. We're over there! Room 2." Lou Guanning said.

"Okay, we're heading over." Chen Guo didn't refuse. They had come here because of his invitation. It didn't make sense to refuse

to see him.

The group of four continued to follow the crowd. There were quite a few people crossing the skyway, but there were also many passionate fans waiting outside the main entrance, holding signs to show their support for their team and idols, waiting to meet them. Lou Guanning and the others had already gone to the tea restaurant across the street and had the time to call her eight times. Evidently, the pro players did not leave through the main entrance. These fans were too ignorant when it came to gathering information.

Ye Xiu's group crossed the skywalk and saw the tea restaurant. They went in and asked to go to room 2. An employee immediately brought them over. There were five people waiting respectfully in room 2. When they saw the four arrive, they immediately got up. One of them was especially excited. He even seemed a little bewildered.

This tea restaurant wasn't too high class of a place. The environment was fairly ordinary. It was even a bit crowded with nine people squeezing into this room.

It was the first time meeting each other offline, but Lou Guanning's first words got rid of the feeling of unfamiliarity between them. He smiled and said: "Did you guys see my performance? How was it? God, please give me some advice!"

Lou Guanning looked at Ye Qiu. Even though the two sides hadn't introduced each other, he instantly determined who the legendary God Ye Qiu was.

"Haha, you fought too politely." Ye Xiu said. He wasn’t shy with strangers at all. It even seemed like he was the host: "Have a seat, everyone. Why are you all standing!"

Everyone sat down. Ye Xiu impatiently fished out a cigarette. He didn’t forget to ask if anyone else wanted one, but the five Heavenly Swords people waved their hands and refused. Ye Xiu didn’t ask if they didn’t want to smoke or if they didn’t know how. In any case, he grabbed a cigarette and tossed the cigarette pack onto the table: "If you guys want one, feel free to take one!" Then, he quickly started lighting up his cigarette.

Before he could light it, Chen Guo moved her hands like lightning: "Hey, show some manners!"

"Hahahaha..." Lou Guanning laughed. He didn’t make any comments and continued, "How about you introduce yourselves?"

"Tang Rou, Chen Guo, me, Steamed Bun." Ye Xiu quickly introduced everyone from left to right.

"Bao Rongxing!" Even though Steamed Bun didn’t mind being called Steamed Bun, he still gave his actual name to everyone.

"Haha, you must be Steamed Bun Invasion!" Lou Guanning laughed.

"It seems like you’ve heard of my might. Not bad." Steamed Bun

was very excited.

Lou Guanning was somewhat puzzled. Don’t we already know each other? Do you not know who I am?

"I’m Chasing Haze." Chen Guo introduced her in-game character.

"I guessed that." Lou Guanning nodded his head. He had only ever met one person, who would shout at God Ye Qiu.

"Soft Mist." Tang Rou half rose out of her chair and introduced herself by her character tag.

"Oh, the expert. How surprising." Lou Guanning said. He didn’t say what was surprising, but anyone smart would know. Soft Mist was a very aggressive Battle Mage, but the player behind her was a beautiful girl. It was a surprising contrast.

"I’m Loulan Slash!" Lou Guanning began introducing his side. After introducing himself, he pointed to the people beside him: "Zou Yunhai is Ocean Ahead."

"Hi everyone." Zou Yunhai greeted.

"Wen Kebei, Homeward Bound." Lou Guanning continued.

This person was the one who was the most excited, that he wasn’t sure what to do when the four entered the room. After

being introduced by Lou Guanning, he finally couldn’t hold back: "God, please give me your signature!"

"Show some manners!" Lou Guanning also scolded like Chen Guo did. Everyone laughed. Chen Guo felt a myriad of emotions after laughing. In the beginning, she had also been innocent! But now? She glanced at Ye Xiu. His cigarette wasn’t lit, but he still held it in his mouth. How irritating!

"This is Gu Xiye. He’s our Grappler, Night Tide. That’s Zhong Yeli. She’s our Cleric Thousand Falling Leaves." Lou Guanning finished introducing everyone. It was their five-man group in the game, four guys and one girl.

"Your Heavenly Swords isn’t only you five anymore....." Ye Xiu said.

"Yeah... but... there’s not enough seats." Lou Guanning smiled. He had obviously just come up with this excuse on the spot. He clearly hadn’t planned on bringing more people. Those other Heavenly Sword players didn’t have any relationship with Ye Xiu and the others. It meant that this meetup was because of their friendship in the game.

"It is a bit tight." Chen Guo saw that everyone was friendly. She didn’t pay too much attention to the particulars and commented on the matter.

"It’s just because it’s close. There’s not much else to do nearby." Lou Guanning said.

"Then what do you have prepared for this late-night snack?" Chen Guo smiled. She was a natural socializer and very easily became familiar with strangers. Ye Xiu had experienced this a long time ago.

"Is there anything you'd like to eat?" Lou Guanning asked.

"Does this place have everything?" Chen Guo smiled.

"No, but if you want, we can have other places deliver food here!" Lou Guanning also smiled.

Chen Guo stared blankly. How tyrannical. This nouveau riche finally exposed his tyrannical ways. It was best if this topic didn't continue. If not, they might get kicked out of this place. There would always be places where they would be looked down upon.

"I'm just joking around. It doesn't matter. We didn't come here to eat." Chen Guo said.

"What? If a late-night snack isn't for eating, then what's it for?" Steamed Bun interrupted.

"...."

It was best not to talk about certain things with those guys, but for Steamed Bun, it was best not to talk about anything in general.

*The official translation would be cha chaan teng, and they usually serve Hong Kong cuisine and Hong Kong style Western cuisine. The "tea" part of it is to distinguish the tea restaurants from Western restaurants that serve water. It’s different from a tea house, which generally just serves tea.

Chapter 927: Heavenly Sword's Bad Friend

With Glory as a common ground, Ye Xiu's group and Lou Guanning's group naturally had much to talk about. Both parties talked joyously. It was just like Chen Guo said: eating wasn't the main focus of this meetup.

It could even be said that none of them wanted the night to end. Lou Guanning invited the four of them to visit their Team Heavenly Swords tomorrow. After all, City B was also Heavenly Sword's home city. The All-Stars event only took place at night, so no one had much to do during the daytime.

Ye Xiu's group obviously had no reason to refuse. As a result, after scheduling it for sometime the next day, the two groups went back to their respective living places.

Next morning, Lou Guanning drove his car over to their hotel and brought Ye Xiu's group over to Heavenly Sword's base.

"How is it? It's not bad, no?" Lou Guanning stood proudly underneath their team's logo hanging on top of the main entrance. Team Heavenly Sword's logo was the same as their guild's. It was a picture of that famous sword, Swordpoint. However, the artist who drew it was clearly very skilled. It had been shrunken into a logo, but it was still easily recognized. As for the logo hanging above their main entrance, it was even bigger than a person. The picture of Swordpoint was even larger than if the in-game weapon was scaled to life size.

"Look. That place over there is our stadium." Lou Guanning pointed towards another direction at a stadium that didn't lose out to Tiny Herb's.

"Incredible!" Ye Xiu praised. He was sincere. From this arena, Lou Guanning's pride towards his success in Glory could be seen. In the Alliance, not every pro team had their own stadium. Many teams rented someone else's stadium and used it as their home ground.

In order to build a standard stadium seen in the Alliance, the construction costs would reach hundreds of millions. It definitely wasn't something an ordinary Club could afford. Only the powerhouses in the Alliance had their own stadiums. These weren't only used for Glory either; they could also be used as normal sport venues. When it wasn't a match day, it was rented out for all sorts of activities. It was an important part of a Club's income.

Team Heavenly Swords had just entered the Alliance. Their futures were unknown, yet they had already invested a huge sum into a stadium already. Lou Guanning wasn't a profligate who never treated money seriously. His decision to construct this stadium showed his determination towards Glory.

"Shall we take a look at the stadium?" Lou Guanning asked.

"There'll be opportunities in the future." Ye Xiu smiled.

Lou Guanning stared blankly for a second, but then understood. He laughed: "When the time comes, please go easy on us!"

"How much money are you planning on giving us?" Ye Xiu asked.

"F*ck!" Lou Guanning shrunk back and looked left and right as if he had seen a ghost: "If you say it so directly, we'll definitely be punished by the Alliance, no?"

"Hahaha, of course." Ye Xiu was obviously familiar with the Alliance's rules. They would certainly be punished severely for violating the competitive integrity of the league. They had just been joking around. If it had been for real, they would have to take legal responsibility.

"Let's hurry up and go..." Lou Guanning hastily brought everyone inside as if the Alliance would discover them immediately if they kept standing outside the base.

If Lou Guanning was willing to spend money on a stadium, how could their facilities be lacking?

After passing through a relaxing green garden, they reached the center of Club Heavenly Swords. Chen Guo felt ashamed. Compared to the other side, her "huge investment" into their "grand gaming house" was nothing! Team Happy's players were so pitiful.....

Thinking of this, Chen Guo couldn't help but steal a glance at the others from Happy. The other three wore their usual expressions. After Steamed Bun saw the practice center, he even grumbled: "Why's it so far away! Our Happy is so much more convenient. It

only takes a few steps to reach there after passing through the entrance to the neighborhood."

"Neighborhood?" Lou Guanning was at a loss.

"Yeah! Forest Park! It's a high class neighborhood!" From Steamed Bun's appearance, he seemed to be even more proud than when Lou Guanning had been standing beneath Team Heavenly Sword's logo and pointing at his stadium.

"Shut up, Steamed Bun!" Chen Guo felt even more embarrassed. Even though she knew that the difference between the two sides were night and day, Chen Guo couldn't help but compare herself to Lou Guanning as a boss, naturally making her want to cry. Steamed Bun was still feeling proud though. Chen Guo felt like she had been stabbed in the heart.

"What?" Steamed Bun scratched his head in confusion.

"Come, come. Please come in." Lou Guanning didn't understand what was going on and immediately shifted topics, inviting everyone inside.

The inside of the building was naturally luxurious. There was a leisure area, a gym, and so on, none of which Happy had. Chen Guo once again felt ashamed, and then Steamed Bun started talking again and instantly killed her with one question: "Where are the computers?"

"Ah? We're almost there..." Lou Guanning said slightly embarrassed. He quickened the pace.

They soon arrived at Team Heavenly Sword's practice room. The entire team was here. This time, it wasn't just the five-man crew. The other six recruited players were there too. Although these players were nameless, they still possessed pro-level skills. Practically all of them had once been a part of a pro team. Even though they hadn't directly been involved in the interactions between their team and Team Happy, they were still a part of Team Heavenly Swords, so they had an understanding of their relationship between them.

They gave a greeting and took a seat. Three sentences hadn't been spoken yet, and they were already chatting about Glory.

This place had such a good atmosphere and such great conditions. If they said that they wouldn't going to practice, it would be too impolite. Everyone was itching to play.

"Shall we play a round?" Lou Guanning said.

Ye Xiu hadn't been able to reply, when a very loud and clear laugh came in from outside the practice room: "Hahahaha, I'm back! Where's Old Lou? Hurry and come out?"

"Hm?" Ye Xiu didn't understand what was going on. He looked at Lou Guanning and saw that his face had turned ugly. He strode forward to close the door quickly, but the other side had already reached the door and held the door in place: "Hey hey! What are

you doing? I see you! Don’t hide!"

Helpless, Lou Guanning could only let him in. As a result, a person dressed brightly and neatly swaggered in flamboyantly. He completely fit the image of a rich person’s son with white silken breeches. He looked around the room. He clearly wasn’t a stranger to Heavenly Sword’s players and gave a polite greeting to Zou Yunhai and the others. As for the remaining six Heavenly Sword players, he directly ignored them. His gaze then fell onto the few from Happy. The sight of Chen Guo and Tang Rou, two pretty girls, made his eyes light up.

"Wow, Old Lou! You’ve recruited again! It seems like you’ve got good eyes this time!" The newcomer blabbered noisily.

"Why haven’t you left yet?" Lou Guanning asked.

"Hahaha, you’re scared!" The newcomer said.

"I’m just annoyed, okay?" Lou Guanning said.

"I’m doing this for you! Look at your team and their record. I’m ashamed on your behalf. Improving your skill level is something you need to urgently do." The newcomer reproached.

This person’s attitude made others feel disgusted. If it was Chen Guo and this took place in her domain, she would have already erupted, but this was Lou Guanning’s place, so she didn’t do anything. She was astonished when she heard these words. He

sounded like he had some ability.

Before any conclusions could be made, he already waved his hands: "Wait a bit. When it’s convenient for me, I’ll immediately come back!" After saying these words, he ran out the door to the restroom. He was very familiar with the way there. It was as if Heavenly Swords was his own home.

"Who was that?" Ye Xiu and the others were curious.

Lou Guanning let out an expression of helplessness, "He’s my childhood friend. We’ve known each other since we were young. Now that I’ve created a team, one of his pleasures is to find all sorts of ways to bother me. When he has nothing to do, he’ll introduce experts for us to fight. He’s so annoying."

"What’s wrong with that?" Chen Guo didn’t understand.

Lou Guanning looked gloomy: "Because if we lose even once, he’ll blabber about it for an entire year!"

"How many times have you lost?" Chen Guo asked.

Lou Guanning couldn’t bear to reply: "Three times… even though the people he finds aren’t that good, but after enough times, an accident is bound to happen…"

"Little Bei, that shouldn’t have happened that time." Zou Yunhai said.

"That time Xiye lost wasn’t any better!" Wen Kebei complained at the injustice and shifted the subject.

"Old Lou losing that match was the worst!" Gu Xiye also shifted the aggro.

They shifted the blame back and forth. This wasn’t how a team should deal with conflicts, but it could also be seen that none of them really considered it very important. They still felt quite annoyed at it though, which was why they were blaming others.

"Who knows who he’s found this time!"

"Old Lou, hurry and lock the door!"

"I locked it last time too, but this guy set up a tent outside the door and almost started a barbecue outside."

The five entered a lively discussion. The others didn’t chime in. Anyone with eyes could see that, although Lou Guanning and the other four appeared annoyed at him, they were undoubtedly friends. Their relationship wasn’t shallow either. How else could he keep invading the team’s practice room again and again?

But from this guy’s behavior, he was clearly a bad friend.

The five were still chatting with each other. Their bad friend’s

voice had already sounded out from outside their door: "I'm back! Old Lou, are you ready? This time, don't run! He's challenging you!"

"Oh oh oh, Old Lou is up." The other four hollered.

"I don't have time." Lou Guanning replied roughly.

"Haha, I don't think it'll take too much of your time." The bad friend laughed and already entered the room.

"Old Lou, don't hold back. Go!" The other four saw that the target was Lou Guanning and started urging him to accept the challenge.

Lou Guanning thought for a moment. He walked around in a circle and then picked a seat to sit down: "Hurry up and have your people come!"

As he said this, he took out his account card, but first logged into QQ.

"God, help me teach this punk a very very very very very good lesson!" Lou Guanning messaged Ye Xiu. Then, he tossed his account card to him. Under the cover of a row of monitors, the account card slid to Ye Xiu's hands without anyone else noticing.

"Isn't that a little too cruel?" Sure enough, Ye Xiu was on QQ, and he replied.

"Yeah, the cruler the better. Kill him in a second and not a second and a half!" Lou Guanning replied.

Chapter 928: Not An Easy Opponent

"Where's your guy?!" Lou Guanning's confidence instantly skyrocketed after handing his account card to Ye Xiu, giving a courageous yell.

"You seem very spirited, Old Lou. Don't be impatient. Your opponent will be here soon," saying this, he made to walk over.

"Don't come over! I won't give you a chance in hell!" Lou Guanning feigned worry about the other sneaking a peak and cheating. In reality, he was just afraid that the other would come over and his action of getting Ye Xiu to fight in his stead would be exposed.

"Wow, so serious? The more serious you are, the worse off you'll be!" He shook his head, sighing.

Though they were frenemies with one another, they were familiar with one another and knew each other well. Seeing how his guest was, Lou Guanning was quite surprised. This guy was strangely confident! Though this person didn't really play Glory himself, he interacted all too often with Lou Guanning and other Glory fans, and now came to try and throw a blow at Team Heavenly Swords. He had some sense of judgement. He was clear about Lou Guanning's current skill. A randomly found expert player probably wouldn't be able to handle Lou Guanning team, so the only thing he could hope for was that Lou Guanning would make some mistakes in the match and then mock them over the result. Now he was so confident from the start; had he found some sort of incredible player? Otherwise, with the high chance of

failing that a normal expert would have, wouldn’t his confidence be equal to holding his face out to be slapped?

Lou Guanning was a a little doubtful, but when remembering that a God was using his account, he felt much steadier. However, he still acted shocked after seeing this guy’s confidence, so that the other side wouldn’t see through him and asked, "Who did you find?" Being friends was a two way road. As Lou Guanning understood him, he also understood Lou Guanning. The other had displayed excessive confidence, so Lou Guanning had to seem not too confident to avoid suspicion.

"Haha, you’ll see," the other said.

This guy, he hadn’t managed to get a pro player, had he?

Lou Guanning mumbled to himself. After all, it was the All Star Weekend, so all of Glory’s pro players were gathered in City B. If this guy was willing to do whatever necessary to strike a blow at him, then he might’ve truly gotten a pro player to play for him!

As he was thinking, a figure came sight in the doorway. Lou Guanning stood up to take a look. Unfamiliar... This guy wasn’t a pro player.

"Great, you’re here. Then shall we start?" his frenemy looked eager, and made himself at home, giving his guest a seat at random.

The guest didn’t bother talking, sitting down and taking out an account card from his pocket, swiping it and logging in.

"Room number," Lou Guanning secretly sent the message to Ye Xiu and announced it loudly after getting a reply.

The opponent’s character quickly logged in and arrived at the arena, finding the room. The crowd had long since come to the room with their account cards to spectate. Using an account card to spectate made things much clearer than looking over one of the player’s shoulders. Lou Guanning himself was also among the crowd, watching the opponent enter the room with everyone else with his smurf.

Another Summer of Sleep.

Their opponent’s name was rather interesting, and, upon seeing the class, Lou Guanning immediately understood why he was the one challenged. This Another Summer of Sleep was also a Berserker.

"Let’s go with the usual rules. Random map, one match game," Lou Guanning said.

"You don’t want a few extra chances?" his frenemy asked.

"I don’t have the time," Lou Guanning grumbled, "Let’s start."

As he spoke, Ye Xiu very cooperatively chose the random map

option, and begun the match. The countdown ended and the two were loaded into the map. Their randomly selected map was the one on one indoors map, Tavern.

One on one maps were never very large, but compared to the most commonly used map Arena, which was chosen when neither side wanted to spend too much time making a decision, it was much larger. For indoors maps, having many rooms was more annoying than having many obstacles. For this Tavern, there were five interconnected rooms along with an underground wine cellar, a total of six rooms.

Ye Xiu's Loulan Slash and Another Summer of Sleep were each in their own rooms, not knowing where the other was and walking to their respective rooms' exits.

All the spectators went to check out Another Summer of Sleep's equipment. The equipment of normal players' accounts could never compare to pro accounts. Yet, with the big update, normal players had a chance to close the gap between them and pros.

However, this was just a chance. Was level 75 Orange equipment something just anyone could get?

Yet when everyone checked Another Summer of Sleep's equipment, they were shocked. He had four pieces of level 75 Orange equipment already and this included an Orange weapon: Broadsword Edgeless. There was no need to mention the eye-catching level 75 Orange equipment's stats; but there was also a bonus effect at the end, Shatter, which increased the amount of durability equipment would lose in battle.

This was a vicious ability to have.

What was weapon durability? It was money!

If you simply found a blacksmith or something to repair your equipment in Glory, the equipment's maximum durability would decrease with each repair until it reached the lowest it could get and was no longer repairable. In order to prevent the maximum from dropping, you needed to find special materials to repair it with. The better the equipment, the more expensive the materials needed were.That meant, the better the equipment, the more money its durability was worth.

This durability-wrecking weapon was like a thorn directly in his opponent's head! What was even more terrifying, was if they entered a long endurance battle, then this durability-destroying weapon might even manage to use up all of its opponent's weapon's durability. In Glory, the lowest durability was one, if the durability fell to zero, the equipment would break and become more useless than trash.

"Could it be that this guy specifically got a weapon like this just to destroy our equipment?" Lou Guanning silently began to suspect again. Though the equipment of Team Heavenly Swords was comparatively low quality in the pro circle, it was still leagues above normal players. That was why, when this frenemy found people to play for them, they would provide the equipment. This guy might not be anything in Glory, but so long as you had money, getting equipment and other gear was rather easy. In order to make trouble for Lou Guanning and entertain himself, this guy

was very willing to make these sorts of investments.

It must be that guy's plan. Lou Guanning glared at his frenemy. However, with a god at the helm, Lou Guanning was certain that these schemes wouldn't work.

The two Berserkers darted about within the Tavern. Neither of them ran into the wine cellar, simply darting between the five rooms in an attempt to find each other. Finally, in one of the rooms, the two characters barged in through different doors and met each other.

Collapsing Mountain!

The one that struck first was Ye Xiu, using a very typical engaging move for Berserkers.

His opponent was very familiar with these mainstream tactics. Another Summer of Sleep jumped back slightly, and attacked with a Sword Draw, swinging his boardsword through the air. Collapsing Mountain's priority wasn't any lower than Sword Draw, so this Sword Draw wouldn't be able to send Loulan Slash, who was in the middle of performing a Collapsing Mountain, flying, but would still deal the damage. After completing this Sword Draw in close-quarters, Another Summer of Sleep jumped back a little again, accurately avoiding the range of even Collapsing Mountain's shockwave.

Ye Xiu was secretly rather shocked. This guy's counter attack with just these two jumps, the first jump was to avoid the blade

itself so he could counterattack at the closest possible distance, and the second was to avoid the aftereffects of Collapsing Mountain that Sword Draw couldn't negate. The timing of these two jumps was incredibly precise. Finesse could be seen from this detail and coincidences didn't happen twice.

Ye Xiu immediately became more serious towards this. If this was a random opponent, he would probably not care if Collapsing Mountain had hit or not and directly continue striking down and attacking. However, after seeing the two jumps, Ye Xiu realized that if he continued this attack without care, then he would be struck down by the other's counterattacks. So, without waiting for the Collapsing Mountain to finish, he cancelled the skill in midair and switched to a Guard.

With a loud clang, the Sword Draw hit Loulan Slash's Guard, and Loulan Slash took this moment to land. The two Berserkers, in the first clash of their broadswords, had both chosen to use Blade Master skills. The sound of the two broadswords clashing caused Lou Guanning's heart to jump. Who knew how much durability disappeared with this sound alone?

As Loulan Slash landed, Colliding Stab was immediately activated. The move was so swift it seemed like the character hadn't even landed and flew straight over.

The other had obviously not expected such skill from their side, harried as he dodged the Colliding Stab. Ye Xiu had Loulan Slash follow up with a Whirlwind Strike. The other's movements were swift as well, also using Whirlwind Strike. The two Berserkers wildly swung their respective broadswords at each other, the

sound of the weapons clashing ringing out over and over again as blood splashed, their health dropping.

With Whirlwind Strike, it was required for a player to tech and change the angles of each swings to maximize damage. The two were obviously both teching the Whirlwind Strike, sometimes striking their opponent, sometimes parrying. By the time the two skills ended as one, the damage each of them had taken was about the same. As for the health of their weapons, the durability, Loulan Slash was definitely at a disadvantage.

Not bad!

The two thought to themselves. This sort of clash between two of the same skills was the best at portraying one's skill. If they ended up with approximately the same result, that meant their skills were at around the same level.

Just who was this person?

Ye Xiu couldn't help but carefully consider this question. How many people in the Glory circle could fight him to a standstill? Ye Xiu hadn't thought anything of it and didn't bother to look when the other came, but now he realized that this opponent wasn't easy to beat. If he wanted to look again, it was too late, because the two screens were in the way.

As for the challenger, he wasn't as surprised as Ye Xiu. After all, he thought his opponent was Lou Guanning and Lou Guanning was a pro player. It wasn't surprising that they would be about the

same skill level.

"Again!"

Neither side spoke, only letting the word ring in their heads. The characters struck as one, broadswords a streak of crimson shadow. With another loud clang, this Wild Blood Strike, both striking at similar angles, became parries in the end.

Lou Guanning’s heart was breaking!

God, don’t play around like this! If you continue like this, you’ll break my equipment! Please show a little more variation...

Chapter 929: Wild Exchange of Skills

The Wild Blood Strikes hit and both characters entered a short stun from the impact. Then in the moment that the stun ended, the characters attacked at almost exactly the same time. With a woosh, the two Berserkers both sent out a Gore Cross. This skill consisted of one horizontal strike and a vertical one. For two characters, that was a total of four strikes, yet only two clashes sounded out. The two had attacked at exactly the same time, even the sound effects were simultaneous.

Clang! Clang!

The Gore Cross clashed again, throwing sparks out. There wasn't much an an impact from these low level skills, so the two characters didn't pause in their movements. However, after this strike, Loulan Slash's broadsword's durability had gone down by a point.

It wasn't like durability fell quickly, otherwise under this sort of design, who could be able to afford maintaining their equipment? It was because these too fought too wildly, meeting attack with attack that their equipment would take so much wear. In a game like Glory, there were many small details like this. If you considered the addition of Another Summer of Sleep's Edgeless' bonus effect, Shatter, Loulan Slash's weapon's durability was draining rather quickly.

This one point drop in durability had Lou Guanning's heart in his throat. Like a scaredy-cat, Lou Guanning silently opened up a calculator. He wanted to calculate how long this battle could go on

according to the time it took for this one point drop in durability.

Yet, before he even finished calculating, the situation changed. The two stopped meeting attacks with attacks, but instead started a fierce exchange of skills. However, this exchange of skills was a little too wild. There was little to no dodging or parrying, just exchanging hit for hit. Blood spurted from the two characters uncontrollably, and both Berserkers' broadswords were stained crimson with realistic blood. When they paused, there would be drops of blood that fell to the ground.

Though the two characters were both Berserkers, they had different equipment. That meant their health, defense, attack, etc would all be different. However, after this exchange, the percentage of damage each character had taken about the same. That was enough to show that there was a method to this seemingly crude exchange of blows. If it wasn't for the fact that they could maintain this balance, one side might've broken off from this exchange. Their silent agreement allowed both characters to reduce their health to 50 percent. The two Berserkers paused in their attacks.

Half health was a special point for Berserkers. Their passive skill, Blood Awakening, would be activated at half health. From this point on, the lower health the Berserker had, the higher their damage would be. From now onwards, how to exchange health for power was all a test for the player.

Lou Guanning was also a Berserker player, and seeing the pause between the two, immediately understood what was going on. These two had probably realized in their first few tryouts of their

opponent's ability that the other wasn't an easy opponent, so they had decided to simply skip the first half of their health and entered the Berserker's Blood Awakening state to settle this.

The two's true ability would only be shown in the following clash!

Lou Guanning was extremely curious who this person was who could go toe to toe with a god. He wanted to stand up and take a better look, but he was currently pretending to fight a match, so he could only wait impatiently.

Everyone was focused on watching this match, and as the two paused in their movements, silence reigned in the room for a moment. The two Berserkers slowly raised their broadswords and began to circle each other step by step. Every action was extremely careful.

Fwooosh!

A bloody streak of energy shot out. Another Summer of Sleep was the first to attack. Slashing his left hand on the edge of his sword, he made a Blood Sword.

Ye Xiu had Loulan Slash quickly sidestep it. Another Summer of Sleep had already began another attack, a Colliding Stab bringing the character charging over with his sword. Ye Xiu almost seemed like he couldn't react in time, Loulan Slash standing still in place. Yet, in the moment they came into contact, he suddenly acted and the two swords collided once more.

Clang!

The loud noise caused Lou Guanning's heart to stutter again. These two weren't going to start again, were they?

Yet the results weren't so. In this collision, Loulan Slash was definitely at a disadvantage. Though Ye Xiu had also responded with a Colliding Stab, in that instant, to resist Another Summer of Sleep's, Another Summer of Sleep had a running start, so the momentum of the attack was very different from Loulan Slash's. This clash of similar skills was Another Summer of Sleep's victory, and Loulan Slash skidded backwards. Not only did his weapon durability take a hit this time, his shoes probably lost quite a bit, too.

But with the current situation, Lou Guanning couldn't spare any heart to care about that. This action by the god was an obvious error. At times like this, what you needed was a purely defensive move like Guard. Parrying wouldn't be able to neutralize the charged energy from Colliding Stab. How could such a mistake happen with this god?

Did he have a plan?

Lou Guanning quickly thought of this. As expected, Loulan Slash, who had been pushed back, swiftly countered with a Collapsing Mountain. Another Summer of Sleep took this hit full force, from head to toe. He had no way of avoiding it, because he was still in the ending lag for Colliding Stab's animation and was locked in

place for a moment by it. This was the timing Ye Xiu used to strike back.

Nice one!

Lou Guanning almost yelled aloud.

Using Colliding Stab to defend, Ye Xiu couldn't neutralize the impact from his opponent's Colliding Stab, but managed to neutralize the small stun the last impact would have on him. This allowed him to counterattack immediately. A Collapsing Mountain was timed just right, making his opponent incapable of avoiding it. With this, their exchange of skills had become two for one, with Ye Xiu obviously at an advantage. Collapsing Mountain hit full on, dealing much more damage than what little Another Summer of Sleep had dealt using his higher priority move.

In addition, analyzing this from a Berserker's point of view, Ye Xiu's choice to react with a Colliding Stab was a way of trading a little bit of health, allowing his attack to increase in strength.

How spectacular! Lou Guanning was, after all, a player of this class, and was able to instantly organize the information within the situation. In comparison to those who weren't familiar with Glory and just here to spectate, he was able to obtain way more information.

This Collapsing Mountain was just a start. When had a pro player's combo ever only consisted of one skill? Any time you managed to hit your opponent, you should always follow up with a

flurry of attacks. That was a part of being a pro player.

As soon as the Collapsing Mountain hit the ground, a Back Slash following immediately. Then his body began to glow with a bloody light, using Berserk, Gore Cross, Heavy Hit… A string of skills landed. When Berserk neared its end, a Wild Blood Strike came down and sent Another Summer of Sleep spinning through the air. Loulan Slash didn't let up, slashing his left hand on the edge of his blade and activating a Blood Sword, getting one last strike in. After this, Berserk came to an end and Loulan Slash didn't keep chasing after, watching as Another Summer of Sleep landed, rolling to his feet.

This torrent of attacks directly chunked 15 percent of Another Summer of Sleep's health. Lou Guanning wasn't here just for fun, he was also analyzing as the battle went on. If it were a normal player, they would try to get in as high of a combo as possible after the first hit, as if that would maximize the damage. However, the torrent of attacks unleashed by that god didn't pursue that. He had accurately utilized Berserk's period of effect, and his choice of skills was all focused on control; they were all skills that made it hard for his opponent to break his combo.

The combo wasn't long, but its effects were impressive. Berserk's period of effect had been used to its fullest potential, taking 15 percent of health with it. If it was a normal player, they probably wouldn't be able to do as much damage even with a longer combo, and that was disregarding the possibility of their opponent breaking out of their combo.

So smart, so much depth!

Lou Guanning thought in awe, but at this moment, Another Summer of Sleep adjusted himself and immediately began to counterattack. His character didn't use a skill, but rapidly approached Loulan Slash.

Ye Xiu, of course, wouldn't back down. Loulan Slash charged forth to meet him. The two Berserkers still had quite a bit of distance between them when Another Summer of Sleep attacked first again. Colliding Stab, it was Colliding Stab again.

Was this guy's style so simple? Lou Guanning mumbled to himself. This skill again; wasn't he afraid of getting beaten the same way again?

Yet this time, Ye Xiu didn't use the same method as last time, but instead had Loulan Slash dodge this attack.

Why? Loulan Slash was confused. Having struck air, Another Summer of Sleep immediately cancelled the skill and his left hand grabbed out, crimson as if blood were pouring from his grasp.

Soul-Devouring Crimson Grip!

This was an AoE control skill, and all the characters in the range of Soul-Devouring Crimson Grip would be gripped by the aura of blood and dragged towards the character that used the skill.

However, this skill only took control of the target's movement,

and not any other actions. Being pulled over didn't affect the other's ability to mount an offense. So, this skill would usually be used against ranged characters. For melee characters, it was just like giving them an accelerator.

Another Summer of Sleep's atypical decision confused Lou Guanning. As for Ye Xiu's Loulan Slash, he used this to power up a Colliding Stab, charging at his opponent.

Clang!

This was the sound of weapons colliding that made Lou Guanning's heart ache the most. Another Summer of Sleep didn't back down, but swung his sword to meet his opponent, using a Whirlwind Strike. The two swords clashed and though Whirlwind Strike was a higher level skill, it couldn't neutralize the impact of Colliding Stab. Another Summer of Sleep was knocked to the side, but he would've never thought that after sliding back two steps, Another Summer of Sleep would forcibly take a step forwards and strike Loulan Slash with another hit from Whirlwind Slash.

Slide back, advance , strike…

Another Summer of Sleep continued to use this strange routine to attack and Loulan Slash quickly understood that he was using Whirlwind Strike's controllable movement effect to neutralize the impact of Colliding Stab.

This, it was too confident…

Loulan Slash was secretly shocked. If you had him go and complete these mechanics, he wouldn't have the confidence to do so.

Then, Another Summer of Sleep made another action that Loulan Slash couldn't understand. After Whirlwind Strike neutralized the knockback, Another Summer of Sleep resolutely cancelled this skill and activated a new skill. By then, Whirlwind Slash still had at least a third of its time left. Why would he give up on the damage of the rest of this attack?

Gore Cross, Back Slash, Destruction Slash…

Another Summer of Sleep began a series of attacks as well, but Lou Guanning didn't think much of it. A god could easily break this sort of combo, right? Yet the combo was never broken and Loulan Slash took it all. Lou Guanning was shocked. What was this? Trading health?

Chapter 930: Calculating is Useless

The two inactive pro players were fighting a match even more difficult to understand than what was seen on stage in the Alliance. For a moment, Lou Guanning couldn't figure it out. It wasn't rare for Berserkers to trade health, but God's way of doing it was just too unprofessional. No one was going to just stand there and let the opponent hack them to increase their damage. The correct way should be like when Ye Xiu used Colliding Stab previously. It was calculative, and it had a purpose. From a long-term perspective, trading skills should make up for the health lost, especially in a 1v1.

Perhaps he was waiting for the right moment to break the opponent's combo and counterattack?

Lou Guanning could only guess. As a result, he began viewing the fight from this perspective and looked for openings. Lou Guanning's eyes lit up!

This opening was too good. He could use Wild Blood Strike and directly counter attack. It should be here, right?

During the time it took Lou Guanning to think of all that, Loulan Slash was hit again.

Why is he not using it? Lou Guanning was depressed. It was such a good opportunity... Suddenly, Lou Guanning realized where the issue lay.

Using Wild Blood Strike to forcefully counter the attack was

certainly a good choice, but could Loulan Slash make this choice at that moment? His Wild Blood Strike was probably on cooldown.

As a result, Lou Guanning instantly understood.

When he carefully recalled Another Summer of Sleep's offense, Lou Guanning realized that those places, which he thought could be broken, were only in theory. In reality, those combos corresponded perfectly with Loulan Slash's skill cooldowns, leading these combos to be incapable of being broken. Ye Xiu wasn't trading his health away, but was truly being suppressed.

The person at the scene is baffled, but the onlooker sees clearly. That saying wasn't always true. If you weren't the player, some details could easily be missed. In that case, the saying should be that the person at the scene sees clear, but the onlooker is baffled.

After recognizing this point, Lou Guanning also immediately realized that God being on the defensive was about to end. Skills wouldn't permanently be on cooldown. After using Wild Blood Strike, Loulan Slash's skills had already been refreshed, but if Another Summer of Sleep was able to figure out his opponent's cooldowns and create such a combo, how could he not know that? After this attack, Another Summer of Sleep quickly activated Berserk. He dragged on the previous wave of attacks using Berserk and ended the combo with a high-level skill.

28%!

Another Summer of Sleep's wave of attacks lowered Loulan

Slash's health by 28%. Loulan Slash's previous combo had only taken away 15% of his health, so under the effects of Blood Awakening, he possessed powerful combat stats. In addition, his combo had been far longer than Loulan Slash's. His combo was terrifyingly strong.

Lou Guanning couldn't help but be worried for Ye Xiu. Another Summer of Sleep's precise calculations and comboing proved that he was absolutely a top-tier expert. The opposing Berserker's skill level was a good level higher than his own. Lou Guanning didn't think he would have the ability to complete a chain of attacks taking the opponent's cooldowns so precisely into account, even more so facing a God.

Lou Guanning had all sorts of thoughts. The battle didn't stop though. After taking an enormous amount of damage, the first thing that Ye Xiu did was have Loulan Slash counterattack.

He was also taking advantage of the opponent's cooldowns!

Lou Guanning watched with understanding this time. He understood this strategy, but he couldn't utilize it as perfectly as Another Summer of Sleep. His set of combos made it seem as if the holes in Loulan Slash's skill cooldowns were lined up one after the other. His efficiency was unimaginably high.

If this guy could do it, God could probably do it too, no?

Lou Guanning was incomparably confident on this point, but he didn't consider that if Another Summer of Sleep could do it, then

he would also be wary of it too. When the two Berserkers clashed again, Ye Xiu didn't quickly gain the upper hand like Lou Guanning had imagined. Another Summer of Sleep had been fighting wildly the entire time. Once he gained a clear advantage, he suddenly became a lot more conservative and emphasized defense.

The two characters once again began trading blows to reduce their health.

At the moment, Another Summer of Sleep had more health, while Loulan Slash had less, but because of the existence of Blood Awakening, his attack power was stronger. As a result, trading blows became more complicated. Which skill to choose required precise calculation.

The pace of the battle was still extremely fast, as if neither side wanted to give the other time to carefully think. As the blood splattered, the health of the two characters dropped. The observers watched the numbers change to see which side was winning or losing the exchanges.

God was slightly winning!

Lou Guanning concluded. Before, he had even pulled out a calculator to compute the loss in stamina for both sides. Later, he got so absorbed into the battle and forgot to close it. Now, he took it out again and nimbly computed it, reaching a conclusion very quickly.

This slightly winning wasn't enough! Because God's health value was lower. If this trade continued, Loulan Slash would be the one to fall first, unless he could suddenly find an opportunity to deal over 5% of his opponent's health. However, with how cautious both sides were being, this type of opportunity would be unlikely to occur.

Lou Guanning was anxious. After looking for a bit, he suddenly discovered that the health of the two characters wasn't decreasing at the same rate as he had predicted. Lou Guanning took out his calculator again and confirmed a discrepancy with his previous calculations. After puzzling over it for a bit, he soon figured it out. It was because it was a battle between two Berserkers. As their health fell, their attack power would constantly be changing, so trading attacks was much more complicated for them than with other classes. In this confrontation, besides testing the knowledge and technical skill of the two sides, it also tested their ability to calculate while fighting.

But due to the fast pace of the battle, it might be very difficult to do that for someone like Lou Guanning, who was using a calculator to make precise calculations. In this battle, their calculations most likely came from experience and intuition alone.

The two continued fighting. Lou Guanning had a calculator in his hands. He thought that he would have a better grasp of the situation than the two players, but in reality, because of how their battle strength changed as their health decreased, there wasn't much point in Lou Guanning calculating anything because he couldn't make any future inferences based on the numbers. As for deciding who was winning... just looking at the health on both sides was enough. Calculating wasn't necessary.

Lou Guanning was calculating wildly like an idiot until the health of the two sides kept surprising him. Only then did he suddenly realize that he was being stupid. It was pointless to calculate. The only thing that could be concluded was the overall situation.

After a series of back and forths, Another Summer of Sleep's health was at 10%, while Loulan Slash's health was at 7%. There had originally been a 13% difference, but it had been pulled closer by 10%. Lou Guanning immediately started playing with his calculator again. By checking the rate at which their health dropped from trades, he realized that if Ye Xiu could keep this rate up, using his 7% to make a comeback over the enemy 10% was set in stone.

He really does deserve to be called a God!

Lou Guanning's worship for God increased, but then, the situation abruptly changed. The trading of attacks was disrupted. Another Summer of Sleep suddenly began fighting for the initiative.

"Tsk tsk..." Lou Guanning sighed, "This guy's skill level is really high. He's realized that if this continues, he'll lose. He has to put his all into the fight! But I'm sure that this is all within God's calculations. He must be prepared, right?"

From Loulan Slash's response, Ye Xiu had been prepared, but not longer afterwards, Lou Guanning discovered that Loulan Slash was still being suppressed.

6%...

5%...

4%...

Even though it wasn't considered a combo by the system, it was clear that Another Summer of Sleep held the upper hand. Blow after blow reduced Loulan Slash's health. He himself was also losing health, but with his health advantage, as long as the trading between both sides was equal, the one to fall in the end would be Loulan Slash.

How is that possible?

Lou Guanning was shocked. Victory and defeat was about to be decided. He felt so nervous that he couldn't calmly analyze the situation anymore and glanced at God sitting over there. Ye Xiu's expression was as calm as ever. His hands never stopped moving. However, he let out a light sigh; it didn't escape Lou Guanning's eyes.

He's going to lose!!!

Lou Guanning realized. He turned his head to check on the battle. Loulan Slash's health had fallen to 1%. Another Summer of Sleep's health was still around 5%. In the final stage of the battle, not only was Ye Xiu not able to pull the health disparity closer, the other

side had increased the health difference to 4%.

Will there be a miracle?

Lou Guanning was still looking forward to it. Loulan Slash fell in the end. Ye Xiu had lost.

Who is this guy!

Lou Guanning's astonishment couldn't be described using words. He knew that there was always a winner and a loser in a Glory match. No one was invincible. Even God had lost numerous times in the pro scene, but he could not accept the reality in front of him. It wasn't just him. Chen Guo, Tang Rou, and Steamed Bun were so shocked that it looked like they had just seen the impossible.

Even when Loulan Slash only had 1% health remaining, they thought Ye Xiu would immediately suddenly burst out. It was only when Loulan Slash actually fell did they come back to reality. For them, Ye Xiu losing was even more shocking than Ye Xiu suddenly make a comeback with just 1% health left.

The practice room was completely silent. Lou Guanning's bad friend unexpectedly didn't jump out to start taunting him despite it being such a rare victory for him. For Lou Guannin's friends, this was definitely a miracle. This bad friend was also staring into blank space when the match ended. This match had been extremely thrilling and intense, even someone like him, who only had mediocre interest in Glory, was sucked in.

A moment later, this guy came back to reality. He didn't immediately begin mocking Lou Guanning. Instead, he stood up and stared at him. His face was filled with astonishment: "Old Lou, when did you become so good?"

"Your skill level is truly exceptional. Even though I won that match, who knows if I'd win again if we played another round. We'd have to start over from the beginning." Another Summer of Sleep also stood up and looked at Lou Guanning.

Lou Guanning couldn't sit still. He felt very ashamed. He was just about to admit the truth, when Another Summer of Sleep suddenly shouted: "What the f*ck? Why are you here?"

"What?" Lou Guanning looked over in confusion. He saw that Another Summer of Sleep's astonishment was directed at Ye Xiu.

"It's you! No wonder!" Ye Xiu also looked over at the other guy. His expression was much more calm.

"You guys know each other?" Everyone else in the room was surprised.

"Ye Qiu!" When Another Summer of Sleep said this name, there was clearly a bit of anger within.

"Sun Zheping." Ye Xiu was still rather calm.

Chapter 931: The Injured God

Sun Zheping!

Those who had only started playing Glory two or three years ago might not recognize the name, but it wasn't possible for veterans with more than five years of experience in Glory to not know this name, especially for Berserkers. If they didn't know of Sun Zheping, they were probably lone wolves like Mo Fan.

When Ye Xiu said this name, apart from Tang Rou and Steamed Bun, everyone else was stunned.

Besides those two, everyone else in the room had played Glory for a very long time. All of them recognized him.

A God like Sun Zheping had once been all over the TV, news, and Internet. However, none of them had ever met him in real life, so when Sun Zheping entered the room, no one had recognized him. When his name was revealed, everyone started to see the similarities. Sure enough, it really was Sun Zheping!

Lou Guanning obviously knew this person the best. Sun Zheping. During his career, his fame as the number one Berserker shined even brighter than Yu Feng's current fame. Sun Zheping and Zhang Jiale had entered the Alliance before the Golden Generation and were the undisputed Best Duo. Their greatest achievement happened in the third season of the league; they had led Team Hundred Blossoms into the finals. Unfortunately, Ye Qiu and Team Excellent Era beat them, completing Team Excellent Era's

three-peat championship.

This was why Sun Zheping had gnashed his teeth when he saw Ye Qiu. He had almost become the champion, but Ye Qiu stole the title away from him. After that, when Team Hundred Blossoms returned even stronger than before, Sun Zheping injured his hand and left midway through the season. After the season ended, he retired quietly and never returned. Team Hundred Blossoms reaching the finals in season five and season seven could be attributed to Zhang Jiale alone. Sun Zheping's only chance for the title had been that one time.

The others didn't know that the previous confrontation had been between two top Gods. Everyone once again fell into shock. When they regained their composure, they all took the same action without any prior agreement. They all looked directly at Sun Zheping's left hand.

As the skill level in Glory rose, the effects of an injury became even more clear. Thumbs, wrists, elbows, and shoulders. For a pro player, these needed to be kept in good condition. Perhaps some pain could be tolerated, but in a high skill level competition, any amount of pain would affect the player's ability. The player would naturally be incapable of performing well.

There were numerous cases where complications arose for a player because of an injury. However, the most well-known and significant case so far still belonged to Sun Zheping. The injury in his left hand led to his departure from the stage midway through the season. In the end, he retired even more quietly. It had clearly been a very serious injury.

Right now, it had been four years since Sun Zheping's injury. He had unexpectedly appeared here and fought an intense match with Ye Qiu. Had his injury been healed?

Thinking of this, everyone couldn't help but look at Sun Zheping's left hand. When they looked at it, they saw his left hand was covered in white bandages.

"Ah!" Everyone heard a fearful cry. The source of that cry was Steamed Bun.

"This is... Wicked King Immolation Fist's Supreme Technique, Dragon of the Darkness Flame!" Steamed Bun cried out in awe.

"Steamed Bun, stop spouting nonsense!" Chen Guo was furious. The injury on Sun Zheping's left hand was a huge scar in his heart. Using that to jab at him was too inhumane, even if she knew that Steamed Bun wasn't speaking with bad intentions because Steamed Bun was staring intently and nervously at his boss, Ye Xiu. He wasn't actually thinking that Sun Zheping would undo his bandage and actually summon flames from hell to obliterate Ye Xiu, did he?

"Ahem, you hand is healed?" Ye Xiu probably felt that Steamed Bun's words weren't appropriate, so he immediately changed subjects.

"Not too good." Sun Zheping looked at his left hand, "But it's still enough to beat you."

"Oh my! How arrogant!" Ye Xiu patted the table, "How about another round? Little Tang, give me your account card."

"No need." Sun Zheping smiled slyly. If he wanted to forever brag about his win over someone, winning once and then ignoring him afterwards was obviously the safest method. Of course, Sun Zheping and Ye Xiu had definitely fought against each other more than once. They were the most famous Gods of Glory during the early stages of the Alliance. It was just that today, he didn't want to give Ye Xiu another chance.

"So it's Senior Sun Zheping. I've been too inconsiderate!" Lou Guanning found a chance to speak a few words and hastily said the words that a host should say. Even though he also played the Berserker class, but he didn't do anything in particular for this God. He didn't show any more respect to him compared to a normal senior.

And then……

"Senior, are you planning on returning?" Lou Guanning asked.

He didn't look at Sun Zheping being ancient God. He had become a pro player very young. Right now, he was still only 25 years old. Pro players nowadays underwent more scientific practicing. The length of their careers kept increasing. In the past, 25 was retirement age, but now, there were many players at this age struggling on stage. Their condition might not be as good as their prime years, but it was still early for them to retire. A 25 year old

could still come back to the stage and shine. Team Tyranny's extraordinary achievements this season made many forget the age of their three core players.

"Return……" A bitter expression appeared on Sun Zheping's face. He slowly lifted his bandaged left hand, "With my hand, I'm unable to cope with the fast-paced competitive scene."

"But what about just now……" Chen Guo questioned. The intensity of the match between Ye Xiu and Sun Zheping didn't lose out to any pro match. If not, the room wouldn't have been so shocked.

"It's fine if it's only from time to time, but I can't play for very long. If not, did you really think I would be scared to play a round against his Battle Mage?" Sun Zheping said.

The former number one Berserker had left the competitive scene for a very long time, but he was still as proud and confident as ever.

But the practice room instantly fell silent. Pain and bitterness hid underneath that pride. How could the onlookers not sense such a strong emotion?

It had already been four years since his departure from the competitive scene. Sun Zheping could still beat Ye Qiu though, which meant that he hadn't given up on Glory yet. During these four years, in some unknown corner, how much effort had he put into Glory? But in the end, this was the only outcome. How could

they not feel that same pain?

"Old Lou, think you'd cheat! That's too despicable, no?" Under this stifling atmosphere, someone suddenly spoke out. It was Lou Guanning's bad friend.

"Ahem..." Lou Guanning coughed. In the end, that issue hadn't been forgotten. After seeing the confrontation between Sun Zheping and Ye Xiu, he couldn't help but admit: "I would not have been senior's opponent."

After saying these words, Lou Guanning ignored his bad friend. Then, he suddenly turned his head towards Sun Zheping as if he had made an important decision: "Senior, are you interested in joining our Team Heavenly Swords?"

"Hm?" Sun Zheping was surprised, "Did you not hear me? I'm unable to deal with the fast pace of the competitive scene."

"I heard you clearly, but I also heard that an occasional match wouldn't be a problem, no?" Lou Guanning said.

Sun Zheping continued to be surprised: "You need that type of player?"

Any pro player would cost quite a sum of money for the team. Spending this money to raise a player, who could only play a limited number of matches and suddenly step down because of a sudden injury, was something no team would want. When he

heard Lou Guanning's invite, Sun Zheping was surprised, but he wasn't happy because he felt that Lou Guanning's invite was out of sympathy. That wasn't something he was willing to accept.

"Of course it's needed. Our team needs a high skill level senior to guide us. Even if you don't show up on stage, we still need you very much." Lou Guanning said.

Sun Zheping hesitated. That was a solid reason, but it could also be an excuse for helping him.

Then, he heard Ye Xiu speak up: "Yeah, I told you guys before. Your team should have an old general. Even if his strength isn't good, he'd still be of great help to your team's growth."

"Are you saying my strength is no good?" Sun Zheping looked gloomy.

"Don't take it too personally." Ye Xiu reminded him.

"Senior, consider it!" Lou Guanning urged him. He wasn't pretending. Lou Guanning also didn't mind helping Sun Zheping out of sympathy. He dearly loved Glory and was both a player and an owner. He wasn't like any of the other owners who only formed the team based solely on financial interest. His urging was truly because he wanted a God like Sun Zheping to join their team. If Sun Zheping really had recovered from his injury, Lou Guanning would have been more careful with his invitation. Even if the invitation was successful, it might not be handled well.

Team Heavenly Swords didn’t have an experienced player guiding them like Ye Xiu had recommended them to have. It wasn’t that Lou Guanning couldn’t do it. With Team Heavenly Sword’s financial resources and their momentum as a new team, finding this type of player wasn’t difficult. In reality, it was because of Team Heavenly Sword’s unusualness that he didn’t do it.

This Sun Zheping had the skill, but because of his injury, he couldn’t participate in matches like a normal player. For Sun Zheping himself, it was truly a tragedy, but for Lou Guanning, someone like him was just too appropriate for their Team Heavenly Swords.

"Join us!" Lou Guanning continued to urge sincerely.

Sun Zheping was starting to feel tempted, seeing his attitude.

"I could give it a try." Sun Zheping finally nodded his head.

"Great!" Lou Guanning was excited, "Senior, what requirements do you have? Should we talk about the contract right now? The season’s transfer window has already closed though. Senior, you’ll have to wait until next season to come out on stage."

"I know that." Sun Zheping nodded his head.

"Hm? Then for the next half of the season, why not join our Team Happy?" Ye Xiu suddenly said.

Chapter 932: For Victory

"Happy? In the Challenger League?" Sun Zheping still cared greatly about Glory, even knowing the current situation of the Challenger League.

"Yup!" Ye Xiu said joyfully, "It's the Challenger League, so it's nowhere near as intensive. You can have a go and try to find your footing. You'll also get a chance to go against Excellent Era in the Challenger League! Take it as a chance to get your revenge on them for taking your championship all those years ago."

Everyone cast him a sidelong glance.

The Excellent Era that had taken the championship from Hundred Blossoms, wasn't it this God that had led them? Now he was talking as if he had nothing to do with the event.

Yet before Sun Zheping could say anything, Ye Xiu slapped the desk and shouted, "You're really a lucky one! There's only one more round until the offline matches begin. You can still make it. Otherwise, if you were just a bit late, you wouldn't have the chance with the offline matches starting!"

The rules of the Challenger League were that you could switch and add team members in the online elimination rounds. However, after arriving at the offline matches, it wasn't so lax. It was almost like actual pro matches.

The way Ye Xiu put it, it was like he was giving Sun Zheping a

great opportunity. Everyone stared at the old god, stunned. Would Sun Zheping cherish this "opportunity"?

"Do you want me to help you take revenge on Excellent Era?" Sun Zheping smiled coldly.

"Revenge?" Ye Xiu smiled, "I just want to win."

"Good, it’s the same for me too," Sun Zheping replied.

"Hero, let’s go forth together!" Ye Xiu said.

"Sign me up." Sun Zheping flicked his hand and an account card flew towards Ye Xiu. To register an account card for the Challenger League, you just had to swipe and log in with it.

"Good choice!" Ye Xiu caught the card, and immediately logged into the webpage to update Happy’s team roster. The crowd was staring again. What? With just a few quick exchanges, a seemingly very important decision had been made just like that?

By the time everyone came back to their senses, Chen Guo was the first to become excited! Their team had gained just gained a legendary member; didn’t this mean they had an even greater chance of defeating Excellent Era?

As for Lou Guanning... In theory, Sun Zheping had already agreed to join Team Heavenly Swords, so he was technically already a member of Team Heavenly Swords. Even if he couldn’t

play for them this season, shouldn’t he first make sure the team was ok with this before agreeing? Any normal boss would probably be pissed by this development, but Lou Guanning didn’t mind, looking on cheerfully.

"Whatever, be happy, I’m leaving." Lou Guanning’s bad friend stood up and prepared to leave with a casual goodbye.

Sun Zheping, Ye Xiu, they were all renowned figures in the Glory circle, but he didn’t care at all.

"You coming to my party tomorrow?" Seeing his bad friend leave, Lou Guanning yelled after him.

"We’ll see!" His bad friend didn’t even turn around, simply waving his hand and leaving.

Lou Guanning didn’t bother paying him attention anymore, turning around to smile at Ye Xiu and co. "After the events tomorrow, I’m throwing a party. Why don’t you all come?"

Ye Xiu, Chen Guo and the others looked at each other, expressing their agreement. Coming to B City this time was on Lou Guanning’s invitation, so of course they’d have to go with him, as his guests.

"Then should we continue the tour? Senior Sun can come along too," Lou Guanning offered.

"Ok." Everyone nodded and continued their tour of Team Heavenly Sword's club with Lou Guanning as their guide. After that, they made arrangements for lunch and in the afternoon, Sun Zheping went to talk with Team Heavenly Swords about the details of their contract. Ye Xiu and co went to take a look around and then all ended up in the training room to play Glory.

That night, the All Stars Weekend continued. Tonight's events were focused on pro player audience interaction. The game content tonight was a mod for glory, but this sort of mod was designed officially. It would be released for players to download afterwards. For example, last year's All Star hurdle mod was very popular. Rumor had it that the Glory developers were planning on implementing these mods in the arena soon.

What were the contents of tonight's All Star games event? This was a huge part of the suspense of the second day. Even the pro players that signed up didn't know the details.

The opening ended and the event began.

The first game's map was shown through the holographic projector. It was, surprisingly, a swimming pool and high above it was a springboard. There was no need for explanation; everyone could guess what the first game was about: diving.

After the host called the All Star who would pick the audience members, the two of them explained the event together very cooperatively. Then, the All Star began to pick audience members.

The All Star that had come up for the diving event was the captain of Team Void, Li Xuan. As he picked, Chen Guo thought nostalgically of last year, when she and Tang Rou had gone up to participate in the event. Back then, she was just a Su Mucheng fan. Having the chance to interact with her idol at such a close distance had made her practically vibrate in excitement. Now a year had passed and her idol had become a friend that she could easily chat and gossip or go out for food and drink with. Chen Guo was very satisfied.

The Tiny Herb stadium could fit 18,000 people, and the entire place was filled to the brim. Without Su Mucheng manipulating things this time, Ye Xiu and co hadn't been picked. After the four lucky audience members arrived on the stage, the pro players who were participating in this event had gone on stage as well.

For the games event, it was usually interaction between four lucky audience members, an All Star, and three normal pro players. However, for this diving event, there were four other pros apart from Li Xuan who came down. What caught the attention of most was two ladies who came down together last, hand in hand.

"Next, we'll be grandly introducing two new faces to you," As the two sisters came down, the host was also yelling out a commentary, "These two are the two rookies that Team Misty Rain managed to discover during the winter transfer window, Shu Keyi, Shu Kexin! By their names, everyone should've already noticed that these two rookies are actually sisters. As for the characters they use in game, many of you have probably noticed during the Christmas event: Lower Your Head! None Dare Attack! Two very imposing IDs! If we didn't know, who would've thought it was these two beautiful ladies?"

Since this was a games event, the introductions made by the host wouldn’t be too serious. A close up of the two sisters was also shown on the big screen. They wouldn’t lie about it when they said they were beautiful.

A ruckus immediately spread through the audience. Even when Li Xuan had come down, the audience hadn’t reacted with such vigor. It could be seen that beautiful women gained special treatment wherever they were. It was especially so since girls were relatively less common in online games and even less common in the pro circle. Under these circumstances, two girls had suddenly popped up, and they were beautiful sisters to boot. The audience seemed to have abruptly converted to Misty Rain fans, yelling and shouting. However, among these yells, the cries of support and encouragement were the minority, most of it was just whistling and hooting.

"So it’s them!" Ye Xiu couldn’t help but lament. These two were rookies that had caught his eye and that he had tried to recruit, but ultimately went to Misty Rain. Now it seemed that apart from their skill, these two were quite something. Beautiful sisters, that was a very valuable selling point if played right!

No wonder the two didn’t even bother considering Ye Xiu’s invite before rejecting it. These two probably didn’t only consider their competitive skill. They had thought about other perspectives from the start, wanting to become stars in all aspects.

Thinking of this, Ye Xiu couldn’t help but sigh. As time went on and the alliance developed, the competitive aspect wasn’t as pure

and simple as it had previously been. At first, the players were only passively encouraged by their clubs to develop on the commercial side. Yet now, the players had started to think of their own values from different points of view. Because of this, the alliance would become greater, but Ye Xiu hoped that the competitive aspect would at least be kept pure. This was because, looking at other developments in sports, when sponsors and money became a deeper part of it, the competitive aspect would start to become impure. People would start to consider looking good in the sport, or even play scripted matches. When the players all lost their competitive spirit, this competition would become nothing more than an entertainment program. Ye Xiu hoped that a day like that would never arrive for Glory.

By the time Ye Xiu brought himself back to the present, the nine on the stage had all joked around with the host for a bit. The reason for having nine people participate was also revealed. The beautiful sisters Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin wanted to do a synchronized dive.

"They knew the contents beforehand!" Ye Xiu could tell that Misty Rain wanted to use this year’s All Stars to promote the two sisters.

The two sisters had the right to enter the Rookie Challenges, but the thing was, it was far better to promote the two together. In the Rookie Challenges, even if it wasn’t a true fight, there was no two on one. So if the sisters wanted to enter the stage together, they could only do so in other events. So, this diving event could show off the two sisters’ synergy rather well.

Splash!

As the beautiful sisters' characters hit the water at the same time, there was thunderous applause.

From the jump to all the movements made by skills in the air, the two characters had little to no deviation. Even the splash from the landing was similar. This had completely overshadowed the elegant movements made by all of the other participants. There was no need to talk about normal players, but just from the poise and timing, they had also outstripped the other pros by miles.

There was a need for scoring with diving and the system couldn't do something like that, so the job of scoring was given to the audience. Each seat had a scoring instrument, and the characters would be ranked by the total points they each gained.

Each character jumped three times and Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin's synchronization was practically perfect with every jump. Their scores skyrocketed, leaving the other seven in the dust and eventually winning the event without any doubt. The two had also managed to use this event to make a lasting impression on the audience. Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin had become the hottest topic of this year's All Stars. Misty Rain's promotion had exceeded expectations with just the first step alone.

For the games event on the second day, there was a parkour and shooting mod after the diving one. Naturally, it was the pro players that won first with ease. After that came the audience challenges. For the pro sent out, it was as always one of the home team members. Tiny Herb sent Gao Yingjie out, who easily

defeated a few audience members, bringing the events of the second day to a close.

Chapter 933: Cocktail Party

The third day of the All Star Weekend was always the main act. The All Star competition actually only referred to this one day as well.

Twenty four All Stars would, on this day, be split into two teams of twelve to battle. If it wasn't for the fact that the All Star Weekend was more of a show than anything else and the players wouldn't be so serious about victory and defeat, this could be seen as the creme de la creme of matches.

The teams for the twenty-four All Stars was decided through official channels. On principle, they wouldn't divide the members of a team into different groups. Historically, the number of players coming from each team had always been a good number to work with, so there was no circumstance in which they ever had to forcibly separate the members of the teams in order to form two groups with an equal number of people.

Today was no different. The twenty-four participants were harmoniously divided into two groups.

Samsara's three, Tiny Herb's three, plus Wind Howl and Hundred Blossom's pairs as well as Royal Style, Seaside's singles formed a team of twelve.

Tyranny's four, Blue Rain's three, plus the duos from Void and Misty Rain, as well as the single from 301 Degrees formed another team of twelve.

Though the split was peaceful, the alliance would usually separate the teams so that there would be some tension between the two. For example, last year's champions and runner-ups Samsara and Blue Rain wouldn't be placed together. Tiny Herb's Gao Yingjie and Blue Rain's Lu Hanwen were the two most eye-catching rookies in the alliance, so their two teams were also on different sides, attempting to create a match between the two. Wind Howl and Hundred Blossom's veterans had both transferred to Tyranny, and Zhang Jiale's transfer was especially nerve-grating for Hundred Blossoms fans, so these two teams were placed against Tyranny.

Apart from that, they had to make sure that the divisions didn't repeat too much. After all, many gods always made it into the All Stars year after year. What the audience wanted to see was different participants becoming teammates and opponents. If it was the same few people fighting each other every year, it would get tiring very quickly.

These arrangements were to make the All Stars as spectacular as possible. In reality, the All Star competitions were usually rather dense. Even though everyone knew this was just a show, they also knew that this was a show that gained the attention of many fans. The normal players were all too willing to use this match to judge which characters did better or worse. The pro players didn't want the normal players to misjudge them so easily. In addition to that, there was the tension that was purposefully injected, so the All Stars wouldn't give too much slack.

However, there was one awkward reality that had plagued two consecutive years of the All Star competitions. That was that there

was only one healer among the All Stars last year, Zhang Xinjie, and the same was true for this year too.

The one thing that no pro team would ever be without was a healer. Healers were a very important aspect of the team competitions, so their skill had to be good. For the healers of each big team, it was hard to rank them by strength since they usually didn't battle. This meant that most healers got approximately the same amount of votes for each All Stars. Zhang Xinjie was the current number one healer, but it was difficult to say how many of his votes were because of his identity as a Master Tactician. . When talking about pure healing ability, there was one undeniable God of Healing in the history of Glory and that was the player behind Tiny Herb's Paladin Wind Guard, Fang Shiqian. It was a shame that he had retired after the seventh season when Tiny Herb won their second championship. It was after his retirement that the Alliance had fallen into this awkward situation of only having one All Star healer on stage. And by the looks of things, this awkward situation would continue for a while.

The performance and skill among the current healers were steady, and there were no signs of anyone having abrupt improvement. As for the rookie healers, none of them seemed to have the same level of talent that Fang Shiqian had, who rose up above the other experts.

However, not having a healer wouldn't influence how spectacular the All Stars were. In last year's All Stars, the healerless side had gone wild, their team members unleashing burst after burst of intensive techniques, eventually defeating their opponents. It had to be said, however, that such a victory would probably only appear in the All Star Weekend. In this show, there

wasn’t as much pressure to win on the players, so they would be a lot more relaxed. There wouldn’t be any particularly serious tactical limits either, so unpredictable situations weren’t too unusual.

For this year’s All Stars, the situation of these gods unleashing burst after burst of skill didn’t appear again. The presence of a healer became the eventual deciding factor between the two sides. The side with Zhang Xinjie obtained the victory for this year’s All Star competition.

This season’s All Star Weekend had come to an end. In comparison to last year, there wasn’t as much to talk about, but it was still a highly successful All Star Weekend.

As the event ended and everyone left, Lou Guanning’s group had to exeunt via the pro player exit. Ye Xiu’s group of four made their way out by following the crowd. Lou Gianning had already arranged for a car to pick them up afterwards, directly taking the four directly to the cocktail party.

Lou Guanning’s party was in a place that wasn’t very far from the Tiny Herb stadium so they arrived rather quickly. With Lou Guanning having notified the staff of their arrival, they made their way in without experiencing any hitches. Lou Guanning and co had already arrived at the party, dressed immaculately. Seeing Ye Xiu’s group arriving, they hurriedly came over to welcome them.

"So cool! It’s just like watching a movie!" Steamed Bun had obviously never seen such an event, and looked around in curiosity.

"Haha," Lou Guanning laughed.

Chen Guo was more composed than Steamed Bun, and after looking around for a moment, she asked Lou Guanning in confusion, "How come I don’t see anyone else."

"Anyone else?" Lou Guanning turned his head to look around a little. There weren’t many people here, true, but it wasn’t like there was no one here either. What did she mean by "anyone else"? Lou Guanning was bewildered.

Chen Guo seemed to be afraid of missing anything and swept her gaze around again, carefully. "I don’t see any of them!"

Hearing this, Lou Guanning managed to decipher the meaning behind her words, smiling and saying, "You mean the other pro players? Of course they wouldn’t be here. I didn’t invite them after all."

"Ah?" Chen Guo looked back in confusion. She had thought that this party was hosted in hospitality as a gathering for the teams out of friendship.

"Haha, it is Tiny Herb’s turf, after all!" Lou Guanning said.

Chen Guo didn’t understand, but Ye Xiu did immediately. At first he had thought this party was a gathering for the teams, but now he realized that this guy truly had tact.

This time’s All Star Weekend was hosted by Tiny Herb. Heavenly Swords might also be a home team, but if they used this occasion to throw a party, there would be suspicions of trying to steal the spotlight. Especially since Heavenly Swords was very conspicuous from the start, if they did such a thing now, the other teams probably wouldn’t believe that this was done out of hospitality, but was rather a chance for this rich guy to gain attention and boast again. So, at this time, it wasn’t very appropriate to invite the teams over for a party. Chen Guo’s personality was rather bold, so she might not have considered such small details. After hearing what Lou Guanning had to say about Tiny Herb’s turf, she was still rather confused and asked, "Then what are we here for?"

"Making more connections with people is always a good thing!" Lou Guanning said.

"Who are all these people?" Chen Guo looked left and right.

"Come on, I’ll introduce you." Not many of the guests had come yet. Lou Guanning took care in guiding Chen Guo and the others, joining a random pair’s conversations and introducing them.

These two people were some sort of investment consultant and an executive director of a kind, rather imposing titles. No matter how big Chen Guo’s Internet cafe was, it wasn’t very upscale, so she had never interacted with thse kinds of people before. Then she heard Lou Guanning introduce her as Team Happy’s boss and she finally understood the point of this party.

"Getting sponsors?" Chen Guo quietly asked Lou Guanning after chatting about nonsense with the two for a bit.

"That’s right." Lou Guanning nodded.

It was only then that Ye Xiu’s group understood what connections Lou Guanning wanted them to make at this party. Bringing them here was extremely generous. Both being teams in the alliance, they could be considered rivals.

"Little Lou, you’re really too nice!" Chen Guo had completely accepted Lou Guanning by now, not having any further reason to dislike him.

Chen Guo had no experience in this sort of situation, but she had guts and the heart to give her all to the team. She wanted to be a good boss, so she dutifully went to find people to establish connections with. With Chen Guo’s openness, she was good at making friends on the fly, but her attitude became a little rude in this situation. Chen Guo evidently understood that as well, so she was careful to be a little more reserved. However, there were many people among Lou Guanning’s guests that didn’t really understand Glory and it’s competitive scene, so Chen Guo was having some difficulty communicating. However, she refused to give up, still inserting herself into conversations wherever she could.

This sort of thing wasn’t something Steamed Bun could manage either. This guy acted like he was in a zoo, wandering around randomly and occasionally running back to Ye Xiu’sgroup to gush about something he had just seen. Whenever someone came up to talk to him, he would introduce himself as Steamed Bun and

sometimes show them the tattoo on his left arm, shocking people left and right. Being able to expose your arm to this cold winter was rather impressive.

As for Ye Xiu and Tang Rou, the two stayed curled in a corner. Tang Rou had casually taken a glass of wine to sip at while Ye Xiu held a very deep ashtray, going through cigarette after cigarette and filling the air around them with smoke. Tang Rou was a radiant-looking lady, yet no one had come up to talk to her, all thanks to Ye Xiu.

They didn’t ask when the party ended. From when they arrived, guests continuously came in. Lou Guanning was at the center of it all, being able to chat a bit with everyone, no matter their age or gender. Then, when he glanced over at Ye Xiu and Tang Rou, he tapped his glass twice and dragged Happy into the spotlight. "Today, I have a few good friends that I would like to introduce to everyone."

"This guy..." Ye Xiu was helpless and could only come over with the others cooperatively as they were introduced.

Who would’ve thought that after this introduction, a voice of discord would appear in the party.

"Hahahaha, since when did a bunch of gamers get so serious as if they did anything of note?"

Everyone turned to look at the voice. The owner was a tall, handsome young man. He was rather rude, but he looked to be

gentle and refined with an extraordinary air.

"Who on earth is this?" Ye Xiu asked Lou Guanning.

"No idea!" Lou Guanning replied.

"I say, isn’t this your party?" Ye Xiu was a little exasperated.

"I threw it very casually and didn’t send out invites, so anyone who passes by can come in and see what’s going on," Lou Guanning answered.

Chapter 934: Hand Speed

"So in reality, the people that we're meeting today, you've only known since today, as well?" Ye Xiu looked at Lou Guanning.

"Hahahaha... Actually, my social life is mostly based in Glory as well. You should understand," Lou Guanning said.

Ye Xiu was speechless. He understood this all too well. That meant, though Lou Guanning looked like a social butterfly, he was, in fact, a hermit that was completely obsessed with gaming. However, his identity and background was different, so we managed to fit in here naturally.

"You seem pretty familiar with this place?" Ye Xiu asked. Ye Xiu and co didn't even need invites to get into this private club. With just a single notice from Lou Guanning and they could enter and exit at will. It was clear that he had good relations with this place's owner.

"Of course, we always come here to play Glory, after all!" Lou Guanning explained.

"Impressive..." Ye Xiu gave Lou Guanning a resolute thumbs-up. A year's worth of membership in this sort of club might cost several hundred thousand, maybe even over a million. Playing Glory here and playing Glory in an Internet cafe were two completely different concepts.

The two were still chatting over here when Chen Guo had long

since charged over to the guy with reckless abandon.

"What did you say!?" Chen Guo was very clear on the fact that anyone who could come here would all be rich and upscale. The young man in front of her looked like that too, obviously not a normal person. However, being mocked like this wasn't something that she could take sitting down.

"Yelling like that, you've used too much commoner's language, haven't you?" The young man glanced at Chen Guo, not moved by the fact that she was a beautiful woman, and continued to mock at them without care, "All you people know is how to play games. You don't know what to do with your lives and remain uncultured and uneducated. Does your existence truly have any value?"

Chen Guo was even more angry, but she couldn't help but admit that what the young man said was a rather common view in many parts of society. Even though Glory's pro circle was so active and grand nowadays, there were still many who didn't view gaming as any sort of worthwhile skill. When Chen Guo was chatting with all these people before, she had gotten such a feeling as well. For these people, Glory was no more than a tool they could use to earn money. Speaking of Glory's commercial future was much more effective than talking with them about how interesting or how classic this game was.

They didn't care what game this was or how interesting it was, all they saw was what profits this game could bring them. As for pro players? In their eyes, pros were just cash-trees. What pro players dedicated to this game was something these people wouldn't understand.

"I don’t have anything to say to people like you..." Chen Guo wasn’t a particularly eloquent person, her emotions were intensely felt, but hard to express with words. She could only bite out these words without thinking it through.

"Haha, see? Uneducated. Of course you can’t say anything. As for people like me, well, we can’t be compared to people like you."

"You can’t say that now!" Ye Xiu finally walked over, "Many players of Glory are talented in many ways. For them, gaming is just a way of relaxing, a hobby. It’s no different from if you come to this club to drink a little or go for a few rounds of cards."

"I’m sorry, I wasn’t talking about those people who see games as a pastime. I’m talking about you, pro players who don’t know anything but playing games."

"Who says that all we know is how to play games?" Ye Xiu said.

"Really?" The young man’s gaze swept across the room before alighting on a corner and he smiled, saying, "Then do you have any sort of talent that you can show everyone? How about the piano or some other kind of musical instrument? Why don’t you play a song for us?"

The corner which the young man had set his gaze on had a piano sitting there. This could be a decoration, or you could find someone to play tunes on it, or one of the guests could come up and play something for everyone. With those words, he turned to Ye

Xiu with a mocking expression, as if certain that the other would only humiliate himself here.

"Musical instruments?" Ye Xiu paused. "Talent doesn't necessarily mean music, no?"

"Haha, then what can you do? Drink tons without getting drunk?" The young man laughed exaggeratedly, glancing left and right as if expecting people to laugh with him. There were people who laughed with him, but everyone was very reserved in their laughter. No one openly laughed aloud.

"I apologize, but I'm even worse at alcohol. Then I'll play a tune, as you suggested?" Ye Xiu said.

"What did you say?" The man widened his eyes, face full of surprise.

Ye Xiu ignored him, walking over to the piano under the shocked stares of many people, including Lou Guanning and Chen Guo.

"I say," Ye Xiu suddenly spoke up again, "Do you know how to play, having challenged me to do so?"

"Of course," Despite his expression of disbelief, he still replied with confidence.

"That's good..." Ye Xiu reached out and pressed a random key before saying, "I'm going to play a tune. After that, I don't need

you to play it any better, I just want you show me that you, too, can play the original tune..."

"Hahaha," The person didn't wait for Ye Xiu to finish before laughing again. "You don't know how to play and are just going to play randomly, aren't you? Don't you think such tricks are rather boring?"

Ye Xiu smiled slightly, not explaining. His hands were already on the keys.

"Wow, this God has much more depth to him than he shows!" Lou Guanning breathed out in awe.

"This really is quite deep..." Chen Guo, who had just walked over, said, still stunned.

As they talked, Ye Xiu had already began to play. Like a storm that arrived without warning, it came suddenly, a burst of wild notes like an explosion, darting into everyone's ears.

"What is this?" Chen Guo was shocked, Lou Guanning stared dumbly, yet Tang Rou had already found humor with just a few notes, laughing very very cheerfully.

"What?" Chen Guo hurriedly asked. From what she heard, it sounded like Ye Xiu was just slamming on keys randomly.

"Flight of the Bumblebee," Tang Rou said.

"What?" Chen Guo was confused.

"This tune is called Flight of the Bumblebee. It’s a tune with a very fast rhythm; most people play it to show off their hand speed," Tang Rou explained.

"Hand Speed?" Chen Guo was stunned for a moment, before finally understanding why Tang Rou was smiling.

"How shameless, that’s just bullying!" Chen Guo said with a massive grin.

"Yup, he’s definitely bullying him..." Tang Rou nodded.

"That guy definitely can’t play this, right?" Chen Guo watched the young man, delighting in his misfortune. The young man’s face was twisted in shock, seeming to have no idea what to do.

"Not just him. At this pace, there’s probably no one on earth that can manage it," Tang Rou said.

"You’ve got to exaggerating!" Chen Guo was shocked.

"At least not that I know of..." Tang Rou also felt like she had exaggerated a little too much and hurriedly corrected herself.

With just these few sentences, Ye Xiu finished his performance.

Because he was so fast, it was just several tens of second before Ye Xiu had finished the tune. The crowd was silent, looking at Ye Xiu wide eyed. Out of the people here, there was probably none that didn’t understand music at all, and that was why everyone was so shocked.

"Should we clap?" Chen Guo whispered at Tang Rou.

"Probably not!" Tang Rou said.

"How come?"

"Actually, apart from being fast and accurate, there’s nothing of note about the performance itself," Tang Rou explained.

"He probably learned the song just to train his hand speed!" Chen Guo guessed.

"I think so..." Tang Rou said.

Anyone who had any form of accomplishment in music all shared Tang Rou’s thoughts. Such a fast performance was worthy of applause, but the problem was that this guy only pursued speed and nothing else. Any sort of tune had content and emotion, but this performance had pretty much no artistic aesthetic behind it. You could even say that this performance didn’t even have rhythm, it was just fast, fast, and faster, as fast as possible. Apart from that, he had been accurate. Applause for this sort of performance? Everyone felt like that was a disrespect to art.

Ye Xiu didn’t seem to care about this, standing up once he had finished and asked the perpetrator casually, "Should I give an encore?"

"You... You..." The man was a little panicked, but luckily he was someone with some skill and understanding. "Your performance was just fast; you don’t understand anything about music!"

"Don’t put it like that. All you can say is I’m not very accomplished in music, but I did, at least, manage to accurately play a piece, right? You’re up next," Ye Xiu said with a smile.

The man’s face was red, unable to say a word.

"Seems like you can’t manage it, what a shame, then..."

"I didn’t agree to anything!" This guy was evidently afraid that Ye Xiu would use this against him to humiliate him in front of everyone and luckily cut Ye Xiu off before Ye Xiu could make any sort of arrangements, and Ye Xiu didn’t continue. In the current moment, he couldn’t be bothered with civilities anymore, grabbing onto this like a lifeline and hanging on shamelessly.

"I never had you agree to anything, but you really can’t play it, can you?" Ye Xiu said.

"There’s no meaning to this sort of performance anyways!" The guy made an excuse.

"Well, since you can’t play it, then I can only deem you as someone who doesn’t know what to do with their life and is uncultured and uneducated," Ye Xiu said.

"You..." The young man was enraged, but someone tugged at him. Turning his head, he saw it was one of the employees from the club.

"Young master Lu, you’re drunk..." Hearing of what was happening, the staff of the club hurriedly came over. In the end, what they saw was the end of this young master’s thorough humiliation. On their way, they had already learned of the situation and knew it was this man that had been the perpetrator of this trouble.

Lou Guanning and co usually were holed up in the club playing Glory, rarely appearing in these social situations, so not many people recognized them. This young man obviously didn’t realize this, so he had no idea what sort of background the one who threw this party had. Seeing the pro players being introduced, he had resolutely began mocking them out of disdain. If he knew the background of the one that threw this party, he wouldn’t have made such a huge ruckus of this, even if he was disdainful. He didn’t have any sort of grudge, after all.

The club staff came to smooth things out. They couldn’t afford to anger any of these people and didn’t dare to show favoritism to any side. If they started calling people out, that would be excessive. That would be forcing one side to bow, and would probably anger a lot of people. So these staff came and gave this white lie in order to

give one side a way out. If both sides could compromise, then this thing would soon be over.

It was unfortunate that with the enraged young master Lu, this became a futile hope.

"I’m not drunk!" The man referred to as young master Lu responded angrily, seeming to be unwilling to let go.

Chapter 935: Could I Trouble You

"How was I?" Ye Xiu stopped paying attention to Young Master Lu, who was arguing incessantly, and returned to his little clique.

"Your hand position is too ugly." Tang Rou sighed.

"My left hand’s okay, but my right hand always feels a bit twisted." Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Chen Guo asked.

"My right hand is used to holding a mouse." Ye Xiu said.

"..."

"You probably only know how to play that piece, don’t you!" Chen Guo said.

"Of course not!" Ye Xiu said proudly.

"Oh?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"I know one other song." Ye XIu said.

"..." Chen Guo was once again rendered speechless. Knowing one piece or two was practically the same thing, no? It seemed like he

only played the piano to practice his hand speed.

"Which other one?" Tang Rou was quite interested.

"Pathetique third movement." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh." Tang Rou nodded her head.

"What's that?" Chen Guo didn't feel ashamed to ask.

"Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique. It consists of three movements. The third movement has a fast tempo." Tang Rou said.

"Uh..." Chen Guo stared at Ye Xiu. Her expression was complicated. It was hard to connect the guy in front of her and a famous musician like Beethoven, even in this situation.

Young Master Lu felt even more unhappy, when he saw them chatting pleasantly together. He completely ignored the club staff, who had tried to give him a way out of this embarrassing situation, and walked over: "I'm not done! Don't run!"

"Do you need another show of talent? Would you like me to show everyone some boxing?" Steamed Bun heard his words and jumped out excitedly.

"Box..... boxing?" Young Master Lu stared blankly. From his hesitation, that didn't seem to be something he was good at.

"Are you threatening me?" Young Master Lu looked at the guy, who was waving his fists around eagerly.

Steamed Bun looked puzzled: "Threaten? Isn't this a talent show? I do it once, then you do it. If you can't do it, then you lose."

Young Master Lu was furious.This guy must be trying to humiliate me! I haven't even finished settling that previous grudge and now this guy wants to take the initiative to strike at me.

"If you want to play this game, then I should be allowed to go first. The rest is the same. How about it?" Young Master Lu said.

"That's reasonable!" Steamed Bun nodded his head, "What are you going to be performing!"

"I'm going to play a piece too. If...."

"What? I thought you didn't know how to?" Steamed Bun interrupted and questioned him.

"Who says I don't!" Young Master Lu roared.

"You just said that you couldn't." Steamed Bun said.

"How does that count? I'm going to be playing real music!" Young Master Lu shouted.

"Real music? What's that?" Steamed Bun didn't understand.

"You'll know soon." Young Master Lu smiled with confidence and strode over to the piano. He knew very well that it was astonishing how the way that guy played the piece with purely speed and without rhythm nor musicality, it didn't mean anything. That guy had actually played a clever trick. However, speed alone couldn't capture an audience. Young Master Lu believed in his piece. Just based on the types of people here, his audience had superior taste. That guy's way of playing was only good for scaring plebeians who didn't understand music!

As if he was scared of being blocked, Young Master Lu quickly dashed over to the piano.

The party had gone down to a standstill. Everyone was watching the ongoing drama, but when Young Master Lu began playing his piece, everyone was gradually enamored by the music. Even for someone like Chen Guo, who couldn't appreciate the complexities of music, could recognize that Young Master Lu was on a higher level than Ye Xiu through just the simple reasoning that it sounded good.

"He really is quite good." Tang Rou nodded her head.

"Should we give him a round of applause?" Ye Xiu didn't really care.

"You're planning on bringing things to a conclusion?" Chen Guo

asked.

"Do you think ignoring him would be a good idea?" Ye Xiu said.

"Despicable!" Chen Guo wasn't happy. Putting it plainly, this time, Ye Xiu had left too big of an opening. He gave the other side an opportunity to counterattack. Even Chen Guo could tell that Young Master Lu was a superior piano player, let alone the others at the party. By the time that guy finished, he would arrogantly follow up with a provocation and push Ye Xiu into doing something beyond his ability. "Ignoring him" was too shameful of a solution.

"Have Little Tang go up against him." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?" Chen Guo looked at Tang Rou.

"Look at how clear she is on this subject and you'll know that she's an expert." Ye Xiu said.

"Really?" Chen Guo had always felt like Tang Rou wasn't an ordinary person.

"Mm... if you compare me to Ye Xiu, then I'd dare to call myself a God." Tang Rou smiled.

"Then what about compared to him?" Chen Guo said.

Tang Rou smiled, but didn’t reply.

During their conversation, Young Master Lu had finished his performance. The audience gave a sincere round of applause. Young Master Lu seemed very satisfied with his performance and politely bowed to express his gratitude, thanking the audience for knowing what was what; the audience recognized true gold and wouldn’t get swindled by that guy’s little trick.

"I say…." Young Master Lu looked over to their side smugly.

"Now it’s my turn to fight a round of boxing, right!" Steamed Bun jumped out excitedly.

"…"

"I’ll go!" Tang Rou smiled and stepped forward.

"Mm?" Young Master Lu saw that it wasn’t Ye Xiu and was surprised. He stood still, not moving.

"I can’t?" Tang Rou said.

"You’re also a pro player?" Young Master Lu said.

"I’m still a bit lacking compared to a pro player, but becoming a pro player is my goal." Tang Rou said.

Young Master Lu had been confident with his performance, so he displayed some grace in front of this beauty. He didn't say anything more and moved aside, inviting her to use the piano.

Tang Rou nodded her head as if to give a greeting to everyone and sat down.

Her two hands stroked the keyboard. In an instant, piano sounds danced about.

Fast!

Tang Rou played very fast, but it wasn't like Ye Xiu who only pursued speed. All of his notes had been squeezed together with practically no pauses. Tang Rou also played fast, but her playing had purpose and followed a certain tempo. Despite the fast tempo, every note was solid and steady, displaying her extremely deep fundamentals.

"Ah, it sounds familiar." Chen Guo heard Tang Rou's piece and felt pleasantly surprised.

"Uh, that's the other piece that I know how to play." Ye Xiu said.

Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique Third Movement.

"I've heard of it before?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"There are a lot of famous pieces that are recognized by everyone. Many just don’t know the name of the piece, that’s all." Ye Xiu said.

"Then the piece you played wasn’t famous!" Chen Guo said.

"Maybe you would have recognized it if someone else played the piece...." Ye Xiu said.

"Little Tang is playing better than that guy, right!" Chen Guo said.

"Can’t you tell just from everyone’s reactions?" Ye Xiu smiled.

Ye Xiu had shocked everyone, but that was because they didn’t think the piece could be played at such speed. On the other hand, Young Master Lu’s serenade had been quite good, and everyone expressed their appreciation towards it. However, Tang Rou’s performance was both shocking and appreciative. It was beyond their expectations.

As for Young Master Lu, the look on his face was even more brilliant. Even though he had been shocked by Ye Xiu’s performance, he didn’t feel embarrassed because he understood that even if he could repeat that same performance, it would just be a joke. Who played the piano like that? However, Tang Rou’s performance gave him a feeling of powerlessness. When it was obvious who played better than the other, the disparity between the two sides wasn’t small. Young Master Lu could not be blamed. Only those at a professional level could give rise to such a feeling of

powerlessness in him.

The audience erupted into an applause after the final note. Tang Rou politely expressed her thanks to everyone and smiled towards Young Master Lu.

"I feel sorry that a pianist at your level wants to become a pro player." Young Master Lu said.

"Then I'll have to trouble you." Tang Rou said.

"Aren't you letting down your family with that choice?" Young Master Lu said.

"I'll also have to trouble you with her family." A voice drifted over from the main entrance to the party. Everyone turned their heads to see who it was. When they saw the speaker, the expressions of many in the audience changed. There were clearly many who recognized this person, and in this type of club, someone who was recognized by the vast majority of the people here clearly wasn't someone simple. Even Young Master Lu's expression couldn't help but change when he turned his head to see the speaker. His expression was filled with disbelief.

This person had come over with a glass of wine. He clearly wasn't here for Lou Guanning's party. He walked over to the piano and everyone in his path moved out of his way.

"When I heard those piano notes, I thought it was you." The

newcomer walked directly towards the piano. He didn’t even glance at Young Master Lu and started talking directly to Tang Rou.

"Hee hee." Tang Rou didn’t say anything. She simply chuckled naughtily.

"Why are you here?" The newcomer asked.

"I dropped by with some of my friends." Tang Rou said.

"Oh?" The newcomer came with Tang Rou over to Ye Xiu’s little circle.

"This is my father." Tang Rou introduced.

Ye Xiu and the others looked at each other. They felt that Tang Rou wasn’t simple. Ye Xiu had been wondering if she had run away from home like he had, but from how the father and daughter spoke to each other, their relationship seemed very normal. If she had ran away from home, it would have been surprising if she wasn’t beat to death!

"These three are your friends?" Father Tang looked at Ye Xiu’s group and smiled.

"Yeah! Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, Steamed Bun." Tang Rou introduced one after the other.

"It’s Bao Rongxing. Hi, uncle." Steamed Bun replied rather enthusiastically.

"Hi everyone." Father Tang greeted. His next few words were ordinary words, expressing how he was indebted to everyone for taking care of his daughter. As for the other guests, they had gathered over almost like they were lining up. They were clearly trying to get an opportunity to say a few words to him. However, after Father Tang said a few normal words to Ye Xiu and the others, he gave a toast to everyone and then pulled Tang Rou to the side to talk.

Ye Xiu and the others didn’t know what exactly Father Tang’s identity was, but judging from how eighty percent of the searches for the surname resulted in him, Tang Rou was at the very least the daughter of a very influential family.

"Keeping one’s own counsel." Chen Guo sighed.

"Hey, that what’s his name isn’t done yet! Don’t run!" At this moment, Lou Guanning suddenly leaped out. Everyone looked over and saw Young Master Lu getting ready to slip away.

"After having enough fun watching the show, now you come out to say something?" Chen Guo said.

"I was having so much fun that I almost forgot that this was my party!" Lou Guanning said.

If the name Pathetique doesn't ring a bell, you're probably like Chen Guo, and just don't know the name of the piece. I'm sure you've heard of it once somehwere; it's very famous after all. There are some other remixes of it which you may have heard of before like Beethoven Virus or Remilia's theme, if you're a fan of Touhou. Here's a link to one classical interpretation of the piece. Just pretend it's Tang Rou playing :)

Chapter 936: Finisher

As the host of this party, Lou Guanning would lose a lot of face running into this sort of trouble. Then, Ye Xiu and Tang Rou came out to slap faces and. In the end, even Tang Rou's dad came, blow after blow landing on the troublemaker, resulting in Lou Guanning not even having the chance to make a move. If he really let Young Master Lu go just like that, how was he going to show his face in the future?

Young Master Lu had wanted to flee when no one was paying attention, yet someone had seen him. Running away without care was something that uncultured people did. For them, on the other hand, image was very important.

Young Master Lu turned his head back, afraid to initiate anything further, just waiting to see what Lou Guanning had planned.

"I remember there was a rule here, that if more than a certain number of members agreed, we could kick someone out, right?" Lou Guanning said, looking at the club staff that had yet to leave.

Everyone was surprised upon hearing this. They hadn't thought that this host, who had been watching the drama unfold all this time, would suddenly strike, and strike so viciously. Getting kicked from the club was a most humiliating thing.

Hearing this, the staff were also shocked, but the guest had asked for the rules, so he could only oblige and answer truthfully, "Yes."

"Wonderful. Then I suggest we kick out this uncultured, uneducated person, who doesn’t seem to have any idea what to do with his life. Does anyone concur?" Lou Guanning immediately called out. Ye Xiu and the others heard his tone, immediately reminding them of someone shouting and looking for a party outside a dungeon entrance!

The guests were all here to spectate. Who would concur to such an offensive decision? Ye Xiu's group weren’t members themselves, so they didn’t have the right to concur.

"I concur."

"I agree."

"I’m all for this."

"I’m definitely in accord."

It was then that several voices rose up in agreement. The guests were all shocked. Someone was willing to risk offending people and agree?

Ye Xiu’s group turned to look, only to find that the ones that sent out voices of agreement were Zou Yunhai, Wen Kebei, Gu Xiye, and Zhong Yeli. The four of them were composed as they walked over to stand at Lou Guanning’s side, looking at Young Master Lu tauntingly.

These people…

Ye Xiu paused for a moment before having a sudden understanding.

Zou Yunhai and the other three could give a response, meaning that they were members of the club, and if you wanted to join a club like this, you had to be worthy of it. If they were just Lou Guanning's playmates, then they would, at most, be like Ye Xiu's group, here as Lou Guanning's guests. If they wanted to be members, then they had to have some sort of background. If they were merely Lou Guanning's Glory friends, then that wasn't enough.

Seeing how these four were also dressed immaculately, fitting in completely with the environment, how could they possibly be normal Glory players? These four were also of the upper-class. Considering their age and how they were always holed up, playing Glory, it was evident that they couldn't have been young geniuses that built themselves up from scratch. They should also be the young masters of rich families.

Team Heavenly Swords wasn't just the creation of Lou Guanning, this one money warrior, but rather five money warriors.

No wonder they hadn't listened to Ye Xiu's suggestion to find a skilled veteran to strengthen their team. It was because their team, no matter what, would have them five as the core. This could not be changed. This team was theirs and the five of them were all bosses in their own right. They had built a team to have fun in the

pro circle, not as an investment. Anyone who came to Team Heavenly Swords would want to take the place of a core member. This sort of stable line-up of Team Heavenly Sword's was unprecedented and very possibly never to occur again. That was why the addition of a God like Sun Zheping who had special circumstances made Lou Guanning so happy. Otherwise, nevermind a God, any skilled player wouldn't be able to accept being a sub in a team where they would never have a chance to become a core player of.

The number of people who had concurred with the idea of kicking young master Lu out had suddenly become five. Young Master Lu's complexion became extremely ugly. He didn't recognize any of these people, but being members of this club, they definitely weren't normal people. Yet with the situation between them having escalated to this, Young Master Lu didn't bother to worry about offending them. Seeing that there were a total of five, he laughed mockingly. "So few people, I think that's far from enough."

"Count me in as well." Young Master Lu then heard a voice say from behind him.

Who was this?

Thinking of how Tang Rou's father had come before, Young Master Lu felt that this definitely was a good omen. Turning his head to look, he saw a person who only lacked the words "savage" written on his face walk in. The people who came in and out of the club, even the staff, were all well-dressed. Only Ye Xiu's group wasn't up to standard. This was also one of the reasons why Young

Master Lu felt disdain when seeing them: dog meat wasn't fit for ceremony. However, this person, was also dressed casually, not at all classy enough for this club. Yet since this person could concur, he also had to be a member.

Young Master Lu didn't recognize this person either, but he saw that the staff had already gone over to him, greeting him respectfully, "Young Master Zhong came."

"Yup, I came, do we have enough people yet?" The person referred to as Young Master Zhong was that frenemy of Lou Guanning's. The party had already been going on for half a day and this guy only arrived now, it was definitely not giving the host any face. Yet as soon as he came, the first thing he did was back the host up.

"Um, I still don't think it's enough..." The club staff said.

"Really? How many votes are we missing? I'll call them over!" As Young Master Zhong said this, he grabbed his phone. With the way he was yelling, it was like he was calling for reinforcements in a gang war or something.

Young Master Lu looked around at the people present, his head aching.

Tang Rou's father was obviously controlling himself. Considering his identity, he was above getting into petty fights with these juniors. After shutting up Young Master Lu with a single sentence, he had gone to one side to talk with his daughter,

completely ignoring the matter.

What about Young Master Zhong? He didn’t have any sort of elder’s tolerance. What this guy did most often in this club was make a big deal out of something small, and make it such a deal that there was no way to settle it. Causing trouble was his forte. Why was he so unlucky as to have run into this guy today?

At this point, going over to try and smooth things over would be uttering humiliating. Young Master Lu, face pale, glared at them as well as Young Master Zhong, whom he was secretly somewhat afraid of.

"I see how it is..." With that sentence, Young Master Lu turned and left.

"Hey, how come you’re leaving? You should at least struggle a bit. Are you just willing to get kicked out without any resistance?" Young Master Zhong was still yelling loudly.

Yet what reason would Young Master Lu have for turning back? He was gone quickly, as if he had activated an Assassin’s Shadow Move. In the end, he still ran like a street gangster that couldn’t win in a fight. However, this was a smart move considering the situation. Running and ruining his own image gave the other side a reason to stop. After all, running off like that was better than being kicked out. It would be too easy for others to misunderstand being kicked, thinking that he had done something terrible. It would ruin his reputation.

"How boring!" Seeing Young Master Lu running away, Young Master Zhong put away his phone as his interest flagged visibly.

"You're early!" Lou Guanning didn't express any form of gratitude to Young Master Zhong at all, his first words mocking how late this guy was.

"Shut up. I just came out of a Board of Directors meeting. Do you think I'm like you, having nothing to do but play games?" Young Master Zhong asked.

Ye Xiu's group was bewildered by the true nature of the relationship between these two, sweat dripping at these words. Wouldn't you call taking the time to find someone just to strike a blow at Lou Guanning's face "having nothing to do"? Board of Director's meeting? Placing something like that with this person was like talking about Ye Xiu and Beethoven together. They did not complement each other at all, completely unimaginable.

"Hey, you guys came too." Young Master Zhong even greeted Ye Xiu's group, surprising them greatly.

By the time he had finished greeting them, a waiter had already brought over a plate of wine glasses.

Young Master Zhong took one glass at random, raising it in a toast to everyone. "I'd arranged to meet with someone about a contract, so I was just passing by. Now that I've finished passing by, bye bye." After that, he put the emptied glass back on the plate and left.

"Your friend..." Chen Guo seemed to have a thought.

"Yes?" Lou Guanning asked.

"Was he really passing by, or was he busy and came over for you after hearing of your trouble?" Chen Guo asked.

"God knows what he's thinking." Lou Guanning seemed to think it not worth his time to consider Young Master Zhong's train of thought.

With Young Master Lu's departure, the party went back to normal. It was just that with Tang Rou's father here, more and more people began to pay attention to Ye Xiu's group. Originally, with their unfitting attire, everyone could tell they weren't on their level, so very few people initiated conversation with them. Now, everyone kept coming over. Even Ye Xiu, who kept hiding in a corner, smoking, had been pulled into a conversation by someone. Team Happy wasn't something that went in one ear and came out the other anymore. Many people had taken notice, prepared to research once they got back, especially what the heiress of the Tang family was doing there. That was the crucial point.

No one knew where Tang Rou and her father had gone. All they knew was that they came back a long time after they had left. With her identity, not dressed well? That could easily be ignored.

With Tang Rou's return, she was immediately surrounded. These

immaculately dressed people seemed to have forgotten all propriety.

"Don’t you think it might be time for us to leave?" Chen Guo hurriedly suggested, seeing the situation. Lou Guanning, their host, for the first time didn’t seem to want them to stay.

Seeing that Tang Rou was going to leave, many voices called for them to stay, but no one dared to cling to them and force them to do so. Seeing that they still wanted to go, the crowd could only try to leave a good and lasting last impression as they sent Ye Xiu's group off. Lou Guanning’s party almost ended because everyone wanted to say goodbye to Tang Rou.

"The car will be here soon." Lou Guanning could feel himself sweating at the sight of all these people who had lost their cool at the entrance of the club. These people were crowding around and fighting over a send off! The job of chauffeuring suddenly became a something everyone wanted to offer.

"My Lady!" It was at this moment that a car drove past the front door, parking itself at the side of the road. The chauffeur came out and called over.

An abrupt silence fell.

"Shall I drive you back?" The chauffeur said.

"What if we ride my dad’s car?" Tang Rou asked Ye Xiu's group.

Who dared to try and argue when Tang Rou’s father wanted to take them back?

"Sure." Ye Xiu didn’t care at all.

The four got on and left. Lou Guanning let out a breath of relief.

"I never would’ve guessed that Soft Mist would be the heiress of the Tang Family," Zou Yunhai said, edging over. They were still more used to calling Ye Xiu's group by their in-game tags.

"Yeah... who would’ve?" Lou Guanning agreed.

Dog meat wasn’t fit for ceremony is a saying referring to how dog meat can’t be served in ceremonious occasions/can’t be eaten in public because it’s unworthy, or something done only in private because dog meat is “lesser” and not classy enough. I believe Young Master Lu is referring to the way Ye Xiu's group act and dress not being worthy or classy enough. -Jouissance

Chapter 937: As Long As You're Happy

The chauffeur deserved his title as a professional. He drove the car swiftly and steadily.

Tang Rou sat shotgun, while Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, and Steamed Bun sat in the back. No one said anything. Chen Guo fished out her cellphone and went online to do a quick search.

A moment later, she gently nudged Ye Xiu and put her cellphone in front of him to look at.

Tang Corporation Limited. The corporation started out as a spinning, weaving, printing, and dyeing business. After ten years of growth, their main business was in spinning and weaving. They were an enormous conglomerate with developments in several other areas as well and had about 14,000 employees. The corporation could even be ranked on an international level.

There was a big picture of the corporation's chairman, Tang Shusen, who was the person they had just met: Tang Rou's father. He had a huge list of gorgeous achievements and honors. The Internet didn't have much information on his family background though. Was Tang Rou an only child? Did she have any brothers or sisters? Searching for Tang Rou didn't yield any results.

Their hotel wasn't far. No one said a word on the way there, and they soon arrived. The chauffeur got out of the car and sent them on their way. After bidding them farewell, he left.

After the car drove off, Tang Rou turned around. The other three were standing neatly behind her.

"Miss, would you like us to carry your bags for you?" Ye Xiu asked.

Tang Rou didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

"Go go go, let’s go up first." Chen Guo called out.

When they returned to the room, the four sat together in a circle. Ye Xiu lit up a cigarette, but it was snatched away by Chen Guo.

Ye Xiu was helpless. He could only jump to the main topic. He looked at Tang Rou: "What’s the situation?"

"Uh, it’s not as complicated as you think it is." Tang Rou obviously knew that the other three wanted to talk to her.

"What?"

"I was originally studying music abroad, but I didn’t want to anymore all of a sudden. Then, my father said that if I didn’t want to anymore, then to just come back home, so I came back home. Then, he asked me what I wanted to do. I said I didn’t know. He told me I should go and travel around to relax, so I did. Later, I passed by Happy and saw that it was hiring, so that’s how I got there. And once I was there, I stayed." Tang Rou said.

"This... your father said that? He doesn’t care what you do?" Chen Guo was dumbstruck.

"When I decided to stay here, I told him! I told him I found a job. He asked me what type of job? I said as an Internet cafe employee. He asked, what do you do there? I said that I managed the computers at an Internet cafe. He asked me how long I would do it and I said I didn’t know. He said okay and told me to call and come back often. That’s about it." Tang Rou said.

"That that that that.... That’s not scientific at all!" Chen Guo was having an intense struggle in her heart. From what she had thought, Tang Rou had such a powerful background. There must be some sort of special reason or conflict that made her become an Internet cafe employee! But it turned out that everything between Tang Rou and her father was just that plain and simple. Let alone a household like hers, even a very normal family would be worried about their child’s job, no?

"Hm? What’s not scientific?" Tang Rou asked.

"Internet cafe employee..... this..."

"Haha, for me and my father, it doesn’t matter what I do!" Tang Rou said.

"How can you say that?"

"Because he always tell me that it doesn’t matter as long as I’m healthy and happy." Tang Rou said.

In this instant, everyone understood. Tang Rou had been born with a silver spoon in her mouth. She never had to worry about clothes or food. She was the child of a wealthy family who didn’t know which direction to go. And it turns out that her father was someone who only hoped she enjoyed her life and didn’t care which direction she went in.

Enjoying life. This concept differed from person to person. Some people considered struggling towards a goal as enjoying life. Some people considered having clothes and food and idling their time away as enjoying life. So on and so forth. In reality, Tang Rou was someone who treated struggling and competition as enjoying life, but the problem was that struggling and competing required a goal. During her time at the Internet cafe with Chen Guo, she was rather bored because she didn’t have a goal, but now, Glory had become her inspiration, so now everyone could see a Tang Rou, who was filled with enthusiasm.

"Does your father know that you want to be a pro player?" Chen Guo asked.

"Yeah, he knows!" Tang Rou said.

"What does he think of it?" Chen Guo asked.

"He watched the Pro League streams three weeks in a row and even had his secretary record all of the matches for him. Then, he

asked where I was." Tang Rou said.

"Pft..." Chen Guo couldn’t help but laugh. No matter how powerful Tang Shusen was, it seemed like he was no different than the average father. He truly didn’t know much about something like Glory, which was more of a young person thing.

"He should understand now, right?" Chen Guo said.

"He gets it now. He’s been watching our journey through the Challenger League ever since." Tang Rou said.

"Does he understand it?" Chen Guo asked.

"He didn’t at first, but slowly, he’s getting a feel for it." Tang Rou said.

"Oh?"

"He at least knows that Soft Mist can’t shoot bullets." Tang Rou said.

"Haha, you should help your father expand his knowledge on Glory." Chen Guo said.

"I heard that his secretary had to research Glory until his head bled." Tang Rou said.

"What a pity." Chen Guo sighed.

"That’s just the way it is."

"So you can still continue playing for our team, right!" Chen Guo said.

"Of course." Tang Rou smiled.

"Then, let’s keep working hard!" Chen Guo was excited. Tang Rou’s identity had made her worried the most. She didn’t know whether Tang Rou could continue playing the game with them, but she could finally relax.

"Let’s rest for now. We’ll go back tomorrow and get ready for the final round of the online portion of the Challenger League!" Chen Guo announced.

The next day, Lou Guanning personally came over to send them off.

"Where’s Old Sun?" After Ye Xiu saw him, he asked about Sun Zheping’s situation.

"He’s already signed the contract. He’ll be with us for now. He’ll go over to you guys when you guys need him for the offline part of the Challenger League." Lou Guanning said.

"Use him well. Don’t waste this opportunity." Ye Xiu patted Lou Guanning.

"Couldn’t you describe it in a different way? Using him sounds too despicable." Lou Guanning said.

"Use? Exploit? Utilize? Put to use? Take advantage of?" Ye Xiu displayed his flexible vocabulary.

"..."

Airport, farewell, boarding, home.

Their biggest takeaway from their trip to All-Stars was getting a helping hand from Sun Zheping. Even though he could only provide a limited amount of help for them, for Happy, they didn’t always need him to be there. A help of the hand at the crucial moment could turn situations around.

After this news was told to everyone else at Happy, Wei Chen and Wu Chen were astonished.

Wei Chen didn’t need to be mentioned. He had fought against Sun Zheping in the past. He knew about how skilled the former number one Berserker was. As for Wu Chen, he had also heard of Berserker’s fame. Such a powerful helper couldn’t be compared to a jack of all trades who came from the game.

"What a pity. It’d be perfect if he wasn’t injured." Wei Chen

lamented.

"If he actually recovered, we wouldn’t be able to get him to join us." Ye Xiu said.

"That’s true." Wei Chen nodded his head. If Sun Zheping was truly at his peak, he would have joined another team long ago. He wouldn’t be helping Happy, in any case.

"How’s his equipment?" Wei Chen asked.

"It’s okay." Ye Xiu said. Their requirements towards equipment emulated those of pro teams. Sun Zheping’s equipment for Another Summer of Sleep was absolutely high-end in the Heavenly Domain, but for a pro team, it was just so-so.

"Let’s see if he wants any of our equipment over here." Wei Chen was very generous at this moment.

"During this time, let’s continue working hard to collect equipment!" Ye Xiu said.

"How’s your Myriad Manifestations Umbrella going?" Wei Chen said.

"I’m still unsure about the materials for one part." Ye Xiu said. Self-made equipment was like this. If a single part wasn’t good, a good piece of equipment couldn’t be created. A passable one would affect the stats too. It wasn’t impossible for Level 60 Silver

equipment to have Level 40 stats. Ye Xiu wasn't certain about an important axle when the umbrella transformed. If the material he chose wasn't a good fit, it was known from past mistakes that, in the worst case scenario, the umbrella would immediately collapse when it transformed. In the best case scenario, it would damage its durability.

Ye Xiu had whittled it down to two materials. Both of them eliminated the possibility of the umbrella immediately collapsing, but he didn't know which one could guarantee its durability.

"Let me take a look." Wei Chen said. Ye Xiu took out what he had researched during this time and the two began discussing.

As soon as they arrived, Ye Xiu immediately got to work with Glory. Chen Guo was already speechless. He didn't want to chat about Tang Rou? How boring.

Not only did Ye Xiu not gossip about it, he even pulled Wei Chen over to talk about work. The remaining Wu Chen, Qiao Yifan, and Mo Fan weren't really targets for gossiping to, so Chen Guo could only endure.

"It really is troublesome." After Wei Chen and Ye Xiu studied for an hour, he also wasn't sure like Ye Xiu.

Wei Chen wasn't an equipment editor expert at first, but after retiring, he concentrated fully on it, especially after reaching Level 50. His research on Heavenly Domain materials was much deeper than Ye Xiu's. At this point, Ye Xiu had been focused on the

matches. His research towards materials gradually slowed down. Right now, he was mainly relying on his solid foundation and inferred things from what he already knew. However, even Wei Chen wasn’t sure either.

"If we can’t think of anything, we can only test it out." Wei Chen sighed, "A 50% chance isn’t bad. Let’s gamble! Prepare the the earlier stage materials."

Earlier stage materials meant that if this upgrade failed, they could immediately create another Level 55 Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

"It looks like that’s our only choice." Ye Xiu sighed. Self-made equipment often came with uncertainties. In the end, they could only rely on testing directly. If the material used was optimal, they could record it. Sometimes there was nothing else that could be done.

"Hm?" Wei Chen suddenly thought of something, "Perhaps Luo Ji could calculate it?" .

"How do you calculate this?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Rubbish. If you understood how to do so, you would have done it already." Wei Chen said.

"Okay, then give it to him to see." Ye Xiu thought about it and contacted Lou Ji. He then told him about the problem and gave

him a bunch of information.

Soon afterwards, Luo Ji replied: "This... I could calculate it in theory, but the information that you've researched doesn't help me that much. I would need the data on what materials were used in the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. What type of equipment could these materials create? The more information I have on that end, the more accurate of a grasp I'll have on the data."

"I understand that," Ye Xiu sighed, "but we just don't have that many materials to choose from."

Riding shotgun means sitting in the seat next to the driver. It's seen as the "better" seat, and people will often "call shotgun" ahead of time to reserve it for themselves. It's really common in America, but I guess it's not really used in other countries.

Chapter 938: Offline Matches

Having researched Glory for so long, Ye Xiu might not have eaten pork before, but had still seen pigs run. In regards to researching and developing equipment, the pro clubs currently had two groups working on it in tandem. One was comprised of people like Ye Xiu and Wei Chen who utilized their knowledge and experience of Glory, the other did what Luo Ji had mentioned and used math to calculate and understand the specifics of each material. These two talents were people that the clubs would have on their development teams, supporting each other to complete research on Glory in general, not just custom equipment.

Theoretically, Happy had both kinds of people as well. However, while Wei Chen and Ye Xiu had plenty of experience and knowledge, Luo Ji was only beginning to apply his mathematical knowledge to Glory. That meant he had no stock of data and info to rely on. It was precisely this compiled data and information that was the core component of each team's R&D team. Even though Ye Xiu used to be Team Excellent Era's captain, he still wouldn't have been able to obtain all of this information. As for Wei Chen, there was no need to mention him; back in his day and age, R&D wasn't so structured, they all relied purely on experience.

"How about we do this," another message came from Luo Ji, "Compile a list of all the materials used in each upgrade and the creation of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. Then, list out all the uses of these materials that you can think of. Give me the stats and data of the equipment these materials are used in, the more detailed the better, and I'll see if I can find a pattern within.

"Ok!" Ye Xiu replied with a simple word, but Wei Chen's face had

already gone green. Only people who had researched Silver Equipment before knew how much work was involved in such a job.

"It’s not just me who will be doing it," Ye Xiu said to the green-faced Wei Chen, "You should organize everything you know about materials as well. We still have so much silver equipment to research!"

Wei Chen immediately understood what he meant by this. They would start building Happy’s database up from this day forth.

"I really can’t believe that we’re starting to get there!" Wei Chen suddenly had a feeling of being distanced from the world. To be honest, when Ye Xiu first pulled him in, he had the intentions of yoloing it for the last thrill before it all ended. People like him who understood the pro circle more clearly had less confidence in grassroots teams. The current pro league wasn’t like how it had been eight or nine years ago.

Yet Happy had come this far, their players, equipment, funds, materials, and guilds had all come out from nothing. Now, their database was on its way to being built as well. Wei Chen had suddenly realized, Happy had gradually become a young sparrow, ready to fly. Any team that looked at Happy as a grassroots team would pay the price for underestimating them.

"Organize materials!" Wei Chen suddenly hollered, causing everyone in the room to jump in surprise. Yet he had already buried his head into his computer monitor, searching through his memories, the internet, and all the experience he had accumulated

from his years of research, organizing them.

"Organize materials!" Without waiting for anyone to react, Ye Xiu suddenly hollered as well, before busying himself with his own computer.

"What's up with those two?" The room of people exchanged glances. All they could be sure of was that these two hadn't gone crazy. They were just extremely focused, even more focused than in matches.

The newest round of the Challenger League happening this week and the last round of the online matches, finally arrived on Friday. Team Happy had completed their last updates to their line-up before the last round. Berserker, Another Summer of Sleep, appeared on their member's list. However, a change like this in a team in the Challenger League wouldn't be noticed. Even the reporters that were interested in Happy didn't even notice.

The last online round of the Challenger League ended without suspense. The twenty teams that had survived till the offline matches had been locked in. Any team that could come to this point would have some sort of foundation in skill. However, for Happy, skilled normal player teams weren't enough to make them feel threatened. Apart from Excellent Era, Team Mysterious Fantasy, who had also been relegated last season, had also made it into the top twenty.

Mysterious Fantasy's relegation wasn't something shocking like Excellent Era's. In the last season, they had been steadily last for 90 percent of the time, not giving any other teams a chance to take

their spot. Their relegation was undebatable; they were the weakest, there was no fault with that result.

However, their weakness was relative.

In comparison to normal player teams, they were definitely much stronger. However, in the pro circle, Mysterious Fantasy couldn't even match up to Everlasting. Everlasting had three years of experience in the pro league, while Mysterious Fantasy hadn't even been able to hold on for two years before getting kicked out. In addition, their ability to remain in the league seemed to be all thanks to a miraculous idea of getting retired veteran Zhang Yiwei to coach them. With such an experienced ex-pro giving pointers, Mysterious Fantasy's rookies managed ok in their first season, but Zhang Yiwei wasn't able to pull off another miracle in the second year, causing them to fall like a mountain's collapse. The topic of if a coach could change a team warmed up again.

Usually, a relegated team wanting to keep its strength was a hard task, but Mysterious Fantasy's members had pretty much all stayed. It wasn't so much that the team had done a good job as it was that other teams hadn't shown much interest in Mysterious Fantasy's members. Could a Mysterious Fantasy of this strength win against Excellent Era in the Challenger League? Normal players weren't bothered to even try to consider this question. In the past, the face off between two teams that were relegated in the same season would be the hottest topic of the Challenger League. As for this year? It was probably more worth your time to keep an eye on that grassroots team Happy that swore to beat Excellent Era than on Mysterious Fantasy!

After Mysterious Fantasy, another team with a history was Team Jade Dynasty. Jade Dynasty didn't just have background, but it even had a history. Even Ye Xiu and Wei Chen felt their hearts warmed by seeing the name Jade Dynasty. Team Jade Dynasty was a team that was in the League since its creation. Just this seniority was enough to instantly kill half the teams in the League right now.

However, in comparison to their seniority, what was more touching about Jade Dynasty was their rocky road to life.

From the very first year when Jade Dynasty joined the League, they had ranked last. However, since there was no relegations in the first year, they still participated the next year.

Unfortunately, in the second year, relegation became a thing and Jade Dynasty, who had been at the bottom of the charts again, were relegated.

In the third year, Team Jade Dynasty conquered the Challenger League

So they returned in the fourth year and were relegated once more.

In the fifth year they won the Challenger League again, entering the Alliance, and in the sixth year of matches, they were kicked again.

Jade Dynasty, with the moniker Revival King, had somehow slipped up in the seventh year and lost this "title". In this year's Challenger League, they had failed.

Then in the eighth year, they slipped up once more.

Jade Dynasty still hadn't disbanded, entering their ninth year, this year's Challenger League.

Nine years of pro Glory, five in the Challenger League, Jade Dynasty was definitely the most experienced team in the Challenger League. However, there was probably no team in the pro league that really cared about how strong they really were anymore. Some teams might've even forgotten about their existence. A team that struggled even in the Challenger League didn't seem to be anything that the powerhouses of the alliance cared about, even if they did revive themselves.

Even Wei Chen was surprised at seeing Jade Dynasty's name in the list of twenty that had made it.

"Is it that Jade Dynasty?" Wei Chen asked in shock.

"It is that Jade Dynasty," Ye Xiu confirmed.

"They haven't disbanded yet?" Wei Chen asked.

"Not yet," Ye Xiu replied.

"This is an opponent worthy of our respect," Wei Chen said with great respect.

"Yes."

"If they get eliminated again, you think they'll finally disband?" Respect was respect, trash talking was trash talking.

"Who knows?" Ye Xiu responded.

"Do you still know anyone on the team?" Wei Chen questioned.

"That, I really am not sure of," Ye Xiu said. It was already the third year Jade Dynasty was struggling through in the Challenger League. Ye Xiu didn't know what line-up they had. Even if they had interacted in the sixth season, this sort of third string team wasn't one that would leave a deep impression on Ye Xiu's mind.

"Who was in it back then?" Wei Chen tried his best to remember, but it was obvious that the weak links would always not make much of an impression. Amongst Wei Chen's few memories in the pro league, all that he was left with about Jade Dynasty was their name.

The title of Revival King for Jade Dynasty was no more than a joke; no one truly cared to notice how they were doing. This was especially true after two years of failure, when it wasn't even a joke anymore; they were close to being completely forgotten.

"No matter what, we must take them seriously," Ye Xiu said solemnly.

"Yes yes, take them seriously." Wei Chen nodded. Only he knew if he was actually taking it to heart.

Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, and Jade Dynasty. Those were the ones amongst the twenty teams that had some history of being in the pro league. Usually, they would be the titans of the Challenger League. Apart from them, it was just normal player teams, the real grassroots. Being able to get here, they definitely had some skill. The big teams would keep an eye on their behavior, and some might be noticed by the teams, becoming pro players.

What was a shame was that there were no teams amongst these grassroots teams that had taken names mocking Excellent Era. That was a big point of interest lost. However, in comparison to people who tried to use their team names to mock Excellent Era, Team Happy who had sworn to defeat them was the greatest taunt. That was because it seemed that Happy was serious!

The offline matches were about to begin and the big Glory media outlets finally decided the Challenger League worthy of more articles, Excellent Era's grand line-up, Mysterious Fantasy's coach Jade Dynasty's rise and fall, Happy's shameless boasting... These all became interesting topics. As for the alliance, they began to officially contact the teams, informing them of the place and time of their offline matches.

Yet before this, an important event needed to happen.

Drawing lots.

In some sense, an event that would determine the future of these teams had just begun.

This means that though someone might not have personally been an expert at, worked in, or have intentionally undergone training in an area, they still had some idea of how it worked because of their experience.

Some of you may recognize Jade Dynasty from the MMORPG by the same name. This MMORPG is actually based on the novel, Jade Dynasty, also known as Zhu Xian (诛仙). The novel itself is very famous in China. It's considered a Chinese fantasy masterpiece. Along with Legend of the Simple Soldier (小兵传奇) and A Fleeting Journey (飘渺之旅), Zhu Xian is considered one of the Three Webnovel Masterpieces. It was published in around 2003 (Qidian was created in 2003), so it could be considered as a defining work during the early Chinese webnovel scene.

Unfortunately, those early masterpieces like Legend of the Simple Soldier and A Fleeting Journey aren't being translated. I've also heard good things about other early webnovels like 佣兵天下 (Mercenaries Under the Sky), 紫川 (Purple River), 风姿物语 (A Tale of Wind's Gesture). These most likely won't be translated though as I don't think they would be popular in the current scene, which is dominated by 'YY' novels (more on that later).

If you were around 2-3 years ago when the international webnovel scene began, you could consider Zhu Xian or those other two early works mentioned as the Coiling Dragon of the Chinese webnovel scene. It had around 30,000,000 views/clicks back when it was serialized, which is incredible, considering that there were

way way fewer Chinese readers in the webnovel scene than now. TKA (serialized in 2011) had around 25,000,000 views/clicks to put that into perspective, and TKA is very popular in China.

The most popular/"clicked" webnovel is Battle Through the Heavens (斗破苍穹) published in 2008 with 151,300,000 views/clicks. BTTH could also be considered a defining work in the Chinese webnovel scene, although not necessarily because of the quality of the work unlike the three mentioned above. I want to say that along with IET's Stellar Transformations (also published in 2008), it helped popularize the webnovel scene immensely. I also want to say that BTTH is how YY novels got popularized. These are just conjectures though, so take it with a grain of salt. Also, in case you didn't know, YY novels are your typical Chinese webnovels filled with tropes like arrogant young masters who don't recognize Mt. Tai, old grandpa teacher, alchemy, auctions, tournaments, faceslapping, OP MC, and so on. You can consider YY novels as fast food. They're very fun/delicious and addicting, but not exactly quality stuff. And there's nothing wrong with that. I have my fair share of YY novels that I love.

Chapter 939: Drawing Lots

The next groupings for the twenty teams would be determined by drawn lots. What opponents you would have was clear. If this was important or not, it was obvious from what had happened with the teams Everlasting and Sunset Fire.

These teams both had pro backgrounds and, under usual circumstances, wouldn't have too much of a problem getting into the offline match portion of the League. Yet the two hadn't draw lucky lots. Everlasting had gotten Happy and Sunset Fire managed to draw Excellent Era, being eliminated from the Challenger League early on. Everlasting had completely disbanded, and there hadn't been any news from Sunset Fire since. How many people would care to notice a poor eliminated Challenger League Team?

Such an important drawing of lots had to happen offline, of course, for transparency and fairness. Team Happy obtained messages via email and then phone, wanting them to confirm that they understood that they had to arrive at the Alliance's headquarters before January 18th for the lot drawing ceremony.

January 18th was a Saturday. Putting this on a weekend was an act of kindness from the Alliance. After all, many of the players had work or school and were only free on the weekend.

However, this kindness ended there. Following that, all the teams were gathered together for the offline matches, which would occur over the course of a full month. The work and school of the participants would be affected. Their own decision on how to proceed was on themselves.

"For this, I think I should just go?" Chen Guo suggested to everyone after getting the message from the Alliance.

To be honest, Chen Guo was feeling quite nervous. The captain or someone should be the one attending this sort of ceremony. However, Ye Xiu and Wei Chen had spent the past few days and nights organizing all of the knowledge they had accumulated over the years regarding materials. Chen Guo couldn’t bear to trouble them with such an errand. The headquarters of the Alliance wasn’t in H City, which would make this trip take even longer. Seeing how these two practically looked like they were trying to crack a minute into two halves to use, Chen Guo decided that she should be the one to handle the task.

"Sure, it doesn’t matter who goes." Ye Xiu didn’t care.

"Get a good draw." Wei Chen, on the other hand, had to give Chen Guo some pressure.

"I’ll go with you?" Tang Rou said.

"No need, you should stay and continue training with the others!" Chen Guo said with a smile.

"That’s true." Ye Xiu nodded, "We need to focus on preparing ourselves mentally for the matches to come."

In the end, Chen Guo, represented Happy to attend the Lot

Drawing Ceremony.

January 18th, Glory Alliance Headquarters, the lot drawing ceremony began at 2 PM. Chen Guo arrived timely and sat in a random spot after registering her arrival. Taking a look around the place, she saw that a large group of people were crowding around one place. It was only after the host's urging that they slowly dispersed. Looking again, Chen Guo saw that Excellent Era's captain and vice captain were sitting there, Sun Xiang and Xiao Shiqin. Were those people crowding around to get autographs?

After watching everyone leave, the two spotted Chen Guo as well.

The two sides hadn't met each other many times, but they knew each other. Xiao Shiqin smiled and nodded in greeting and Chen Guo nodded back in acknowledgement. This scene was seen by many people and they all began to guess what relationship this beautiful lady had with Xiao Shiqin. It was only under the host's urging, again, that the crowd quieted.

As the host announced the lot drawing ceremony in motion, the first one to walk onto the stage was the biggest Boss of the Glory Alliance, Chairman Feng Xianjun.

Though the Challenger League wasn't on the same level as the Pro League, it was still an official event hosted by the Alliance. No matter how limited the attention given to the Challenger League was, the Alliance itself still needed it. The big Boss Feng Xianjun had to come to such an event to say a few words, even if it was just civilities about his gratitude, well-wishes, and hopes.

After that, the ceremony started. First, the computer randomly gave each team a number and the teams began to go up one by one to draw their lots.

Team Happy was randomly assigned to draw their group fourth and their turn came quickly. Chen Guo rose and walked on stage, and the audience burst into a wave of discussion. Even though the attention given to the Challenger League might be limited, the teams that were in the Challenger League themselves were very well acquainted with the rumors and hot topics going around within the League. Team Happy had gained a lot of attention by challenging Excellent Era, and shortly after they defeated Team Everlasting, becoming the hottest topic in the Challenger League. In comparison, Excellent Era, who had also defeated a pro team, Sunset Fire, wouldn’t become such a hot topic because it was to be expected!

Rumor had it that god Ye Qiu was at Team Happy. The representatives from each team had hoped to see him at the Lot Drawing Ceremony. Yet who they actually saw was this beautiful woman.

No matter how mysterious Ye Qiu was, there was no doubt that he was a guy. When the audience saw, they at least didn’t have any strange and convoluted ideas and guesses about how Ye Qiu might actually be a beautiful lady.

"Team Happy, Group B."

After Chen Guo drew her slip, she took a glance at it before handing it over to the host. The host announced the draw and on the big screen, in the list of Group B teams, Team Happy's name appeared.

At that moment, four teams had been assigned groups. A and B each had a team and C had two, but D had yet to get any.

Chen Guo returned to her seat, taking a deep breath.

The teams that everyone took notice of was the pro teams. They all hoped to god that there wouldn't be a pro team in their group. Chen Guo was the same, so she had memorized the the number of Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, and Jade Dynasty were positioned at, 12, 8, and 15 respectively.

After Chen Guo, number 5, 6 and 7 went up to draw their groups. The seventh team, called Seven Steps One Kill, managed to draw Group B, the same as Team Happy. Then, Chen Guo saw that, when the member of Seven Steps One Kill came down, he shot her an anxious glance and she realized that while she was focused on the three pro teams, Team Happy was a team of note, one to avoid for the other normal player teams.

This felt... pretty good!

Chen Guo enjoyed this feeling, but then the eighth team Mysterious Fantasy came onstage to draw their lot and the host soon announced their result: Group B.

Chen Guo paused for a moment and then looked over to see that member of Seven Steps One Kill again. Now he didn't just look anxious, he looked like he was about to cry.

Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, Jade Dynasty, and Happy. These were the teams that were hard to deal with, which meant that each team would take a place for themselves.

Team Happy had gotten Group B, taking a place from there. It could be predicted that the competition for the remaining place would be intense, so the member of Ten Steps One Kill began to become nervous. Yet, Mysterious Fantasy took a spot in Group B. That meant that the remaining place had been taken as well. From now on, the result of Group B's competition was set. Seven Steps One Kill's member naturally wanted to weep.

Those who had drawn their lots and not gotten Group B felt immense relief. Those who had yet to draw their group watched Group B warily, silently praying to themselves. Everyone had the same wish in their hearts: Excellent Era and Jade Fantasy, if only they had also went to Group B.

Then, the tenth team, Team Trader drew Group B. When that player came down from the stage, his demeanor made him seem like he was the twin brother of Seven Steps One Kill's player.

Soon enough, it was number 12, Team Excellent Era's turn. The one who went on stage was Captain Sun Xiang, and he didn't even bother to check his group after drawing it, handing the slip directly to the host and leaving the stage before anything was even announced. This was a portrayal of Excellent Era's atypical status:

these draws were meaningless to them.

"Team Excellent Era, Group D," the host announced.

All of the present players were stoic. Though everyone had been crowding around the two gods present at Excellent Era, the reality was that, with the current circumstances, no one wanted Excellent Era here. No one enjoyed seeing Sun Xiang's display of arrogance. Though everyone was willing to admit that they were, by far, no match for Excellent Era, they were all still hoping to win. Everyone loved miracles.

After Excellent Era, three of the strongest teams had already been assigned to a group, and only Jade Dynasty was left. Currently, the most nervous ones were Group D's teams, praying desperately that Jade Dynasty wouldn't fall into Group D

This time, their prayers were answered.

"Team Jade Dynasty, Group A."

As the host announced this, the audience seemed to erupt. Everyone's tense and on edge nerves had finally found relief. Those in Group C were the luckiest, then Group A. Group D had Excellent Era, so there was little hope for that spot, but at the very least there was another for people to compete over. As for Group B... The teams in Group B didn't even want to speak.

The audience exploded into a ruckus, as if the drawing was

already over, making number 16, who was coming onto the stage, extremely awkward. The host knew the reason for this commotion and knew that it would be futile to try and maintain decorum. The numbers 16 to 20 quickly went by. Among them, one team had gotten Group B, but no one cared at all, so they could only silently go to one side and weep.

The assignments for the twenty teams had been completed, and the schedule of the matches was automatically generated and printed out by the computer, then distributed to all the representatives.

After all the members of the teams obtained a copy of the schedule and got their souvenirs, they took a group photo. This was an event that the chairman had to participate in. After Feng Xianjun took a picture with everyone, he started to chat with the two gods of Excellent Era and then turned, catching sight of Chen Guo.

"Team Happy," Feng Xianjun referred to Chen Guo by saying this, "How come Ye Qiu isn’t here?"

Everyone’s ears perked up.

Was Ye Qiu in Team Happy? This question was passed around, one day he wasn't there, and the next he wasn’t Ye Qiu. No one ever gained a precise answer. Was the chairman’s words a revelation?

"Er..." Chen Guo had no idea how to respond to this question. She

had always had a thought: Ye Xiu had used his brother Ye Qiu's identity to play matches and now he was switching back. Would the Alliance acknowledge this?

Chen Guo had been tripped up by this, yet unexpectedly, someone came to her rescue. She wouldn't have ever expected this person to be Sun Xiang.

"As the captain, how could he not come to such an important event? Does Happy think themselves above the Challenger League?" Sun Xiang said.

Sun Xiang felt like he had made a very impressive taunt and the others did find it impressive: you clearly thought yourself above this, yet you still used this. Using eight hundred to strike down a thousand, that was truly a god, so courageous!

"Team Happy's captain hasn't come, but their boss has," Chen Guo smiled and said. After being around the old foxes Ye Xiu and Wei Chen for so long, Sun Xiang's taunt could only be called weak to Chen Guo.

Pretty straight forward, it means to make an action that damages or takes from yourself almost as much as it does from your opponent. So like sacrificing 800 to take out a 1000.

Chapter 940: Another Year

"How about it? Are you interested in joining our Team Happy?" After Chen Guo made her status as the boss known, she gave Sun Xiang another blow. After her encounter with Lou Guanning, Chen Guo truly experienced the greatness of having the status as a boss, so she started utilizing it more freely.

"Hmph. We'll see each other on stage." Sun Xiang sneered coldly, but then he thought of something and immediately added: "I hope we can."

"We won't be!" Chen Guo smirked, "I'm here as the boss."

This time, everyone laughed. Chen Guo knew when to stop. She swiftly left, not giving Sun Xiang another chance to speak.

Once Happy drew the lots and got their competition schedules, everyone took a look. Happy and Excellent Era had been split up into two different brackets, which meant that if the two were to meet, it would only be in the finals. Unfortunately, the two former pro teams, Mysterious Fantasy and Jade Dynasty had been placed in the same bracket. In order to reach the finals, Happy would need to beat these two teams.

"The offline matches will officially begin in three months." Chen Guo said.

"Yes." Ye Xiu nodded his head. He obviously knew that. The number of teams participating in the Challenger League changed

every year, so it wasn't possible to know how many rounds there would be in the online part of the league. The offline matches always started in the middle of April and lasted until the middle of May. It took place before the climax of the season and before playoffs, so there wouldn't be a split in attention from the fans.

"Go back home and celebrate New Year's! Then, let's start preparing!" Ye Xiu announced.

This year's Spring Festival took place a little earlier than usual. 1/22 was the Lunar New Year's Eve. After Chen Guo brought back the results from the lot drawing, everyone in Happy was busy preparing to go back home and celebrate the Spring Festival. The first one to leave was Mo Fan. He didn't say farewell to anyone. Instead, he chose a time when everyone was still there. He picked up his luggage bag in front of everyone and left without uttering a word.

"This guy's going to come back, right?" Everyone began to discuss.

"Let's go check his room." Wei Chen went up stairs with a cigarette held in his mouth. Randomly barging into someone's room was nothing for someone as shameless as Old Wei.

"Fuck! It's locked. Is there a spare key for it?" Wei Chen yelled a short moment later.

"Forget it!" Chen Guo said. She obviously had a spare key, but if she gave it away, wouldn't she become Wei Chen's accomplice in

performing shameless acts?

"If he took the keys, then doesn't that mean he plans on coming back?" Tang Rou said.

"What if that bastard locked his keys in there?" Wei Chen said.

"Damn, the keys are in there, but the door's locked? Boss, let me climb up and get in through the window....." Steamed Bun shouted hoarsely.

"He's not Steamed Bun..." Tang Rou replied calmly to Wei Chen's question.

"Okay then!" Wei Chen approved.

Ye Xiu felt like Mo Fan would come back. Even though that guy never said anything, that was just the type of person he was. The current situation made Ye Xiu feel like he was approaching a dead end though.

After Ye Xiu won him over, he let him do his own thing and appeared to completely ignore him, but in reality, Mo Fan had never escaped his attention. It could even be said that he paid the most attention to him out of everyone here.

Ye Xiu saw all of the changes in Mo Fan.

Mo Fan sometimes watched Glory pro matches in secret. After the update came out and new dungeons popped up, he began getting used to coordinating with the team. After all, his foundation was solid. As soon as he started becoming aware of how to coordinate with the team, he improved rapidly. In Ye Xiu's eyes, PvE could not completely reveal Mo Fan's true potential. PvP was his expertise. It was just that there weren't any chances to test him right now.

These tests also needed to happen naturally. Urge him or ask him? With Mo Fan's personality, it would most likely backfire. Wait for him to ask about it himself? He was someone who stayed to himself and kept quiet. It was unlikely that he would take the initiative to request it. This was the dead-end that Ye Xiu felt like he was approaching. He needed to find some way around it.

The others spared Ye Xiu the trouble. Everyone followed the appropriate practice routine. Their practice tools still came from the game, whether that was through clearing dungeons, killing bosses, or fighting different opponents in the Arena. Their skill levels rose, and they accumulated all sorts of different experiences. Sudden growth and improvement would no longer happen anymore for anyone on Happy because none of them were noobs now. Their following growth would depend on the slow and steady accumulation of experience.

In the game, as players obtained better equipment, the new Level 75 wild bosses in the Heavenly Domain were gradually capable of being killed, and not just the materials, but the Level 75 Orange equipment dropped from these bosses were extremely valuable. It had been a month since the update. No Level 75 Silver equipment had appeared in the pro scene yet. The R&D departments of the

various teams were still actively studying the new Level 75 materials. To research materials, the guild department needed to provide these materials to the R&D departments. With such a large player foundation, their ability to obtain dungeon materials was stable, but wild boss materials were always challenging to get their hands on.

To get ahead of the others in Silver equipment, they needed to get ahead of the others in fighting wild bosses. The fires of battle in the Heavenly Domain reached the skies. Level 75 wild bosses needed to be won, but Level 70, Level 65, etc. bosses couldn't be let go of either! When upgrading a piece of equipment, a large number of materials would be consumed. Apart from new materials, the past materials needed to keep up too.

Even though Happy was small, they were still ambitious. All bosses would be fought over.

There were six Level 75 maps with a total of eight Level 75 wild bosses. The total number of wild bosses had now reached 82. Eleven wild bosses spawned each day on average, which came to around a wild boss every two hours. The intensity of work for wild bosses grew all the more. The top guilds increased the number of organized teams. Elite groups one, two, and three were thrown into the front lines of battle. The entire world was searching for and killing bosses. Supposedly, the clubs had increased the pay and bonuses for their guild department employees at this crucial moment, so no one dared to slack off.

Happy didn't have a professional guild department yet, so they didn't have these types of conditions. As a result, foresight from

Happy and the guild alliance was now revealed. Happy didn’t have the resources, but the other guilds did. Happy had been the core of the alliance since the start. As Ye Xiu’s focus gradually shifted away, Happy seemed to have become more and more like a freeloader. However, the allied guilds had tasted the fruits of collaboration. At this time, they didn’t want to rashly disrupt the peace because everyone understood one thing very well. With their strength, if they did not ally together, they were pretty much spectators in these boss hunts. In addition, Ye Xiu had looked for mid-tier teams as allies. These guilds were not good enough to be at the top, but they could not accept being at the bottom either. They were the group under the least amount of pressure during the season. The competitiveness between them wasn’t as intense as the competitiveness between the powerhouses. The longer they allied together the better.

As for Happy, they had recruited Wu Chen over to help with the guild. By the time this alliance would no longer hold, Happy would have their own guild department by then and would have no trouble operating.

As Happy competed for bosses, Happy accumulated all sorts of materials bit by bit. Because they hadn’t begun developing Silver equipment, these materials didn’t get used up. More and more materials started being amassed.

Ye Xiu and Wei Chen hadn’t finished organizing the materials yet. The ones that they had finished organizing were all given to Luo Ji. When Luo Ji saw the enormous amount of materials, he wasn’t flustered. He said calmly, "It’ll be much easier with this." Luo Ji was incomparably confident at his area of expertise.

1/20. Monday of the new week.

Relatively speaking, it was simple and crude. Happy’s "training base" was usually filled with energy, but now, the people were gone and the place was completely empty. On the other hand, at Happy Internet Cafe, Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, and Su Mucheng had gathered together again.

"You’re not going back home again?" Chen Guo could see that Ye Xiu had no intentions of going back.

"Hm? Have you seen my brother’s QQ name?" Ye Xiu said.

"What is it?" Chen Guo was puzzled.

"He changed his QQ name to this today." Ye Xiu said.

"How could I know!" Chen Guo rolled her eyes. It was purely a coincidence, okay?

However, for Chen Guo, suddenly having two people by her side to celebrate the New Year made her very happy. She had to celebrate the Lunar New Year’s Eve alone many times. She could no longer remember how many exactly. She could only remember that she had been very lonely one year, so she let many of the kids, who just received their red envelopes, play at her Internet cafe.

In the end, even though she didn’t take any money from these kids, according to Internet cafe regulations, whether or not she

charged them wasn't important. Letting in so many minors was enough for Happy's business license to be suspended.

It was better now. She didn't need to take these kinds of risks anymore. It was just that this Lunar New Year's Eve didn't seem any different from normal? Why were they still playing Glory?

Chen Guo thought about it and felt a bit angry. She got up.

"What's up, boss?" Ye Xiu noticed Chen Guo's action.

"I'm going to watch the Spring Festival Gala." Chen Guo said.

"Isn't using the projector to watch the Spring Festival Gala a little overboard?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's clearer that way." Chen Guo said.

"Too clear!" A close-up on screen showed a nose as big as a person's head. Ye Xiu almost jumped up in fright.

"I'll watch while I play." Chen Guo went back to her seat. With the Spring Festival Gala playing, the new year's vibe instantly came.

"Where are you at?" Although the projector was showing the Spring Festival Gala, Chen Guo constantly looked towards Ye Xiu's screen out of habit.

"82%." Ye Xiu said calmly.

"How are you so fast!" Chen Guo was furious. They were both doing the Spring Festival events. Ye Xiu was 82% of the way done, while she was still only at 31%.

"Do you really need me to say why?" Ye Xiu asked.

Chen Guo fumed.

"Haha, I'm done." Su Mucheng suddenly cheered.

"No way! How did you do it? Let me see! You're cheating!" Ye Xiu was astonished.

"Hahahaha, it looks like Mu Mu is still the best!" Chen Guo was happy. Su Mucheng was faster than her by 69%, but Chen Guo didn't mind. In fact, her anger disappeared because Su Mucheng was faster than Ye Xiu by 18%.

"How did you do it?" Ye Xiu never slacked off when it came to studying Glory.

"It's over here. You can do it like this." Su Mucheng explained. Chen Guo understood half of it, but she still went over to listen.

In the end, it seemed like no one was watching the Spring

Festival Gala...

The Spring Festival Gala or CCTV New Year's Gala (春晚) is a TV program broadcasted on CCTV to celebrate Chinese New Year. It is the most watched TV program in the world with a yearly viewership of 700 million. It's almost a cultural tradition to watch it at this point. I even remember watching it every year when I was little! I always looked forward to it and I loved watching it, but I was never able to watch it the entire way through my parents wouldn't let me sleep that late. I didn't really understand much of the comedy acts, but the magic, acrobatics, and music performances were always fun.

Chapter 941: Equipment Competition

Seven days of the Spring Festival passed by in a flash. It was as if every player in Happy was an employee. . After seven days,they returned to the Internet Cafe one after another. The two students, An Wenyi and Luo Ji, rushed over simultaneously. As for how these two youths told their families where they were going, this type of gossip was of little concern to Ye Xiu.

February 1st. On the tenth day of the lunar calendar, the first pro match after the spring festival would begin.

This was the so-called New Year's new atmosphere. . On this day, Glory players witnessed the birth of the first Level 75 Silver equipment.

Silver Equipment was a luxury that normal players could only dream of. However, it was also the one thing that they loved to hear about and keep their eyes on. Towards the various colours and types of Silver Equipment in the pro circle, Many players knew about the various colors and types of Silver equipment in the pro circle as if it was their own.

The first piece of Silver Equipment upgraded to Level 75 came from Team Samsara.

Zhou Zekai, Cloud Piercer, Left Hand Revolver, Shattered Frost.

His reputation as the number one player in Glory continued to be solidified through all sorts of means. Zhou Zekai and Cloud Piercer

had once again attracted lots of attention and zeal. This was probably the reward for having the first upgraded piece of Silver equipment.

Since the first piece of upgraded Silver equipment had appeared, the others wouldn't be far behind. Moreover, they had been stuck at Level 70 for so long. As for the next step in upgrading Silver equipment, the big clubs must have already made sufficient preparations. As for whether Shattered Frost really was the first piece of Silver equipment that got upgraded to Level 75, it was uncertain.

The Silver equipment in the Alliance had a sudden breakthrough. As for Happy, their side had also finally made a slight breakthrough.

With lots of information on hand, Luo Ji started researching how to upgrade the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. Ye Xiu had lots of available information on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. After handing it all over to Luo Ji, the research speed became quite satisfactory. Everything, except for one crucial component, was ready for the Level 60 upgrade. Luo Ji solved the problem and decided which of the two materials should be used

February 1st. The day the first Level 75 Silver Equipment appeared in the pro circle, the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella was also upgraded to Level 60.

As for the stats, additional stats, and form transformations, everything was perfect.

During the next few days, Wei Chen shamelessly fawned over Luo Ji, egging him to hurry and calculate how to upgrade his Death's Hand to Level 75

"This will probably be an absolute advantage when we face Excellent Era." Wei Chen's face was serious, pushing the importance of upgrading his Death's Hand to maximum priority.

Of course, this wasn't completely without reason. From the looks of things, the progress of Excellent Era's silver weapon research was rather unsatisfactory.

Ye Xiu and the rest knew this because they knew that Excellent Dynasty's Level 75 wild boss hunting wasn't going well Their poor harvests were also due to Happy. This was extracting firewood from under the cauldron, diminishing Excellent Era's opportunities to research the upgrades of their Silver Equipment.

If not for the recent special events and activities, Ye Xiu and co. would have confidently said that Excellent Era's chances of upgrading their Silver Equipment to Level 75 was 0. Silver equipment that could be utilized in the Pro League required various materials from the Heavenly Domain. Materials from the normal server would be unusable. At most, they would be able to serve as substitute materials.

Their regimen also included causing trouble for Excellent Dynasty - even if they couldn't steal the wild bosses for themselves. s. This was because they did not wish to see Excellent Era holding

the equipment advantage when they faced off. As long as they could get rid of this advantage, it would already be a huge success. If the new update had not been released, they would undoubtedly not have had this kind of opportunity.

This was the so-called uncontrollable opportunity. Happy had the experienced Ye Xiu and Wei Chen watching over the team. They would obviously have this kind of opportunist reasoning. Wei Chen had transformed from being passive to active and had started to fantasize about Excellent Era not having a single piece of Level 75 Silver equipment while he swaggered on stage with his own Level 75 Silver weapon....

However, researching Level 75 Silver Equipment was not that easy

Luo Ji's calculations were done through crunching numbers and could not be completed with the snap of a finger.

Luo Ji was currently unable to do the calculations for Level 75 equipment because they did not have the basic statistics for all of the Level 75 materials. If not, the pro circle would have been flooded with Level 75 Silver equipment a long time ago. A talent like Luo Ji wasn't exclusive to Happy. . The other big teams had these kinds of talents in their relevant departments too.

Therefore, for upgrading equipment to Level 75, the main people to rely on was Ye Xiu and Wei Chen, since they had the most experience. Although Wei Chen asked Luo Ji daily to do some calculations, he himself had also been working hard. He scrolled through the guild storage and looked at the acquired Level 75

materials daily, determining which materials could be used to upgrade his Death's Hand. As of now, he had some ideas, but he dared not try them out. Although Happy had some materials accumulated, Wei Chen could not find the courage to be brave enough to try out these materials. In the end, Wei Chen chose to play it safe, and waited for Luo Ji's calculations.

Luo Ji was unable to figure out how to upgrade Death Hand's, but he displayed his flair for the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. The plan for the Level 65 upgrade for the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was confirmed within a week after coordinating with Ye Xiu. This made Ye Xiu emotional. If not for Luo Ji, there would be a total of five materials and two parts that would have been incorrect in this upgrading phase. This was more complex compared to the two specific materials during the Level 60 upgrade.

February 8th. The second pro match after the spring festival. In this round, the number of Level 75 equipment finally increased. Each big team obviously wanted to upgrade their team's ace character. As for the equipment on the character, the weapon would always be the top priority.

On February 8th, four God-level accounts completed their weapon upgrades.

Samsara's Cloud Piercer's Right Hand Revolver, Wildfire

Tiny Herb's Vaccaria's Stardust Extermination

Blue Rain's Troubling Rain's Ice Rain

Tyranny's Desert Dust's Flame Fist

As for Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestation Umbrella, it was upgraded to Level 65 on the same day.

At the same time, Happy's development for other Silver Equipment became shelved. Ye Xiu had intended to streamline the preparations and start making some equipment that he had knowledge of in order to begin equipping everyone, but now, Level 75 Orange Equipment seemed to have fulfilled this purpose well enough. Although a self-made Level 70 Silver equipment was usually better than a Level 75 Orange one, making one required a lot of effort and materials. At the moment there was a temporary substitute, so there was no need to rush. The offline portion of the Challengers League that put one in a life-and-death situation was still two months away. It neither near nor far. When Happy finally met their opponents, it wouldn't be just a player team that they could easily trash. Everyone needed to prepare in advance, so other matters that required their focus and energy would be set aside.

Time passed day by day.

Starting from February 8th, upgraded Silver equipment within the pro circle started appearing. After the four God-level accounts, the weapons of famed characters completed their upgrades one after another.

Windy Rain's Magic Staff, Ravaging Wind; Crying Devil's Tachi,

Ghost Killer Seal; Swoksaar's Scepter, Curse of Destruction; Three Hit's Claw, Blood Vanishing Soul; Peaceful Hermit's Scythe, Death Savvy; Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' Automatic Pistol, Hunting Seeker; Angelica's Plate Shield, Wall of Sighs.

The names of these famous character's equipment, especially the weapons in their hands, rang a bell for many fans. At this moment there was a list of completed upgrades. The fans only saw the list of names, yet they felt enjoyment.

Most fans that took note of character equipment did not forget about the relegated Excellent Era and their three famous characters.

One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation.

Life Extinguisher's Flashing Shadow.

Dancing Rain's Devouring Sun.

Had these renowned weapons completed their upgrades yet?

The relegated Excellent Era was far from the pro circle. Recently, they did not have any Challenger League matches. Fans had no way of confirming the upgrades themselves, so they could only make wild guesses.

In this wave of equipment replacement, there were a few non eye-catching teams that suddenly attracted a lot of attention.

Conquering Clouds, Parade, and Radiant.

These three brother squads were currently placed 13th to 15th, unmoved from their current position. From the looks of it they were safer than the teams that were drifting in the relegation zone, but there was nothing more to it. They were the most boring among all the teams. For those with higher rankings, a suspense of whether or not they would be able to make it to the playoffs was added. For those with lower rankings, a suspense of whether they would be relegated was added. According to official statistics, these three team's competitions received the least amount of views online. The number of tickets they sold for their home games were also not booming.

As for these three boring teams, they actually made a small mark in the equipment competition this time around. The pace of their equipment development did not seem any weaker than the powerhorse teams. One look and one could tell they had a pretty good material stock.

Players saw the bustling and astoundment, but for the club guild players, seeing that these three teams finally showed their face, they clenched their teeth, and coincidentally shifted their hatred towards Lord Grim.

If this guy had not appeared and formed such a mysterious alliance, these three guilds would have been picking up lost goods. As a result of forming an alliance with Lord Grim and becoming the most competitive group in the game, at their peak, they set a record and claimed half of the wild bosses across the Heavenly

Domain.

With this kind of harvest, their equipment started to become increasingly powerful. This resulted in teams that were stronger than them to burn through their stockpile, which led to the team's harvest being inconsistent. For example, Wind Howl and Misty Rain had good results this season, but they were losing in the contest for wild bosses in the online game. Misty Rain even had a record of three consecutive weeks of no harvests. With no materials collected, how were they supposed to upgrade their equipment? Even with the huge number of wild bosses, the wild bosses refreshing weekly and accumulation of materials, these teams wouldn't be too wealthy material-wise either.

It's all Lord Grim's fault!

All of the teams that were distressed over equipment upgrading agreed that Lord Grim was the root of their problem.

Chapter 942: Royal Style's Tian Sen

Not being able to get wild bosses was definitely no small matter for a pro team.

A team's strength consisted of the players and characters. Where did a character's strength come from? Equipment! Where did equipment come from? Wild bosses!

In particular, after the new update and equipment underwent changes, if this situation lasted, not only would it be impossible to upgrade a character's equipment, even god-level equipment might fall behind. If the strength of the characters were no good, the team's performance would be affected. This vicious cycle might lead to an entire team's downfall.

No team would sit and watch while this happened. Unusual times required unusual methods. Pro players usually wouldn't split their attention for the game, but with the game affecting the life and death of a team, this type of principle could obviously be changed.

As a result, during this particular period of time, Glory nostalgically returned to when the Glory Alliance was initially created. At that time, the beautiful scene described by the PR from the various teams was now being displayed.

Playing with your idol!

2/16 3:38 PM. Level 70 World Tree. In the fight for Forest Guardian Vich, Guild Misty Castle ripped through the chaotic

battle between three guilds under the splendid cover of an Elementalist. Among Guild Misty Castle was a pair of Sharpshooters who left a deep impression on everyone. After this battle, the players participating in this battle would remember that the Elementalist should have been Team Misty Rain's God, Chu Yunxiu, and that Sharpshooter pair must have been Team Misty Rain's newly signed beautiful sisters.

2/16 6:17. Sighing Ravine. In the fight for Sword Master Kayou, a Brawler from Guild Howling Heights charged into battle. He was unstoppable. No one could get near him. His support allowed Guild Howling Heights to take down the boss. This invincible Brawler must be the current number one Brawler in Glory, Team Wind Howl's new core and God, Tang Hao. However, those with sharper eyes would have noticed that when Tang Hao's Brawler charged into battle, an Elementalist stood by his side, providing cover for him. After a brief analysis, this Elementalist should be last season's Best Rookie, Zhao Yuzhe.

2/16 was already a Sunday. There were many wild bosses remaining on the final day of the week. Everyone just had fun enjoying the performance from these pro players.

But on 2/17, the new week began. It could also be said that whenever a boss spawned every day, there would always be unstoppable characters scattered across the battlefield, deciding the outcome of the battle. From the classes of the characters and the guild, it wasn't hard to guess who each character was. In the Glory forums, someone even began keeping track of which pro players came with each new boss spawn.

In that list, players found almost eighty percent of the players in the pro scene.

It was only until Friday and Saturday did the number of pro players in the game start to dwindle. Everyone clearly still had to focus their attention on preparing for their matches on Saturday night. There were a few who did the opposite though. During these two days, when the vast majority of teams wouldn't distract themselves from the upcoming match, they ran to the game to fight for wild bosses.

These types of teams were those who were not strong enough to reach the top, but not weak enough to fall below. They generally did not have too high of a goal for this season already.

Team Royal Style's Tian Sen was particularily hard working during these two days.

Team Royal Style was currently 12th place. Reaching playoffs at this point would require a miracle. Because of Team Royal Style's current rankings, many had forgotten that they had once been a glorious powerhouse.

During the early days in the Alliance, Tian Sen's Peaceful Hermit had been as famous as the Battle God and the King of Fighting. At that time, the Magician, the Sword Saint, the Great Gunner, and so on were still unknown cheerleaders!

The champions of the Alliance's first season had been born out of the match between Excellent Era and Royal Style. From that day

forth, Team Royal Style was a team that stood at the top of the Alliance.

However, after that, they trudged along a downwards path from the peak.

From being a contestant for the championship title in the finals, to being a team that always reached the finals, to a team that would need a miracle to reach the finals, times really had changed for Team Royal Style.

There were many reasons for this, but for people nowadays, regretting these mistakes wouldn't change anything. Through their hard work and efforts, allowing Team Royal Style to return to their former glory was what could be done today.

Tian Sen was the flag character for Team Royal Style's new generation. However, after this flag came out, the speed at which Team Royal Style declined actually increased.

Team Royal Style had fallen to a cheerleader team with no competition above and below them.

Tian Sen's Peaceful Hermit was an All Star. That was their only honor. Yet even this honor was on the brink of death. In the new All Star rankings, Tian Sen and his Peaceful Hermit had been in 21st place. Behind him was Yang Cong and Zhao Ziyang, two typical grassroot players, as well as Zou Yuan, who was ranked because of his special circumstances.

Tian Sen could not accept this placing.

He himself was one of the famous Golden Generation players. Peaceful Hermit had once been one of the three Gods, alongside the Battle God and the King of Fighting. How could this combination end up in such a low position?

It wasn't like Tian Sen wasn't trying hard. However, in Team Royal Style's current situation, weakness had permeated all levels of the team. The team wasn't performing well, and their guild was extremely weak. The update was said to be an opportunity for mid-tier and low-tier teams to make a comeback, but Team Royal Style could not grasp this opportunity. In the competition for wild bosses, Team Royal Style was even more of a cheerleader than they were in the Alliance.

Through the rewards from the several holiday events, Peaceful Hermit was finally able to get his Silver weapon upgraded to Level 75. However, Tian Sen knew that the upgrading had stopped there. This weapon alone had emptied out Team Royal Style's stock of materials. In the following days, Team Royal Style was still just a cheerleader on the sidelines in the wild boss hunts.

Tian Sen truly felt a deep fear in his heart. Even when he had failed to make it to the playoffs, he had never panicked like this before. If this continued, Peaceful Hermit would certainly leave the stage of Gods. Tian Sen definitely wouldn't allow this to happen in his hands and in his generation.

As a result, Tian Sen began actively fighting in the game, assisting Guild Royal Heritage in their hunt for bosses. Even on

Friday and Saturday, when the match date was approaching and the other pro players were preparing for it, he actually took this opportunity to attack again and again.

On Friday and Saturday, Guild Royal Heritage had a bountiful harvest. Tian Sen and Team Royal Style were in a slump in the pro scene, but in the game, they had complete control over the field. Don't forget that Tian Sen was still an All Star player. He was the genuine number one Exorcist of Glory.

The team could not stop Tian Sen's craze because they knew what Tian Sen wanted and what he was working hard towards. So when Tian Sen didn't participate in the final practice before the match, Team Royal Style did not say anything.

The match was about to start. In the preparation room, there was still no sign of Tian Sen. Now everyone felt like he was getting a bit too crazy.

Even if Team Royal Styles couldn't gain anything from this season, wasn't giving up on the match too unprofessional?

The team members discussed this in the preparation room. From their understanding, Tian Sen shouldn't be like this.

The expression on Team Royal Style's manager face was ashen. He called again and again, but no one picked up. Helpless, he could only report it to his boss.

"Have you called anyone to look for him in his room?" The boss asked.

"I've already told someone to do that." The manager said. The match was taking place in Team Royal Style's home stadium. Normally, after the players finished their last bits of practice in the practice room, they would rush to the stadium. Tian Sen not showing up to their final practice session wasn't a big deal. They thought Tian Sen would hurry over to the stadium before the match started, but there was only half an hour before it began, and Tian Sen was still nowhere to be seen.

By this point, the teams had already confirmed their team line-ups. Even though a sudden accident would allow them change it, if they did, they could not change it again. The rules weren't set only for Team Royal Style. That was just the way things were.

Tian Sen was Team Royal Style's ace player. Until the very last moment, Team Royal Style didn't wish to give him up, whether that was for the match or for the fans, it couldn't be done.....

However, they couldn't get into contact with Tian Sen.

In the preparation room, a player suddenly thought of something. He pulled out the laptop that he carried with him, opened it up, connected to the Wifi, opened the game, took out the Glory card reader on him, and swiped his account card.

"Tian Sen is still in the game!" This player was called Chang Jianping. His relationship with Tian Sen was quite good. He finally

found signs of Tian Sen still in the game.

"That guy! Did he forget the time?! Tell him to hurry over." The manager rushed over to Cao Jianping. He saw the screen and shouted.

Chang Jianping had already clicked on Tian Sen's character and sent a message to him.

No reply.

"What's going on? Did something happen to him?" The manager suddenly had a bad premonition.

Chang Jianping suddenly thought of something. He saw that Royal Heritage's guild leader was also online. Since Tian Sen wasn't replying, he messaged Royal Heritage's guild leader instead.

If Tian Sen was doing something in the game, the guild leader would obviously support him with all he had. The two should be together.

When Chang Jianping messaged the guild leader, he soon got a reply.

"In battle!" The guild leader replied.

"What time is it! What battle?! Tell him to hurry over!" The

manager saw the reply and started flipping out. In his outrage, he even failed to think of calling the guild team to ask about Tian Sen's whereabouts.

Glory, Heavenly Domain, Setting Sun Waterfall.

The landscape was enchanting. It was a place, where those in love liked to swim around freely in. However, no matter beautiful the scenery was, once a wild boss spawned, a bloody storm would pass through.

Under the Setting Sun Waterfall, Hidden Warrior Alyan was quickly approaching death. The battle for the boss reached a climax at this moment.

A scarlet scythe whistled in the air, striking the fatal blow to Alyan. At this instant, a spear stabbed forward, accurately blocking the scythe to the tank's side.

"It's already 7:42. Little Tian, you're still not going to head over? Don't you have a match to play soon?" Ye Xiu, who was controlling Lord Grim, asked concernedly to an Exorcist.

Chapter 943: Just Off By One Strike

"I’m going to attend the match. I only need 14 minutes!" Tian Sen clenched his teeth and replied.

"What if there’s traffic?" Ye Xiu said.

"It’s at our home stadium!" Tian Sen said.

"What if the elevator breaks down? From what I remember, isn’t the Royal Style building is pretty old. Do you guys frequently perform maintenance checks on the elevator?"

"....." Tian Sen was speechless. It wasn’t the time to chat about this, but the problem was that he couldn’t help but think about the loud elevator at Royal Style that kept on making noises whenever it went up or down.

Just one more strike!

Tian Sen gritted his teeth. However, this one attack had dragged on for three minutes already.

Tian Sen hadn’t forgotten about the match. He had calculated that there was more than enough time to kill this boss and hurry over to the match. How could he have known Lord Grim’s group would arrive midway, instantly complicating the match.

Just one more strike and Hidden Warrior Alyan would fall, but he was stuck on this one attack.

Most players might not be able to imagine such a scene happening, but Tian Sen wasn't surprised one bit. Pro players had the ability to achieve that. The one in front of him wasn't currently registered by the Alliance, but no one would question his ability. The problem was that Tian Sen himself was being held back by him, which made him feel extremely unhappy.

It was almost time for the match to begin, but he just wasn't able to make this one final strike.

It was already 7:43? He started panicking even more when Ye Xiu told him the time. Rushing to the stadium would take him at least 14 minutes. For insurance, he had originally planned to leave at 7:40, but this Cheng Yaojin who charged in mid-battle completed ruined his plans.

Tian Sen hadn't been too concerned about this bunch. He knew that their capabilities were impressive, but he had already established such an enormous lead. It wasn't possible for Hidden Warrior Alyan's aggro to switch over to another target at this point, especially with an All Star like him watching over the battle.

But he didn't think that, not only would Lord Grim's group not attack Hidden Warrior Alyan and fight over the aggro, they even protected the boss and focused their attacks on him.

Forcefully suppressing the opposing side from dealing damage

was a rarely used strategy in boss battles because any team that could successfully accomplish that was undoubtedly the most outstanding team on the battlefield. It also required that team to have numerous safeguards. How could it be so easily done?

When Lord Grim's group prepared to employ this strategy, Guild Royal Heritage even started laughing. They felt like Lord Grim's group probably thought of themselves as invincible because they could go on a rampage in the game without any resistance. This time, they had bumped into Tian Sen. Attempting a blitzkrieg against him was too naive, no?

Reality met their expectations. How could Tian Sen be so easily killed? With the support of Guild Royal Heritage's elite teams, he easily defended against the pressure.

Afterwards, Lord Grim's group acted shamelessly in the eyes of Royal Heritage. Since they couldn't get the boss for themselves, they want to inconvenience us?

That's too unscrupulous! Look at the other guilds! After seeing how Tian Sen controlled the flow of battle and established a steady aggro advantage, they had already packed their bags and given up. Only Lord Grim's group still wanted to cause trouble for them after knowing they couldn't get the boss. They were too unprincipled!

Royal Heritage's players were furious, but with their strength, they didn't have the ability to challenge Lord Grim's group.

Let alone Wei Chen, Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, Qiao Yifan, Wu

Chen, even Luo Ji was no longer the same as before after undergoing such a long period of pro-level practice.

The skill level and experience of a God like Ye Qiu and professional training methods weren't fake. If a random passerby was picked up off the streets, even if he could not be turned into a God or a pro player, training someone to become an expert better than normal players was absolutely not a problem.

Luo Ji went through another period of bitter practice during the break. He could already be considered an expert. In the Arena, he won more often than not. In any guild, he would be good enough to enter an elite group.

In this PK, Ye Xiu wasn't going to put any restrictions on him to make it easier for Luo Ji to control his summons, because Luo Ji could already figure out how to best bring out his strength.

As a result, even though Lord Grim's group was fewer in number, Royal Style couldn't deal with them.

Neither side was able to do anything to the other, so the situation went into a deadlock. However with Lord Grim's group causing trouble, killing the boss obviously wouldn't go peacefully, especially with Hidden Warrior Alyan attacking at inopportune moments. If not, with Tian Sen personally watching over the fight, Royal Heritage could have brought this situation to a close with a sudden burst of attacks.

Royal Heritage grit their teeth, but they couldn't do anything to

the other side. From their view, as long as they could kill this boss, they would bring defeat to those guys.

At 7:40, it was only when Ye Xiu asked Tian Sen if he wasn't going to the match did Tian Sen realize the despicableness of the other side's strategy.

Lord Grim's group wasn't just there to inconvenience Royal Heritage. Their eyes were still set on the boss. They saw a huge weakness in Royal Heritage: today was match day. At 8:00 PM sharp, the match would begin. How could Tian Sen not go? As a result, they deliberately caused trouble, stopping Royal Heritage from killing the boss. Once the time came, even if Tian Sen's Exorcist wasn't dead, he would still be forced to leave.

7:40 was when Tian Sen had planned on leaving, but he was unwilling to! Because Hidden Warrior Alyan only need one more hit to fall. If their guild focused their attacks, that shouldn't be too hard to accomplish, right?

But they couldn't do it!

Tian Sen was the other side's main focus. Whatever methods the other players wanted to use were easily seen through by the other side. Hidden Warrior Alyan stayed strong with only his final breath. He simply refused to die. His attacks in a red blood state killed many of their Royal Heritage players. What was even more infuriating was that the equipment dropped by these players were actually picked up by a Ninja from the other side. That Ninja was like the wind. He charged into Royal Heritage's troops to pick the equipment up, and no one could stop him.

And just like this, in order to make that final strike, Tian Sen busied about for three minutes. During these three minutes, he was pretty much just fighting with Lord Grim's group. Let alone striking the boss, if he wasn't careful, he might be the one to fall in the end.

"It's 7:44!" In the blink of an eye, a minute passed. Ye XIu reminded Tian Sen again. The ability to report the time like a bird was the greatest blow to Tian Sen. The more time that passed, the more panicked Tian Sen became.

7:45! I'll have to go then! This is the final minute!

Tian Sen wanted to find an opening in this final minute, but Ye Xiu's group had lasted for four minutes already, so how could they easily expose an opening in this final minute? Of course not. This opening would have to be created by Tian Sen.

Tian Sen no longer had a way out. He decided to put his all into this fight.

"If an opportunity appears, attack!"

These were his final words towards Guild Royal Heritage. He wasn't sure if he could make the final blow himself, but perhaps he could create enough of an opening to let the others in the guild complete it. If that happened, the boss would still be theirs in the end.

Tian Sen's Exorcist suddenly leaped up. Before his scythe could start swinging, a bullet was fired. Lord Grim's weapon would be a spear, then a sword, and then a gun. Tian Sen wasn't sure what to do, but this time, Tian Sen wasn't planning on running. The scythe in his hands made three scarlet slashes. Boom boom boom. The three Anti-Tank Missiles fired by Lord Grim were sliced apart. Tian Sen's Exorcist flew out of the smoke directly towards Lord Grim. He wanted to use this type of method to forcefully create an opening in the protective circle around the boss.

A cold light flashed. Soft Mist's spear arrived with a Circle Swing. She wanted to throw Tian Sen's Exorcist down to the ground.

Tian Sen reacted quickly. His scythe swung again, knocking Soft Mist's spear aside. At the same time, he didn't ignore what was ahead of him. After his scythe blocked Soft Mist's spear, he swung it down, deflecting the Circle Swing from Lord Grim as well.

In that one leap, Tian Sen was able to complete five attacks. Scythes had an attack speed advantage over spears. In his hands, the scythe danced without restraint. He broke through all of these obstacles and was just about to reach Lord Grim. At this moment, Lord Grim moved to the side, and Tian Sen saw Hidden Warrior Alyan punch. A Qi Master's Sky Piercing Strike blasted straight at him.

Those guys had actually coordinated with the boss. This attack was a Qi attack and couldn't be blocked. He had already reached this step. He could only take the blow.

His Exorcist opened his hands and a talisman paper flew out. This was a special Exorcist talisman. A talisman could immediately release a skill. This time, right when the talisman was thrown out, pa pa pa sounds repeatedly sounded. At Lord Grim's side, Steamed Bun Invasion had used an Inject Poison. Before the talisman skill could be released, thousands of holes punctured through it, making it fail.

This was the greatest weakness for Exorcist talismans. When a talisman paper was thrown out, if it wasn't protected, the paper could be destroyed, which would be equivalent to interrupting the skill.

And then... there was no and then. When Hidden Warrior Alyan's Sky Piercing Strike hit, Tian Sen's Exorcist was blown away. Another part of the battle had passed. Who would have thought that, after Tian Sen had dispersed the Anti-Tank Missiles, he had thrown an Exorcist talisman into the air. Brilliant light blossomed from it.

Exorcist Talisman: Flying Meteorite!

Sparks filled the air. A meteor, dragging a tail behind it, descended. Tian Sen let out a victorious smile, but soon afterwards, he saw Lord Grim suddenly lift his weapon. That umbrella opened up and Lord Grim strolled over to the boss and protected him. The falling meteor crashed into the umbrella. The boss looked like he was completely unaffected.

"How treacherous. To think you hid an Exorist talisman." Lord Grim lifted up his gaze, appreciating the beauty of the flying

meteorite.

"7:45." In the end, he still didn’t forget to remind Tian Sen about the time.

Cheng Yaojin who charged in mid-battle or Cheng Yaojin ambushes the enemy means somebody shows up unexpectedly and disrupts the plan. Historically, Cheng Yaojin was a general of the early Tang dynasty. In stories, he’s depicted as an inept warrior who sometimes shows up at the right place and right time to save the day. Another saying about him is Cheng Yaojin and his three axe strokes, or Cheng Yaojin and his thirty six axe strokes. Basically, his weapon is a broad axe. His skills suck, but his luck is good. Three axe strokes is enough to defeat a weak opponent. But against a strong opponent, even thirty six axe strokes is not enough and he runs away instead. It's used to describe someone with a limited repertoire of skills.

Chapter 944: Training

It's 7:45.

This sentence did more damage to Tian Sen than any skill. No matter how much he wanted to continue, Tian Sen had no choice but to log out of the game. After all, he was Team Royal Style's captain, Team Royal Style's ace, the one that carried his team on his shoulders. His sense of responsibility wouldn't allow him to miss Team Royal Style's official matches for any reason whatsoever.

Tian Sen's Exorcist finally stopped moving. This was what would happen when you force logged off in combat. An online character that was under no one's control was bound to be trampled over by others. Right now, it was still the target of the Boss' aggro. Hidden Warrior Alyan continued to charge at Tian Sen's Exorcist. This seemed to be exactly what Ye Xiu and co wanted. After Tian Sen's Exorcist was killed, the aggro would be washed from him. If the aggro was washed from an All Star level player like Tian Sen, then washing it from the other members of Guild Royal Heritage would be a piece of cake.

Hidden Warrior Alyan was like the flash of a blade, appearing right next to Tian Sen's Exorcist. A fist swung out and the claws on the back of that fist stabbed into the abdomen of Tian Sen's Exorcist.

It was then that the members of Guild Royal Heritage suddenly moved into a fan shaped attack formation, throwing out every possible skill they could and blasting it at Hidden Warrior Alyan.

Tian Sen might've had to go offline, but Tian Sen's departure might give them some form of opportunity, so Tian Sen had specially informed them of this before he logged out.

In this moment, the admiration Royal Heritage's players had for their captain was endless. He was their god.

An opportunity had appeared as expected!

"Hahahaha, you've miscalculated!" Royal Heritage's players laughed wildly. It hadn't been easy holding it in, seeing the boss just moments away from being taken down.

Ever since Lord Grim had entered the competition for bosses, Royal Heritage went from being able to get a few scraps to becoming a bystander. Like any other guild, Royal Heritage loathed Lord Grim, who never played by the standards and sent everything into chaos. Recently, God Tian Sen had been coming to the guild to guide them, allowing them to gain some spoils in the competition for Bosses. Though, as a upstanding employee of the club, the guild leader worried that their team's performance would be influenced by their god's participation ingame, he understood Tian Sen's intentions upon seeing his strained smile when mentioning their team's current scores.

Royal Heritage didn't have much of a chance to do anything of note in the current season anymore. The current retreat was to make way for a brighter future. Taking this update as a chance, Tian Sen came online often to obtain some high leveled materials,

hopefully grabbing them a chance of striking back. For those teams without powerful foundations, they could only use this effort to slowly accumulate strength.

The continuous battles were all for victory. It wasn't until this Boss that they had met the characters from Happy. They had suddenly all appeared, causing a storm cloud to appear over the head of Royal Heritage's guild leader, even though there was a god among them, helping.

As expected, Lord Grim's shenanigans had suppressed even Tian Sen, drawing things out until he absolutely had to leave. It was a good thing that with his departure, Tian Sen had created a game point for them. He might've not been here personally, but the competition for this boss had still resulted in Royal Heritage's victory.

Royal Heritage's players had been wildly laughing at Happy's untimely loss, but when they looked carefully, they found that Happy's characters had never moved from their original places, and they weren't even looking over here. Lord Grim's back was even turned to them and the others were all looking towards him, obviously listening to him speak.

Some Royal Hertiage players came over curiously. These people didn't stop them from listening into what Lord Grim was saying.

"We were careless. Did anyone notice the Flying Meteorite Exorcism Talisman that Tian Sen threw into the air?" Ye Xiu was saying.

Silence.

"If it was just one person who hadn't noticed it, that's excusable. However, we are a team, we should understand the situation on the field in its entirety, without any blind spots, using the support we have from one another. On this point, we don't do well enough. Everyone needs to keep this awareness of supporting each other in mind. We need to keep an eye of our teammate's blind spots at any given moment and fill in these blanks for them, allowing us, as a whole, to achieve a state where we have no blind spots."

None of Happy's members were newbies anymore, naturally understanding the meaning to Ye Xiu's words. They didn't need further explanation; they just had to make this a habit.

"Okay, Tian Sen has logged off," Lord Grim only turned his view upon saying this, casually taking a glance at the Royal Heritage players, still excited over their boss kill. Then he said, "No pro players would be on at this time, so let's end today's training here!"

Training? What did he mean? What was that?

The Royal Heritage players who heard what Happy was saying were confused, but from Lord Grim's tone, they had gleaned one scrap of information; Happy wasn't interested in anything the Boss had to give. They seemed to be more interested in their exchange with Tian Sen.

Tian Sen was deserving of his title of god; he had probably given

these incomparably inexperienced newbies some good battle experience.

The Royal Heritage players thought this to themselves with pride, but then froze.

Battle experience?

Training?

No way.

Watching the retreating figures of Happy, these players seemed to have realized something. Were these members of Happy here just to use the online pro players as practice? Was this their so-called training?

To know the truth, this player ran over to catch up. However, because of his lack of efficiency in using stamina, he wasn't able to chase for too long. He did manage to hear some conversation though.

"Actually, we could've still tried to take that boss just now. It would be pretty hard to continue in that sort of situation, so we could have seen it as practice." Someone said.

"No need. That would waste quite some more time. We should focus our attention on more specialized training." That was Lord Grim's voice.

"Are we off to watch matches for theoretical learning again?"

"Of course, these are all live teaching materials, we should use them to their fullest," Lord Grim said with a hint of laughter.

"Speaking of which, it’s a match day today, how about we watch a live stream?"

"Hm, that’s good, too... If we watch a live match, we can use the chance to have everyone take part in a live analysis of the battle situation," Lord Grim said.

"No way..." Everyone else chorused.

That was when the Royal Heritage player had used up his stamina and watched Happy’s members leave and disappear into the distance.

Team Happy was using the pro players who came in game to help their guilds get materials as practice opponents. The Royal Heritage player felt like he had found out something big and hurriedly ran off to tell his guild leader. As expected, his guild leader was also shocked.

However, after he recovered, what could he do about it? Get all the pro players to stop coming ingame for bosses to become Team Happy’s practice targets?

Yes... If it was the pros of other guilds, then sure. For our Guild Royal Heritage, we hope that our God Tian Sen will always be here!

It was then that God Tian Sen had finally arrived at the stadium. There was only a minute before the match was due to start.

"Try to be earlier in the future..." Knowing where Tian Sen had gone and seeing now that he hadn't been late, the manager had originally been fretting anxiously, but only said this sentence casually upon seeing him.

Tian Sen was moved. He knew that this showed an immense amount of trust for him. He nodded with some force and swept past to get onstage.

"Did you get this boss?" The manager asked as he passed by.

"I... don't know." Tian Sen was disappointed that he was incapable of answering this question. After logging out, he had rushed over. The battle ingame had definitely ended in these fifteen minutes, but he had no idea how it turned out.

"Do your best..." The manager realized that his question had made Tian Sen, who was about to go up to play, a little absent minded and immediately regretted it. In reality, he hadn't thought Tian Sen would give him such an answer. Seeing this guy appearing only in the last minute, he had thought the other would give him a confident answer. Yet in the end, it was an uncertain one. Was it so hard even for Tian Sen to snatch Bosses in game?

The manager, who didn’t need to play, was rather free and called the guild department. He was obviously pleased to hear that the guild had taken the Boss, but then he heard of Team Happy’s attitude in this battle.

"Using Tian Sen as training?" The manager was stunned.

"I think, that’s exactly how it is," the guild leader said.

"What... what on earth is this about?" The manager was perplexed. Team Happy really was an anomaly.

At exactly 8, the battle between the twenty teams in the 23rd round of the Glory Alliance’s Tenth Season began.

Ye Xiu was completely correct. In this moment, no pro players would appear ingame.

Under such circumstances, Team Happy wouldn’t be conducting any practice.

However, not long after the match was over, Ye Xiu and co gained intel from ingame that the pro players had appeared.

After this period of organizing intel, the smurfs that all the pros were using could be easily compiled by anyone who cared to take note.

The names that had been reported had only just experienced losses or victories on the field. Now, they had come ingame with their different moods. This might be a new method of cathartic relief. Those who had won beautifully needed a place to relieve their excess energy and those who had lost, needed a place to release their frustration.

The more active it was online, the better it was for Happy to train.

Now, many pros had come ingame to battle, but where was the battlegrounds?

New intel soon arrived.

Barrier Mountains, Shadow Tactician Shaan had respawned.

A big level 75 Boss. It had currently not been figured out by the players yet. Just to deal with bosses, there would be many high difficulty NPC deaths. And now, it was facing a difficult moment. It was about to face the true cream of the crop Glory. Fortunately, this team wasn’t in harmony at all.

Chapter 945: A Bit Brutal

The guilds that had received Shadow Tactician Shaan's announcement gathered there. No interactions were made among each other because everyone knew that the one in charge of the guild might not be the guild leader. All the players were wondering which characters that matched the team's classes were a pro player's side account.

It was during this time, when Shaan swayed onto stage.

Among all the NPCs in Barrier Mountain, this boss possessed a mysterious identity. His class belonged to the Night Walker category, and was proficient in all four classes. He made full use of a boss's OP spirit. Before pro players entered the battle with bosses, countless of players had fallen under Shaan's dagger. There was no problem filling up a pile of A4 paper with the names of the fallen.

Until now, not a single guild had a systematic way to defeat the boss. It was all completely done by pouring out blood and tears.

During the week, Shaan was the last to spawn on stage among the eight Level 75 bosses. As for the former seven, due to the addition of pro players, six of the fights' situation turned out to be very different. Since pro players would be intervening this time, what sort of situation would unfold? As every guild silently closed in on Shaan's spawning location, they all started to think about this matter.

Barrier Mountain, Forest Peak.

Shaan spawned in the mountains and woods, and had already been intercepted by three guilds.

Blue Brooks Guild, Herb Garden, and Tyrannical Ambition.

All three powerhouses had arrived.

However, everyone knew that in today's fight for the boss, what determined their victory or loss was not the guild's strength, but the strength of the pro players who personally came to command.

The forces of the three guilds formed a triangle, trapping Shaan.

"Wait and..." Someone from Tyrannical Ambition had only just opened their mouth to speak.

"Attack!" Players from Blue Brook Guild had already started to charge towards Shaan.

"See..." The guy from Tyrannical Ambition still managed to finish his sentence. However, the change came before his words, so he felt as if his face couldn't hold his embarrassment.

"Young people..." Lin Jingyan couldn't help but sigh as he watched the Blade Master rushing out from Blue Brook's formation.

Blue Brook’s Blade Master went straight towards Shaan to attack without the slightest sloppiness. Who else other than Blue Rain’s Lu Hanwen had such energy and drive?

However, before Lu Hanwen’s sword struck, it was blocked by someone.

A Witch flew out from Tiny Herb’s side on his broom. He jumped down mid-way, and waved his broom to attack five times continuously. As a result, Lu Hanwen’s Blade Master was forced to change his target and ward off the opponent.

"It really is a world for the young..." Lin Jingyan sighed once again. In a blink of an eye, Lu Hanwen’s Blade Master and the Witch from Herb Garden had already fought numerous rounds.

The Witch from Tiny Herb that was able to be evenly matched with Lu Hanwen was undoubtedly the genius pro player Gao Yingjie.

Gao Yingjie didn’t have the kind of personality where one would be in a hurried state to rush forward. But in this season, as a young and emerging genius, Lu Hanwen’s performance in the Rookie Challenge was spectacular. There were too many people who were comparing Lu Hanwen with Gao Yingjie.

Speaking of technique, Gao Yingjie, who was older than Lu Hanwen by three years, was more mature. However, if one was speaking of personality, even Tiny Herb’s team captain Wang Jiexi

sighed himself: "If Gao Yingjie had Lu Hanwen's spirit, then it would be great."

Obviously, these words weren't spoken in front of Gao Yingjie. Unfortunately, Gao Yingjie still secretly heard it.

In fact, Gao Yingjie knew clearly what his flaw was. However, personality problems weren't easy to fix, even when he knew where the problem lay.

However, Gao Yingjie still wanted to try. He didn't want to let down the expectations of his seniors.

As a result, Gao Yingjie started to take note of Lu Hanwen. Not to copy, but to learn his energy and spirit.

It wasn't Gao Yingjie's style to rush forward and fight like what was done when competing for bosses. However, when he saw Lu Hanwen jumping out, he subconsciously felt the need to also have this kind of spirit. As a result, he also rushed out to attack.

The two eye-catching youngsters from the league this season had already gotten into a brawl.

"Say, Old Lin, we can't let those youngsters take all the spotlight for themselves. The ones standing in the spotlight this season should be us." A Spitfire walked to the side of Lin Jingyan's Brawler. He switched the magazine in his automatic pistol repeatedly, making continuous 'clicking' sounds. Evidently, he was

a guy who liked to fiddle with things when he had nothing to do.

"Being in the spotlight? Isn’t that your speciality?" Lin Jingyan said.

"Haha, you shouldn’t be too humble. Let’s hurry up, we can’t let those little demons be too full of themselves!" Zhang Jiale grinned. The automatic pistol under his Spitfire suddenly let out bright and rhythmic sounds as the bullets entered the barrel of the gun. He followed up and started attacking.

Pa-pa-pa-pa!

The sound of gunfire echoed repeatedly. The shots that were fired out were brilliant and varied, so there were all kinds of shots with special effects. At the same time, his left hand continued to throw out grenades into the air. In no time, flames covered a whole area. Even the silhouette of the Shaan became fuzzy. When Zhang Jiale’s Hundred Blossom fighting style was brought out, people felt that this guy’s retirement from before must have been a big part of his master plan……

Amidst the splendid flames of the explosion, Lin Jingyan’s Brawler had snuck in. The two veterans of the league unfolded their extravagant raid on the two rookies.

However, before the two parties could collide, a blue sword light suddenly lit up among the myriad of lights flashing from the Hundred Blossoms fighting style. Although it was only monotonous in color, it seemed like it could completely swallow

the dazzling light effects. Streaks of brilliance followed one after another, and it split apart the formation of those two old guys.

Soon after, everyone saw large amounts of speech bubbles popping up.

"You two don’t have any integrity you’re even willing to do this to the cute newbies it seems like you only follow half of the the virtue of respecting your elders and loving the young in Tyranny and it must be the former half because only that half would benefit you!!!!!"

"D*mn, compared to this giant speech bubble, the covering effect of your Hundred Blossoms style is so weak." Lin Jingyan sighed.

"I have always suspected that the reason this guy never uses punctuation is because they leave too much of a gap, so the coverage wouldn’t be able used to its fullest potential." Zhang Jiale said.

"Look. There’s punctuation." Lin Jingyan said.

"The six exclamation marks have dropped to below his belt!" Zhang Jiale said.

The two veterans continued to ridicule, while battling against the guy who had just joined in. That person’s identity was easy to guess, compared to everyone else. It seemed that such a big speech bubble already became the signature move of Team Blue Rain’s

Huang Shaotian.

"Can you two stop spouting rubbish the reason I do this is because the online game has speech bubbles but do they have it in matches? Do they do they do they????" Huang Shaotian yelled.

"This guy is even telling someone else to stop spouting rubbish, I really want to die..." Zhang Jiale said.

"Who wouldn't?" Lin Jingyan spoke.

They spoke to each other, while their hands didn't stop moving. In an instance, the three characters had exchanged numerous skills. Zhang Jiale's Spitfire had already moved to the back to support, while Lin Jingyan's Brawler continued to fight with Huang Shaotian directly at the front.

Although it was true that Huang Shaotian was a God at the peak of his career, he was still very cautious when he faced the two veterans teaming up. He didn't want to let the two open the formation of 2 versus 1 so smoothly, so under the excellent quality of his speech bubbles' covers, he turned around with a Triple Slash. He weaved past Lin Jingyan's Brawler, and wanted to fight straight on with Zhang Jiale's Spitfire.

Their advance had only carried out half way, when a character flew out diagonally. Like Gao Yingjie, he also came from Herb Garden's troops. He was a Witch riding on a broomstick just like Gao Yingjie, however, his flight was rather crafty. This was to the extent that when he reached Huang Shaotian's Blade Master, he

connected his skills at a critical moment. As a result, it looked like someone jumped up and slammed Huang Shaotian's Blade Master into the ground with his broomstick. Then a swish came as the broom swept again. Dust flew everywhere, and it almost buried Huang Shaotian's Blade Master under a mound of soil.

"Shameless shameless shameless shameless! You're all targeting me at once. Three of you fighting one of me! Don't take revenge in the public just because you lost the previous match!!" Since Huang Shaotian, who was swept down, didn't need to precede with any mechanisms, he managed to patiently put on all the punctuations this time in his speech bubble.

"It's only because you're too noisy." The Witch wasn't going easy on him at all. Two magic potions were thrown out, and Huang Shaotian's Blade Master was immediately trapped between skies of ice and fire.

"Huang Shao, let me save you!" When Lu Hanwen noticed that Huang Shaotian's wasn't in a good situation, he knocked aside Gao Yingjie's broom with his sword, and rushed forward swiftly to help Huan Shaotian.

"This is so embarrassing! Huang Shaotian, you should just retire and give your position to Little Comrade Lu. That's the truth!" Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan sighed one after another.

"It's hard to believe how well-coordinated you two are after becoming teammates You two echo each other!" Huang Shaotian wasn't weak. Even if he was going up against three Gods, he wasn't that easy to be killed. Under his controls, the Blade Master turned

over with a Waning Wind Fading Grass. A ray of sword light was drawn in a circle around him, and helped him avoid the two characters beside him. A Rising Dragon Slash and Sky Plunging Blade followed like a sword immortal.

The surrounding players were all flabbergasted at this point.

Lu Hanwen and Gao Yingjie, Huang Shaotian and Wang Jiexi, and Zhang Jiale with Lin Jingyan... What sort of scene was this? This was just like the All Stars Weekend! Everyone forgot why they had come; they only wanted to be the audience, and seriously watch the people before them perform.

As a result, a small team of people was able to secretly close up to this area without anyone noticing.

"Wow..." When Wei Chen saw the group of pro players before his eyes, he immediately exclaimed with surprise: "Won't the contents of this training be a bit brutal?"

"Mm, it’s a bit over the top, so don’t feel like you’re pressured and go up fearlessly!" Ye Xiu said.

"Nonsense!! Since the contents are so brutal, shouldn’t we change our equipment?" Wei Chen said.

"If we lose the equipment that we’re used to, our battle rhythm will change. I think it would be best if we didn’t overlook these details." Ye Xiu said.

"F*ck, then why did you tell us to go in without pressure? If you have the guts, you can go up and let them make you drop your Myriad Manifestations Umbrella." Wei Chen said.

"Comrade Mo Fan." Ye Xiu turned his head around. It was the first time in his life he had proactively communicate with Mo Fan before a battle. "I have a serious task for you this time. If any of us happen to drop our equipment, you must snatch back our dropped equipment no matter what happens."

The nickname Huang Shao is a play on words. Huang Shao is the first two characters of Huang Shaotian's name, but Shao is an honoric that servants might use when speaking to a young master of a household. Thus, Huang Shao can also mean Young Master Huang. Normally, he would be called Shaotian because that's his first name, but people in Team Blue Rain call him jokingly as Huang Shao or Young Master Shao instead.

Chapter 946: Take This Seriously

Whether it was inside or outside the game, Mo Fan never showed any response towards Ye Xiu's instructions. However, the discussion between Ye Xiu and Wei Chen had struck an alarm bell to everyone in Happy.

Bullying normal players wasn't difficult for them, so they wouldn't usually consider any losses in battle. This time's training was different though. They were facing pro players. Running into one or two wasn't a big deal. After all, they were a team; they had the numbers advantage! But this time, the other side came out with six in one breath. These six were all All Stars this year. There was no need to question their strength. Moreover, while these six had come out, who knew if there was anyone else hiding within the guild? One dragon after the other had appeared just before, no?

In the past, Ye Xiu would have certainly waited until enough had happened before calling everyone to move out, doing whatever was convenient for them. It was different this time. They weren't here to snatch the boss. They were here to use the boss as a business item and fight with these pro players, so they obviously couldn't wait until these guys weakened and then come out to directly attack the biggest problems. Everyone was spirited and full of energy. It would only be meaningful if this battle went back and forth three hundred rounds!

"Wealth and glory goes to those who takes risks! Comrades, forward!" Ye Xiu mobilized his troops.

"What type of stupid speech is that?" Chen Guo complained.

"Huh? Why are you here?" Ye Xiu questioned.

Chen Guo gave Ye Xiu a death glare outside of the game. That guy always disregarded her. Her Chasing Haze was also a member of the team. Why couldn't she practice together with them?

"Go!"

Team Happy didn't lack a spirited person like Lu Hanwen. Tang Rou supported Ye Xiu's decision. Her Soft Mist was the first to charge forward.

Qiao Yifan continued to mature during this period of time. His ability to grasp the overall situation and to coordinate with others had become more outstanding. His understanding towards a Phantom Demon had reached a pro level. When he saw Soft Mist move, he didn't dare dally and immediately followed after her, ready to cast a ghost formation at any moment.

"Let's go then!" Seeing how two of his teammates had charged forward, Wei Chen didn't say anything more. Even though he really really wanted to hide his Death's Hand first, his teammates had already rushed out. He couldn't just go back and make a trip to the city.

"Humph!" Chen Guo's anger hadn't subsided yet. She glared fiercely at Ye Xiu and then controlled her Chasing Haze to move forward as well. She lift the steel cannon in her hands and started taking aim at the alternate accounts of those Gods. Not long

afterwards, the summons from Concealed Light blocked her line of sight.

"Concealed Light, move your things aside!" Chen Guo was furious. Luo Ji's skill level had risen. He could skillfully control several summons now, so when the battlefield became chaotic, he could increase that number a bit. Summoners weren't a welcome class in teams. It wasn't without reason. For example, long-ranged classes would feel annoyed if something like this happened to them.

Lou Ji heard her boss shout at him. He felt embarrassed and immediately had his summons give way. At this moment, Ye Xiu mercilessly pointed out: "You moving away is much easier than him moving his summons away."

"WHAT?!" Chen Guo flared up. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle strode over behind her and said kindly: "Follow me!"

Wu Chen didn't say anything more, but Chen Guo could feel that it was her Chasing Haze that had been positioned poorly. However, she had yelled at Concealed Light to move his summons away. It made it seem like she was doing things randomly……

"It's all because of you!" Chen Guo humphed at Ye Xiu. That wasn't her playstyle.

"Haha, I know you didn't do it on purpose." Ye Xiu said.

"..." Chen Guo hated how she couldn’t bring out her steel cannon from the game! If she had that in her hands, she would have certainly blasted Ye Xiu into oblivion.

Everyone in Team Happy came out one after the other. The players of the three guilds went into an uproar.

If it could be said that watching All Stars fight was a joyous scene for everyone, then Happy was a plague to be avoided.

"Lord Grim is here!"

For a moment, howls echoed as if wolves had come. In the chats of the three guilds, people were constantly shouting and typing.

"It seems like the famous ones are here..."

The Gods fighting each other also noticed them. When Lin Jingyan heard the cries from the players, he couldn’t help but glance over and felt all sorts of emotions.

"How about we ally together to crush that guy first?" Zhang Jiale suddenly came up with a grand proposal. Among everyone here, apart from those young rookies, who didn’t want to crush that guy rushing over? It was a good opportunity right now!

"I support this suggestion! Hahahahaha!" Huang Shaotian shouted.

"Then let’s go!" Wang Jiexi expressed his approval.

"Should we call over Old Han too?" Lin Jingyan wasn’t satisfied with just this.

"Call him out in the chat group. Whoever wants to come can come! We’ll go first." Zhang Jiale was clearly more ruthless. After saying these words, he stopped fighting and turned his gun around. His Hundred Blossoms fighting style instantly provided cover for everyone.

Wang Jiexi didn’t raise any objections. Just when he was about to jump on his broom and fly away, a sword pierced through his stomach. He had actually been struck from behind.

"Huang Shaotian..." Wang Jiexi’s voice was filled with helplessness.

"Hahahaha, this is revenge for the previous 3v1!!!" Huang Shaotian laughed wildly.

How could Wang Jiexi let him run rampant? His character turned around and flew down. Huang Shaotian’s Blade Master lifted his sword into a defensive position. Zhang Jiale’s Spitfire had already let loose a gorgeous display of explosions. Then, he heard the sounds of fighting behind him. He turned around and almost died from anger.

"Can’t you guys be a bit more serious?" Zhang Jiale was furious! His Hundred Blossoms style consumed lots of his skill cooldowns and mana. In particular, when facing a top-tier expert like Ye Qiu, throwing two or three bombs at him wouldn’t be enough, so he needed to go all out. His hard work wasn’t just to let loose some fireworks for those two to enjoy.

Lin Jingyan actually went to the pro player chat group and typed out a message. When he went back to the game from QQ, he saw this scene. For a moment, he didn’t know what to say.

Lu Hanwen and Gao Yingjie were following their seniors blindly. Their seniors seemed to have stopped fighting, so they stopped too. Then, they saw Huang Shaotian and Wang Jiexi battling again. Without another word, the two did the same.

During this short period of time, while the Gods were in-fighting, Happy approached. Artillery fire boomed. Summoned creatures charged forward chaotically. Happy had been formed for such a long time already. They practiced together every day. They were no longer three-legged cats when they went into battle, especially for this type of unmanned initiation with the purpose of causing chaos for the opponents. Their fighting was sharp and professional.

As a result, this wave of sharp coordination crashed against scattered sand. Even if each piece of sand was a God, they were instantly struck silly. Each character suffered different levels of damage. Zhang Jiale’s Spitfire was thrown onto the ground by a Circle Swing from Tang Rou’s Soft Mist. He even heard that sister mumble to herself in disappointment: "God?"

"A warrior can be killed but not disrespected!" Zhang Jiale roared. He threw a grenade at Soft Mist's face. Tang Rou was experienced now. She was no stranger to any class. When she saw that it was just a normal grenade, she didn't take it too seriously. She swung her spear, striking the grenade and stabbing towards the Spitfire on the ground. But when her spear passed through the smoke and light from the grenade's explosion, it didn't hit anything. Then, she heard a voice from behind her.

"Girl, turn around and take look at a God!"

Tang Rou was startled.

Using a grenade's explosion to achieve the same effects as Ninja's Smoke Bomb was something that Tang Rou had never seen before by Spitfire.

But no matter how great you were, it wouldn't scare Tang Rou. She didn't listen to his words and turn around. Instead, she directly sent her spear backwards.

"Wow! Impressive!" Zhang Jiale saw her directly attack behind her. It was quite a difficult move to execute. There were practically no normal players who could do it in a real battle. It was only a small praise though. Normal players might not be able to do it, but in the pro scene, who couldn't perform such a basic move?

Bang bang bang bang!

Tang Rou's attack wasn't faster than Zhang Jiale's bomb. As soon as the first bomb exploded, Zhang Jiale started his combo show. Four explosions in a row all dealing additional back attack damage.

Soft Mist ate four explosions in a row. Tang Rou stared blankly. She couldn't do anything at all. Only then did she understand that getting an attack in on a God wasn't a reason to underestimate him. That could only happen if she attacked him until he died.

After these four chain explosions, there was no more. It wasn't that Zhang Jiale wanted to stop his combo, but someone had disrupted him. It was a team fight. In these moments, everyone had to help each other. Tang Rou and Steamed Bun still lacked this awareness, but Qiao Yifan was quite accomplished in this area. His One Inch Ash used Ghost Slash, accurately creating a gap between Zhang Jiale's Spirtfire and Tang Rou's Soft Mist.

"Yifan!" Gao Yingjie saw One Inch Ash appear and immediately called out. One Inch Ash was Qiao Yifan. That was no secret.

"Your friend?" Lu Hanwen saw Gao Yingjie's Witch look over there and even give a shout, so he asked.

"Yeah!" Gao Yingjie replied.

"Is he strong?" Lu Hanwen asked.

"Uh..." Gao Yingjie wasn't able to reply. He didn't want to look

down on his good friend, but for a pro player, "strong" wasn't a good description for Qiao Yifan's class.

"I'll go see for myself." Lu Hanwen suddenly said and then Triple Slashed towards Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash.

"Ah!" Gao Yingjie was startled. After a bit, he woke up.

For a moment, he had forgotten that Qiao Yifan was no longer part of Team Tiny Herb. They were no longer teammates. He instinctively rushed over to protect him; his Witch immediately jumped onto his broom and flew over.

Qiao Yifan had an outstanding grasp of the overall situation. He naturally noticed Lu Hanwen heading towards him. His One Inch Ash swung his sword and activated an Ice Boundary in front of him, creating a protective zone.

Lu Hanwen saw it and could only go around. However, Gao Yingjie's Witch caught up and rushed down from above, sending Lu Hanwen's Blade Master into a stumble.

One Inch Ash was in his own Ice Boundary. He obviously wouldn't be affected by it. He moved through the Ice Boundary and followed up Gao Yingie's attack. His sword let out a Moonlight Slash, Full Moon Slash, and then a Ghost Slash to knock Lu Hanwen's Blade Master far far away.

"To think we would fight side by side in this type of situation."

Gao Yingjie realized that the two were not teammates. He forced out a smile somewhat sadly.

Before Qiao Yifan could say anything, Gao Yingjie’s character was lifted up from behind and then thrown. He was unable to Quick Recover. It was a grab.

"What side by side? You guys are enemies! Take this seriously!" Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim threw Gao Yingjie’s Witch away.

The original phrase is "directly attack Huanglong".

The origin of this phrase comes from this: (Song Dynasty General) Yue Fei studied martial under Zhou Tong. After Zhou Tong died, he would sweep Zhou Tong’s tomb every month. His father praised him for his faithfulness: "If there’s a chance for you to serve your country, then you should take it!" In 1122, Yue Fei enlisted into the army. Due to his bravery and skill at fighting, he soared from a normal soldier to a great leader. Yue Fei was very kind to his subordinates: If a soldier fell ill, he would personally brew medicine for him. The remunerations to a family for a soldier’s death was small, so he would divide a portion of the rewards given by the court to those who died. Whenever there was a military operation, he would gather everyone over to discuss and agree upon it before setting out. Thus, when his troops suddenly encountered enemies, they would not panic. However, his military morals were very strict: One time, a soldier took a saddle from a commoner. That soldier was immediately put to death under martial law. His troops would sometimes need to pass the night on the road. The commoners opened their doors to welcome them, but no one dared to go. The commoners called them "The Yue Family Army."

The Yue Family Army fought bravely for ten years and recovered a large portion of lost land. In the Zhuxian Town campaign, they

broke through Jin Wuzhu’s army. The morale of the Jin soldiers were at the lowest, while the morale of the Song soldiers were at their highest. The people occupied by the Great Jin stood up and rallied together. Recovery of the Central Plains was imminent. Yue Fei spoke to his army with excitement: "Directly attack the Huanglong Prefecture and then drink to your heart’s content!" The Huanglong Prefecture is the current-day Jilin Province Nong’an County. Back then, it was the central region of the Great Jin.

Chapter 947: Free-for-all Brawl

Qiao Yifan's manners were indeed proper, and Gao Yingjie's Witch had already been thrown far away, no longer able continue fighting. Qiao Yifan continued to control One Inch Ash to clean up the scene.

"Nice Phantom Demon!"

A voice from above called out. Another Witch flew by on a broom, but this time, it wasn't Gao Yingjie.

Coming face to face with his former captain, Qiao Yifan couldn't help but feel a sense of dread. For a moment, he forgot how to respond. Seeing Steamed Bun Invasion's Brawler quietly snuck up on Wang Jiexi's Witch with a brick, he actually subconsciously yelled out, "Watch out!"

In reality, how could Wang Jiexi fall for such an obvious sneak attack? He had even noticed Huang Shaotian's Blade Master attack from another side. How could Steamed Bun's far less clever attack ever hope to hit him? While dodging Huang Shaotian's blade, Wang Jiexi simply maneuvered to avoid Steamed Bun's brick in passing.

"Traitor!" Steamed Bun yelled out angrily, actually acting as if Qiao Yifan's warning was the sole reason his attack had failed.

"What?" Qiao Yifan instantly reacted, feeling ashamed. He felt like he couldn't show his face in front of this entire room of people

anymore. Regardless of whether or not his warning actually helped, at that moment, he had truly betrayed the team. Although he had only been in Tiny Herb for one year, his feelings towards the team were quite complicated.

After avoiding two sneak attacks, Wang Jiexi pushed his Witch forward, like a race car drifting within a crowd. Huang Shaotian couldn't keep up with his rhythm for a moment. As his Blade Master raised his sword, he easily slashed towards Steamed Bun Invasion.

"Ack!" Steamed Bun cried out in fear, controlling his character to jump away, but Huang Shaotian's unleashed sword skill had already arrived.

Qiao Yifan anxiously cleared his mind. One Inch Ash moved like a Berserker, bravely pouncing forward to protect Steamed Bun Invasion. Because of this, Concealed Light's summoned beast attacked one step ahead, joining Steamed Bun Invasion to surround and trap Huang Shaotian's Blade Master.

"Wait it's me! Don't make a mistake!" Steamed Bun quickly shouted at Luo Ji.

Luo Ji didn't know what to say. Did he really look foolish to the point where he couldn't distinguish friend from foe?

Sword light burst out and Concealed Light's ring of summoned beasts were actually all scattered by Huang Shaotian. Luo Ji was dumbstruck. A God's strength indeed couldn't be estimated with

normal reasoning. Even like this, they couldn’t surround him?

Suddenly, a Warlock’s Hexagram Prison emerged from the ground in a flash of light, trapping Huang Shaotian’s Blade Master. A moment later, Huang Shaotian also felt deeply moved. He controlled his Blade Master to turn and look at the Warlock who had just cast Death’s Door.

Wei Chen was bragging. "Thinking back to those days, my single Hexagram Prison was able to completely trap Huang Shaotian. The best BOSS hunter in the online game? A joke, as soon as he ran into me……"

While talking, he only saw one side of Huang Shaotian’s Blade Master. In the split second before the Hexagram Prison was complete, Huang Shaotian dodged sideways into the gap between two beams of light, making his escape.

"How did he run into you?" Steamed Bun asked, actually listening to Wei Chen’s bragging.

"Ah, times have really changed……" Seeing that Huang Shaotian was able to escape even in this situation, Wei Chen felt wistful. Nowadays, Huang Shaotian was no longer that naive youth he could easily pin down. As a peak God in the Glory Alliance, him pinning down Wei Chen was much more likely.

Indeed, after cutting through Concealed Light’s summoned beasts and breaking out of the Hexagram Prison, Huang Shaotian completely ignored Steamed Bun Invasion, directly charging

towards Wei Chen’s Windward Formation to pin him down.

"Damn! Protect me!" Wei Chen really didn’t hold back. When meeting a strong opponent, he quickly turned and ran away, moving smoothly and confidently.

"You have nowhere to run!" Suddenly, in front of him Lu Hanwen appeared, who had returned once again after Qiao Yifan’s One Inch Ash had knocked him flying. He coordinated with Huang Shaotian’s offensive, blocking Wei Chen’s Windward Formation.

This was the confrontation between Team Blue Rain’s most senior retired player and its youngest new recruit.

Team Happy’s members couldn’t hold back their emotions, all turning to watch.

"Help! Help!!"

Except, all they saw was Wei Chen simultaneously yelling and controlling Windward Formation to continue running away. Meeting Lu Hanwen, who wasn’t even half his age, Wei Chen still had no reservations about fleeing.

Support quickly arrived.

Wu Chen’s Dawn Rifle aimed the muzzle of his cannon, coming over to provide cover fire for Windward Formation. Chen Guo’s Chasing Haze copied him. However, Lu Hanwen’s mechanics were

good. His Blade Master stubbornly blew through two Launchers' attacks. From this, it was easy to see the difference in the ability levels of the two Launchers. Chasing Haze's attacks clearly landed a bit further away from Lu Hanwen. This wasn't because she wasn't coordinating with Wu Chen's Launcher; her aim was just much worse.

Thus, even under the artillery fire, Lu Hanwen still put Wei Chen in a difficult situation, making him dart around wildly. Huang Shaotian was embarrassed to run over and 2v1.

As a result, no one noticed that at this moment, Happy's cleric and quietly started to chant.

Lu Hanwen's stepped forward.

An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands waved his cross.

The flames of Sacred Fire spread almost instantly, engulfing Lu Hanwen's Blade Master entirely. He didn't have a chance to dodge; he didn't even see Sacred Fire's little flame. By the time he managed to react, he had already fallen into the trap and been silenced.

"Hahahaha."

Wei Chen laughed, changing from fleeing wildly to suddenly striking back in high spirits, all in an instant. He transitioned back to being entirely at ease. Was this also a type of experience that

could be gained? No one knew for sure.

At this moment, all attacks were focused on Lu Hanwen's Blade Master.

It appeared as if the little Blade Master only had to suffer through three seconds of being silenced, still able to move normally. However, every expert knew that only relying on forward, backward, and sideway movements in battle was not enough to deal with complicated situations. Sometimes skills could be used during battle to increase mobility in specific ways. A character's movement would also appear faster.

Now, Lu Hanwen was completely unable to use these skills for three seconds. If his opponents were all at Chen Guo's level, then it wouldn't be a problem at all. However, there was Wu Chen, and the even more ruthless Wei Chen.

By the time the three second silence ended, Lu Hanwen's Blade Master was trapped by Windward Formation's binding curse for another five seconds.

This time, using skills wasn't a problem. The problem was that his character couldn't even move. Facing long-range classes, Lu Hanwen's Blade Master immediately became a sandbag to soak damage. Even Chasing Haze's Satellite Beam hit its mark, engulfing him from head to toe.

"Little Lu!" How could Huang Shaotian just sit by and watch? He had come over to save Lu Hanwen long ago, yet before he could

even move half a step, he was blocked by another sword light. Lord Grim's figure appeared, his sword returning to its sheath in the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

"You! Perfect timing. Let me teach you a lesson!" Huang Shaotian concentrated, drawing his sword, before he was immediately surrounded by summoned beasts. One by one they crowded around him, as if waiting for him to give out free candy.

"Bastard! Fight me 1v1!" Huang Shaotian fumed.

"Lunatic." Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella spit out a tongue of flames, and three anti-tank missiles shot out, coordinating with the summoned beasts, directly exploding on Huang Shaotian and sending him flying. From his spinning camera, he examined the situation.

Lin Jingyan, Steamed Bun.

The two Brawlers attacked at the same time, fighting hand-to-hand.

"Your skill isn't bad!" Steamed Bun was amazed. "How is it compared to the number one Brawler?"

This one sentence stabbed Lin Jingyan's sore spot. What was this natural talent in trash-talking?

Saying that I'm the number one Brawler with a straight face? Lin

Jingyan wasn’t Wei Chen. He knew very well that his current skill level was below Tang Hao. Even at his peak, if he were pitted against the current Tang Hao, he might still lose more matches than he would win. Yet even if it was like this, Lin Jingyan didn’t have time to give Steamed Bun an analysis of how he was inferior to Tang Hao, right?

"Becoming the number one Brawler, is that your goal?" Lin Jingyan could only steer the conversation in a different direction.

"Nope! My goal is to defeat you!" Steamed Bun replied.

"Oh?" Lin Jingyan was surprised. So he was Steamed Bun Invasion’s goal? This also counted as a type of fan enthusiasm right? Just as he was preparing to act like a Senior, opening his mouth to give a word of encouragement, he heard Steamed Bun continue, "Come, tell me your name!"

Lin Jingyan’s heart broke.

So you don’t even know who I am?

After thinking about it once again, he really was too pompous! Just hearing something along the lines of "your skill isn’t bad" should have told him that his opponent didn’t know who he was! Except, in these present circumstances, he was still wearing Tyrannical Ambition’s guild tag and playing a Brawler! Was it really that hard to tell who he was? Furthermore, without knowing who he was, this guy actually made him his goal? Was this not an overly ambitious claim, but instead a temporary target?

Lin Jingyan was at a bit of a loss.

"Hey, I was asking for your name!" In reality the other side was still unforgiving.

"You . . . guess!" Lin Jingyan really couldn’t tell whether or not this guy was doing this on purpose.

"Damn, so boring! Childish! Child!" Steamed Bun said.

"..." Lin Jingyan really wished this guy would go and challenge Tang Hao.

This was a battle scene, leaving the spectating players completely speechless. They all knew that the players from the present guilds were all All Stars. Except, right now they were fighting with Team Happy, and they didn’t appear dominant at all!

The most tragic case was Blue Rain. Lu Hanwen chased too fiercely, and was now captured. It looked like he would die at any moment.

Blue Brook Guild therefore also became the first guild to react, the guild leader Changing Spring stomping with anger, "Why are you all standing around and watching? Charge!"

"To kill the BOSS, or . . . ?" Someone asked.

Everyone once again became distracted, turning around to look. The Barrier Mountains wild boss Shadow Tactician Shaan was very lonely at this moment, silently wandering to one side. He had been surrounded by so many players, yet no one moved forward to fight him. They were all ignoring him! This kind of treatment, he's probably never experienced before right?

"Uh..." Changing Spring thought for a moment, before immediately deciding that looking for a PvP confrontation was probably not a good idea. As a proper guild, they should have a proper attitude. Going to the BOSS was the right course of action.

Except, if they turned to make a move on the BOSS, what about the others? Changing Spring turned to look at the other two guilds

Oh, it wasn't just two. Changing Spring immediately discovered, the guilds present weren't just those Three Great Guilds anymore. Happy, Heavenly Justice, Conquering Clouds, Parade, and Radiant, this Five Guild Alliance, had finally arrived. From the east came another group, Blossom Valley's players. From the west came Misty Castle, from the south Samsara, from the north . . . oh, it was the long absent Excellent Dynasty!

So lively . . . Changing Spring thought. Except, as a guild leader, he'd experienced even more spectacular and chaotic battles. Yet, now that he paid attention, how many pro players were hidden among all the guild troops present?

Chapter 948: I Want to be the Core

"Let's save little Lu first," Changing Spring calmed down quickly after taking in the current situation. It was urgent to save Lu Hanwen first. No one was touching the boss for now, so they didn't have to rush on that front.

Hearing Changing Spring's order, Blue Brook's players immediately swarmed over. Ye Xiu's group saw this; this was exactly what they hated. Why was it so hard for them to fight pro players in peace?

However, they weren't alone anymore. Happy, Heavenly Justice, Conquering Clouds, Parade, and Radiant's guild alliance had arrived. Seeing Team Happy's members, they came over to help. Seeing Blue Brook Guild charging forth, they didn't hesitate to clash with them. It was soldiers against soldiers and generals against generals. The operation to save Lu Hanwen was unable to be carried out by the guild for now.

"Hold on, little Lu!" Blue Brook's Blue River yelled out in desperation. Lu Hanwen had spent the summer playing with these guild members. Though he was an official member of Team Blue Rain now, and even an All-Star, despite being a rookie, he was still like a younger brother that followed them around all summer long. This younger brother was much more courageous than them, always at the front lines of the battlefield. Because of this, Blue River and the others were used to having to rescue him. It felt just like having to clean up after a troublemaker of a younger brother. Yet this time, it seemed that Lu Hanwen had gotten into something that he couldn't handle...

It was that guy…

Blue River subconsciously sought out one of the figures. From the new server until now, Lord Grim… his equipment was still as mismatched and eye-catching as ever! His opponents were no longer the experts of the guilds like them, but Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi, and others who stood at the top of Glory.

Fuck, that's how it should be! Why do you always have to bully us?!

Blue River was a little irritated upon thinking of this. However, when he looked closely, Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi didn't seem to be having much of a good time against him either.

Little Lu… Where was Little Lu?

Blue River returned to the present and looked over only to find, fuck, Lu Hanwen's Blade Master had disappeared. The group that had been beating him down had already dispersed…

Then why the hell are we still clashing with Happy, Heavenly Justice, Conquering Clouds and the other guilds?

The strangeness of the situation continued and the two guild powers had already fought to the point of no return. Meanwhile, the boss was still strolling around over there! No one was really clear on why they had come anymore.

"Have you gone to the group chat to call for more people?" Zhang Jiale could deal with Tang Rou easily enough, but the overall situation was different. Team Happy was very coordinated and exhibited great teamwork, and as for their side? They had started with Huang Shaotian stabbing Wang Jiexi in the back. There was no need to describe how coordinated and cooperative their makeshift alliance was.

Seeing how Blue Rain's Lu Hanwen had been dealt with so resolutely and that their opponents were beginning to close in on him, Zhang Jiale was beginning to lose his cool. He quickly moved, crossing paths with Lin Jingyan's Brawler, taking the chance to ask this hurriedly.

"I haven't!" Lin Jingyan said.

"What?"

"It's because I suddenly realized, we're here to steal the boss! If we find a boss, we should kill it quickly without being found out. Why on earth would we go to the chat and inform everyone to get them all to come?" Lin Jingyan said.

Zhang Jiale paused for a moment. Lin Jingyan's logic was flawless. They were stealing a boss, why would they go and tell others? That was just looking for trouble.

"The boss!" Yet, for Zhang Jiale, Lin Jingyan's words had reminded him of what they were here for.

Then, when he turned to look, Shaan wasn’t lonely anymore.

"As expected, this guy isn’t anything good!" Zhang Jiale yelled.

The one who had first attacked Shaan was Wang Jiexi’s Witch. It was clear that when they started to lose their cool, having met Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim, Wang Jiexi had never forgotten their initial goal. While they were over here having fun, he had casually rode his broom in a circle and attacked Shaan, who had, till then, been ignored.

As for Herb Garden, they had naturally received their orders already. With Wang Jiexi’s attack, they immediately charged out to help. Gao Yingjie’s Witch didn’t bother to continue getting into their mess either, having long since gone to support the guild in killing the boss.

Zhang Jiale and the others seethed, but were helpless to do anything. They had to find a way to throw Happy off first! With Lu Hanwen down and Wang Jiexi and Gao Yingjie having jumped ship, their situation had suddenly become extremely dangerous.

"Hey hey, the boss is going to be taken, calm down!" Seeing how Happy seemed to be dead set on fighting them, Zhang Jiale felt like he had to warn them about this.

"Yeah?" Tang Rou, who had been wildly pursuing Zhang Jiale gave him a response in acknowledgement. Her head didn’t even turn and Soft Mist continued to swing her spear viciously at the

Spitfire.

"Holy f*ck, this woman's gone crazy. Old Ye, hurry up and drag her away!" Zhang Jiale yelled.

It was then that another character appeared in his periphery, charging over at them. Zhang Jiale reacted quickly. Four successive jumps backwards allowed him to disengage with the help of an opening, and his counterattack launched in the meantime. Four backwards jumps, along with four grenades flew out towards the approaching character.

Boom boom boom boom!

Four consecutive explosions, flashing with colorful lights. Spitfire grenades had different effects, so when they exploded, the explosions would all look different. Having thrown four in rapid succession, Zhang Jiale obviously couldn't have used the same skill four times in a row. Yet these four successive grenades hadn't done anything to this attacker. They were obviously an expert.

The expert struck and dodged, dealing with all four of Zhang Jiale's grenades. He was ignored by the newcomer, who darted straight at Soft Mist.

Zhang Jiale took a closer look. The newcomer was also a Battle Mage, in the guild Excellent Dynasty. He realized who this was immediately.

Was this cooperation, or coming to cause trouble? Zhang Jiale took a moment to consider before decisively deciding to play the bystander. He watched for a moment before leaving.

Boss Shaan!

Zhang Jiale had put his focus back on their original goal. He escaped from the chaos, avoiding engagement with Happy, and darted straight for Tiny Herb to get the boss back.

With a streak of blinding explosions, Zhang Jiale's Spirfire pressed through. Normal players didn't have any way to defend against his Hundred Blossom Style. They hadn't even had the time to orient themselves before Zhang Jiale easily blasted through them. In the blink of an eye, Zhang Jiale's Spitfire had broken through Herb Garden's ranks and arrived at boss Shaan.

"Fierce!" Tyrannical Ambition's members watched this, bursting with joy, charging forwards to help their god. As for the players of Blossom Valley? They saw this scene as well, but their emotions were tumultuous.

Dazzling Spring...

In the summer, this Spitfire had gone out of his way to fight by their side. Back then, everyone had figured out that this must be their captain; their captain had returned!

Who would've thought that when the summer was over, their

captain did return, but was no longer their captain. Never mind going over to a rival team, he even took Dazzling Hundred Blossoms with him. The Team Hundred Blossom fans felt as if they had been toyed with. Their hatred for Zhang Jiale had reached peak point.

Now, Zhang Jiale was right there in front of them, still using that Spitfire from the summer, Dazzling Spring. However, the guild name above his head was no longer Blossom Valley, but Tyrannical Ambition.

What an eyesore!

Who knew how many of those standing in Hundred Blossom's formation had such thoughts.

This was a emotional sickness, a scar that wouldn't fade. Did it hurt, or itch? They couldn't tell. All they knew was that watching Zhang Jiale fighting with the cheers of Tyrannical Ambition made them feel absolutely terrible.

Someone needed to step forwards on Blossom Valley's side, too.

Yu Feng, who had come with them, obviously understood this. His Berserker stepped out resolutely, charging into Tiny Herb's ranks.

His days of being the core player of Team Hundred Blossoms weren't as blissful as he had expected them to be.

When he was in Team Blue Rain, it didn’t matter how good he was, because he would always be in the shadows of two others, always the third member of Team Blue Rain.

Now, he was in Hundred Blossoms and he was, in title, the core player of their team, the definitive main character. Yet after Zhang Jiale returned, he found himself stuck under yet another shadow.

To be honest, with the rumors of Zhang Jiale’s return, Yu Feng had been anxious. This was because he was very clear on the fact that, if Zhang Jiale returned, he would become the leader of Team Hundred Blossoms, and he would be in second place once more.

Compared to being third, it was a small improvement, but it wasn’t something that Yu Feng would be happy about. He only wanted to be the star of the show.

It was good that, while Zhang Jiale did return, he didn’t go back to Team Hundred Blossoms but to Team Tyranny instead.

Yu Feng had thought he could finally have the limelight to himself, but he realized that he couldn’t.

For each Team Hundred Blossoms fan that yelled "support Yu Feng", there were a hundred, a thousand yelling "hate Zhang Jiale".

The deeper you loved, the deeper your hatred.

It could be seen from how deeply the Team Hundred Blossom fans loathed Zhang Jiale, how much they had once loved their former captain.

This sort of love was what Yu Feng wanted, yet he found out that to become the target of such admiration wasn't as easy as transferring teams.

The Team Hundred Blossom fans would rather go and rave at Zhang Jiale than give him even a single word of support.

Yu Feng's spirit plummeted.

Team Hundred Blossom's opening matches had been terrible. This wasn't unrelated to Yu Feng's stricken mood. It was a good thing that he recovered soon enough. As an All-Star level player, he didn't only know how to wait for pennies from heaven. He had the willpower to fight. He wanted to use his own efforts to change the attitude of Team Hundred Blossom's fans.

Yu Feng's performance improved by the day, and so did his team's teamwork. The battle records of Team Hundred Blossoms had finally been pulled back up, but the shadow within the hearts of their fans, the unforgettable silhouette of that Spitfire, still existed.

It was because of this attitude that Zou Yuan and his new Spitfire could still be pushed into the All Star roster by Team Hundred Blossom fans, despite their strength not having reached the peak.

Yu Feng was still troubled because he had realized that if, someday, Zou Yuan's strength really reached the peak, then Yu Feng and his Berserker would fall to second place.

Yu Feng didn't want to be second. He wanted to use his Berserker to defend everything he wished to achieved!

Chapter 949: Blossoms and Blood

Crimson Storm!

After Yu Feng's Berserker charged in, he immediately activated a powerful skill. A bloody aura rose, like a raging river, immediately knocking aside the Tyrannical Ambition players that were preparing to support Zhang Jiale. After that, he ignored them, raising his sword and charging at Tiny Herb.

Yu Feng's playstyle wasn't as elegant as Zhang Jiale, but the power of a God wasn't something that normal players could counter easily. Herb Garden had just been thrown into chaos by Zhang Jiale, and now they saw another heading towards them fiercely. Though it was a smurf account, the account was from Hundred Blossoms and it wasn't hard to guess who would jump out at a time like this.

"Scatter, scatter!" Herb Garden's guild leader, Arisaema, was quite the player. He knew that having people crowd together to form a wall would only increase the effectiveness of the opponent's attack. Instead, having everyone scatter and attack from all sides, using numbers to chip away at their opponent's health, was a better strategy.

Who would've thought that before Herb Garden had the chance to take on another God that someone had already charged out and engaged Yu Feng's Berserker.

Lord Grim.

This was a strange opponent to appear for Yu Feng. The boss was being stolen by Herb Garden, so everyone should be charging at them to take the boss back. Why was this guy suddenly popping up to stop him?

Turning around to have a look, he found that all of Team Happy was like that. They didn't seem to care that the boss was getting stolen, just grabbing random opponents and fighting them. What on earth was this about?

How would Yu Feng know that Happy was here to kill bosses, but Shaan wasn't the boss they had set their sights on. Instead, it was them, pro players. If one came, they'd fight one, if two came they'd fight them both.

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim came to engage him and prepared to attack without hesitation, when suddenly a voice rung out from behind, "Hey, this won't do. How come I have no support?"

Then they saw the glorious explosions that signaled the arrival of Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Spring, who had charged in and then charged right back out again...

Where the boss was being killed in Herb Garden's formation had Wang Jiexi there, overseeing things, and beside him was Gao Yingjie and a bunch of Herb Garden players. Zhang Jiale wouldn't be able to do much charging in there on his own. He had originally hoped that the players in Tyrannical Ambition would be able to charge in with him. He had never expected that strike from Yu

Feng, which had prevented Tyrannical Ambition's advance for a moment. In just this small period of time, Zhang Jiale felt threatened and quickly disengaged from the mob.

To him, normal players were nothing. If it weren't for Wang Jiexi, he would probably have little trouble dealing with all of them alone. The Herb Garden players were all on the verge of crying. Amongst the flashing lights, they could only vaguely tell that Dazzling Springs had flown by. Those a little closer might even get a bullet or grenade as a souvenir.

Zhang Jiale's retreat sent Lord Grim into his line of sight, and hurriedly called for Ye Xiu to support him, "Hurry, Wang Jiexi's almost done with the boss! Quick!"

Lord Grim responded by flicking his spear at him.

Zhang Jiale made a sound of surprise, forcing Dazzling Spring to jump to the side in a dodge and fell into a confused state similar to Yu Feng. Soon, he had come to a conclusion, "You've gone crazy! Wake up!"

Ye Xiu not only didn't wake up, but Taunted both Zhang Jiale and Yu Feng.

Zhang Jiale and Yu Feng's characters exchanged a glance, feeling rather awkward. Yu Feng had stepped out to prove himself to the Hundred Blossom fans, but now it seemed like the situation required him to team up with the most hated traitor of Team Hundred Blossoms, Zhang Jiale. How could he accept this? As for

Zhang Jiale, just seeing the two words Blossom Valley on top of another's head would cause his emotions to swirl with chaos. One day he had gone to the shop with Lin Jingyan, and he had ended up sighing at a stock of Hundred Blossoms branded royal jelly for five minutes straight.

These two players both hesitated, giving Happy a chance. Concealed Light's summons swarmed them, Windward Formation had hid who knows where and directly activated a Death's Door. Dawn Rifle and Chasing Haze also opened fire with powerful skills. Satellite Beams descended from the sky, one each, making sure they wouldn't get off easily.

Zhang Jiale and Yu Feng both felt very awkward about teaming up, but the situation was forcing their hand. There was no chance of cooperating with Happy even if they wanted to anymore. Their goal of coming here in the first place was to fight pro players for experience. Victory wasn't a goal, so they didn't need to plan. They didn't need any convoluted methods. All they had to do was simple: find an opponent and fight.

Steamed Bun Invasion was still fighting Lin Jingyan's Brawler.

Soft Mist's battle with Sun Xiang's Battle Mage was still raging on as well.

Steamed Bun's fighting was natural to the point where a veteran like Lin Jingyan couldn't even figure it out. He was on the verge of wondering where all his years of experience as fighting as a Brawler had gone.

Tang Rou's fighting was fierce, especially since she knew that the person she was up against was the current number one Battle Mage, One Autumn Leaf's player, a guy who was arrogant to the point of immaturity. Therefore, she was at the peak of her ability, and her performance was far better than usual when she was dungeoning or PKing in the arena.

Even so, that didn't mean the two managed to take the upperhand. It was just the way that they had each engaged their opponent's with their own styles had taken the two off guard. Lin Jingyan and Sun Xiang quickly managed to stabilize the situation. However, Steamed Bun and Tang Rou weren't normal players that they could defeat with ease. Victory was something they had to earn through care and strong focus.

The battle between Gods raged on and the guilds had no idea what to do.

Tyrannical Ambition had originally wanted to charge in to steal the Boss with Zhang Jiale, but ended up getting stopped by a Crimson Storm from Yu Feng's Berserker. After that, they saw Dazzling Spring jump out again and start entangling with Happy. Should they go for the Boss, or help fight off Happy?

As for Excellent Dynasty, Chen Yehui wanted to spit blood.

Zhang Jiale, at least, showed that he still had a clear mind and intentions. As for their God Sun Xiang, he had immediately entered combat upon seeing Happy and charged in to fight them

without hesitation. Chen Yehui wanted to cry. Excellent Dynasty hadn’t won in the competition for Bosses in a long time. He could clearly feel that Happy had made arrangements specifically to counter them. They were heading towards the state of a life and death struggle.

Today, a god had uncharacteristically decided to help them and Chen Yehui was full of excited anticipation. Yet they met Happy the moment they came and their god didn’t want the Boss, but Happy instead. Chen Yehui wanted to bash his head against his keyboard and die.

"Vice-captain Xiao, look..." Chen Yehui was helpless, but it was a good thing that they had another god overseeing this, Xiao Shiqin.

Xiao Shiqin was rather troubled by this as well. Ask Sun Xiang to come back? He wasn’t confident he could; help Sun Xiang defeat Happy? That would be spoiling him too much; ignore Sun Xiang and go for the Boss? This... Sun Xiang was their captain, their core, their ace. If they just tossed him aside, that didn’t seem very appropriate!

"I’ll go!" Xiao Shiqin didn’t have a better plan of action, he could only go up there personally to try and snap Sun Xiang out of it.

Tang Rou was already having enough trouble dealing with Sun Xiang alone. Her performance was at its peak, but it wasn’t giving Sun Xiang any obvious trouble. Tang Rou knew very well that her skill level wasn’t near enough to defeat this person one on one.

"I think that’s enough from you! Now it’s my turn!" At this moment, Sun Xiang gave a battlecry and grasped an opening left in Tang Rou’s barrage of attacks, about to counterattack.

Boom!

A sudden explosion struck them. Sun Xiang hurriedly dodged, losing his chance to counterattack, vexed. Turning his view, he saw that it was Zhang Jiale’s Dazzling Spring, fighting with a bunch of Happy’s players with his Hundred Blossom’s style. Explosives flew everywhere and one of them had rolled over, interrupting Sun Xiang’s plans.

Without waiting for Sun Xiang to begin cursing, Soft Mist’s attacks came again, as furious as ever.

Though she knew she wasn’t as good as Sun Xiang, was Tang Rou one to give up? Her fighting spirit was undying.

"Don’t you know when to give up!" Sun Xiang hollered. He had obviously thought that Tang Rou would begin to feel helpless, begin to back down and accept defeat after being suppressed by his cream of the crop skill. Yet she hadn’t, not at all. Soft Mist’s spear was as sharp as ever.

"An ant like you wants to move an elephant?" Sun Xiang mocked, preparing another powerful counterattack.

Swoosh!

The shockwaves from the downswing of a blade rolled over and Sun Xiang had to dodge once again, interrupting his counterattack.

"Who the f*ck!" Sun Xiang cursed first and asked questions later this time. Turning his view, he saw that it was a Berserker from Blossom Valley, probably Yu Feng, who had escaped and counterattacked with a Collapsing Mountain and backwards jump, just brushing past Sun Xiang's Battle Mage. He was standing just in range of the shockwaves from the impact.

Yu Feng and Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Blossoms stood one in the front and the other to the back, breaking out of Happy's encirclement together and accidentally messing up Sun Xiang's pace. He could excuse it once, but if he didn't strike back the second time, then he wouldn't be himself. Sun Xiang flicked the mouse in his right hand. His Battle Mage had already turned, his spear raised and a Tyrant's Destruction was flung over. Yu Feng and Zhang Jiale really hadn't meant to do it on purpose, so they hadn't expected Sun Xiang's attack. Unable to dodge the Tyranny's Destruction, Yu Feng's Berserker took a direct hit.

Xiao Shiqin, who was bringing his character over, saw this and could only think one thing: he should just leave this guy and let him die...

Stealing a Boss, they couldn't even get around to just dealing with their mutual enemies, who would go around making more? People who made such provocations were asked to have everyone focus fire on them!

However, a Tyrant's Destruction wasn't enough for Sun Xiang to calm down, or maybe it was a habit of his, as a pro player, because one hit could always lead to a combo of n more. Sun Xiang's Battle Mage had resolutely turned around, launching a fierce attack at Yu Feng's Berserker.

Happy was also very confused. Wasn't this guy their greatest enemy? Was he trying to join them now?

Yu Feng didn't want to make more trouble, but how could he not strike back when someone attacked him like this? After hurriedly parrying Sun Xiang's attack, he immediately countered. A Wild Blood Strike sent Sun Xiang backwards, and then several flashes of blade and blood were flung out at the pursuing members of Happy. The aura of the Alliance's First Berserker was evident in these bloody attacks.

Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Spring also turned back to return fire. He had finally realized that Happy was just here to cause trouble. If they weren't defeated, then it would be hard for them to steal the Boss without further interruption. With Yu Feng's sudden burst of attacks snatching back the upperhand, Zhang Jiale immediately turned to take this opportunity.

Amongst the grand explosions, a blade flashed and a bloody aura struck. Even a top god like Sun Xiang had been beaten back, never mind Happy's players.

Everyone looked on with shock at the developing scene.

Ye Xiu, Lin Jingyan, Wang Jiexi... a scene from the past surfaced in these experienced veterans' minds.

Blossoms and Blood...

Wasn't this a nostalgic scene of the old Team Hundred Blossom's Blossom Duo of a Spitfire and Berserker...

There's a brand name that's actually called Hundred Blossoms (百花)

Chapter 950: Blossoms and Blood Reappear

Blossoms and Blood.

Back in the days, Team Hundred Blossom's two Gods had founded this signature playstyle. Sun Zheping's injury had forced him into retirement, and the playstyle vanished along with him. Though Team Hundred Blossoms wished to recreate it, they could not find a suitable Berserker, who could partner with Zhang Jiale. In the end, the playstyle became a memory. Ye Xiu and these other older players had experienced Blossoms and Blood for themselves, so their impression of this playstyle was deeper.

Team Hundred Blossoms had invited the current number one Berserker player, Yu Feng, and picked up the former number one Berserker character, Blossoming Chaos. In exchange, they gave up Dazzling Hundred Blossoms and built a new Spitfire character, Bright Blossoms, for Zou Yuan. They wanted to recreate this former splendor. However, Team Hundred Blossom did not perform well at the start of the season. Even though they gradually improved, the synergy between Yu Feng and Zou Yuan was still lacking in maturity, let alone replicating Team Hundred Blossom's past glory.

But in the game's Heavenly Domain, God Zhang Jiale, who had left Team Hundred Blossoms for Team Tyranny, had allied together with the new core of Team Hundred Blossoms, Yu Feng, to recreate this scene.

Ye Xiu and the other Gods saw it first. Then, the Blossom Valley players followed.

Blossom Valley's elite troops didn't lack older fans. Their accomplishments in Glory couldn't match those of pro players, so their reaction was a half-beat slower. However, they quickly realized it. That familiar scene before them was the Blossoms and Blood from their memories.

Before Blossom Valley's old fans could become excited. They saw clearly how this scene had been revived. Their hearts immediately shattered like broken vases, and they experienced the joys and sorrows of life.

"Zhang Jiale! Why did you leave!!!" A heart-wrenching shout suddenly erupted from Blossom Valley. This Blossoms and Blood scene had awakened their deepest memories. In the end, it was because they couldn't let go of Zhang Jiale that they complained about his choice to join Team Tyranny. If Zhang Jiale had stayed with Team Hundred Blossoms, with Yu Feng, couldn't the long-awaited Blossoms and Blood return?

The battlefield instantly fell silent. A weep followed this heart-wrenching shout. No one could tell if the person was a guy or girl, but at this moment, his or her emotions had gone out of control.

Zhang Jiale stood still.

He had just realized that he and Yu Feng had never practiced together before or communicated with each other, yet they were still able to reproduce a Blossoms and Blood. Their experience, awareness, and skill had reached a certain level, allowing for this

to happen. However, it wasn't intentional, so if the two immediately tried to replicate it, it might not happen again.

But while those at a pro level could understand this reasoning, normal players wouldn't care. When they saw the Blossoms and Blood again, they felt even more anguished at Zhang Jiale's departure. The bitterness in their heart only deepened because they knew that even if there were people who had lost control of their emotions from their hearts being crushed, it would not change reality. Zhang Jiale was no longer a member of Team Hundred Blossoms. The previous Blossoms and Blood was simply an illusion. It would not appear in Team Hundred Blossoms this season.

Everyone could understand the emotions felt by Team Hundred Blossom's fans, which was why the battlefield suddenly fell into silence. They were all Glory players. They laughed, cried, and argued over the same things... sympathy came about just that easily.

"Regardless, what's past is past!"

Someone suddenly said from beside Dazzling Spring.

Zhang Jiale turned around and saw Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

"Yes..." Zhang Jiale suddenly smiled. The feeling of guilt in his heart had truly been incomparably intense. He had even felt the urge to retire again, but even if he did, what would come of it? The past was the past. He could never go back. If he could, Zhang Jiale

would have gone back in time to season five. He wouldn't have allowed Sun Zheping's injury flare up. Perhaps Team Hundred Blossoms would have become the champions that year. That might even have been the start of Team Hundred Blossom's reign!

But it was such a pity.

What's past is past!

His choice had been the result of being careful and being careful again. Why should he regret it? Why should he shrink back again? He had already retired cowardly once. Why did such a thought appear again?

Running away definitely wasn't the solution.

Zhang Jiale let out a sigh. This time, he had decided.

Dazzling Spring lifted his hand.

Bang!

Yu Feng's Berserker was shot in the head at near point blank range.

"We're enemies now." Zhang Jiale said calmly.

"Thanks." Yu Feng actually said thanks towards this attack because he knew very well that after this shot, he truly became Team Hundred Blossom's core. The illusion left in the hearts of Team Hundred Blossom's fans had finally been shattered by this one shot. They would no longer feel regret or reminiscent of him. Only resentment would remain in their hearts.

"You're welcome."

Yu Feng didn't think Zhang Jiale would actually reply to his thanks as if it were the proper thing to do.

"Good luck! Don't disappoint them!" Zhang Jiale said.

This guy! Did he intentionally shoot me?

Yu Feng was astonished because he had realized that Zhang Jiale had intentionally been ruthless, breaking off the last bit of feelings that the fans of Team Hundred Blossoms had for him. Seizing this opportunity, he pushed Yu Feng into the light, letting him become the new hope for Team Hundred Blossom's fans.

Yu Feng didn't think that in this type of situation, he would receive the trust from Team Hundred Blossom's true key figure. This was not something a contract would give him.

This method was too cruel though!

Before Yu Feng could say anything, the players from Blossom

Valley had exploded. Zhang Jiale's shot severed all relationships with them. His declaration of "We're enemies now" made them completely furious. They were no longer weeping. At this moment, they only desired to fight. What wild boss? What uncommon materials? To hell with it! They had once revered the guy in front of him like a God. Now, he had become their greatest enemy. They needed to teach this guy a lesson no matter what.

The players from Blossom Valley threw themselves at him. Their fear towards the Gods? It didn't exist anymore.

Dazzling Spring lifted up his arm and gripped his gun tightly, facing these Blossom Valley players, but the pro players discovered that even though Dazzling Spring aimed his gun towards them, he couldn't fire it. Just lifting the gun wasn't something done to attack.

Yu Feng, who was closest to him, obviously understood this even better. Although he knew that these were all moves benefiting his future, his blood was boiling. He wanted to stop everything from continuing. However, facing the turbulent Blossom Valley group, would they listen to his explanation?

Crimson Storm!

At this moment, a powerful Berserker skill was unleashed. The storm crashed into Blossom Valley, stopping their momentum.

But these Blossom Valley players weren't as rational as those Tyrannical Ambition players, who had been cut off by Yu Feng.

Those who were hit by the attack fell, but those who didn’t ignored the damage and continued to charge towards Zhang Jiale’s Dazzling Spring.

Then, they heard sounds of a greatsword slashing in unbroken succession. A figure had stepped in front of Dazzling Spring. Wild Blood Strike, Whirlwind Strike, and the new skill, Absolute Storm, cut towards Blossom Valley, instantly clearing them away. That player pointed his greatsword to his side. The blood-soaked sword had completely lost its original luster. He did not turn his head and simply asked: "What are you afraid of?"

Another Summer of Sleep?

Everyone saw this Berserker’s ID.

But who was this?

Everyone immediately identified this player’s guild.

Heavenly Justice?

Team Heavenly Swords had a Berserker, and that Berserker was Team Heavenly Sword’s owner; his status was extremely high.

To become a pro player meant his own skill level couldn’t be lacking, but placed on this battlefield, Lou Guanning’s status as a pro player wasn’t anything to blink at.

Apart from the players from Team Happy, all of the pro players were All Stars. Sun Xiang and Xiao Shiqin simply weren't chosen this year due to special circumstances. If they were still in the Alliance, those two would undoubtedly have been chosen as All Stars.

Was this Berserker, who forcefully put himself in the spotlight, Heavenly Sword's Lou Guanning?

The pro players at the scene didn't think so.

They weren't looking down on Lou Guanning. Bullying normal players didn't require that much skill. However, every player had their own aura. Team Heavenly Swords had been in the Alliance for half a year now. All of the teams had an idea what Lou Guanning's Berserker was like. Even though Team Heavenly Swords was a new team, their momentum was like a torrential rush. All of the teams took precautions against this new team. They had thoroughly done their research on Team Heavenly Swords. After half a year, all of them had a good grasp of Team Heavenly Sword's strength. This Another Summer of Sleep's playstyle was much more wild and violent compared to Lou Guanning's. It couldn't be that he suddenly became extremely arrogant as soon as he came to the game, right?

"Who are you!" Zhang Jiale was shocked. No one could be more familiar with such a wild and violent Berserker playstyle than him.

If you've already decided to say goodbye to the past, why is there

still a thread of weakness remaining in your heart?" Another Summer of Sleep still didn’t turn his head.

"I was just..."

"Get rid of all those distracting thoughts!" Another Summer of Sleep raised his blood-soaked sword again and pointed it at Blossom Valley.

"Oh? With you?" Zhang Jiale said.

"Sure." The newcomer didn’t mind.

"You’re still so crazy!" Zhang Jiale felt moved. He already knew who this newcomer was. He was the other dependable and beloved God of Team Hundred Blossoms. Now, he had pulled out his blade, ready to fight with his former fans. Zhang Jiale couldn’t help but feel a ripple spread in his heart. This was exactly something his former partner would do.

"Right now the person who needs to go crazy isn’t me, but you." Sun Zheping said.

"Okay. I’m here!" Dazzling Spring stepped forward. He didn’t only lift up his gun. This time, he truly attacked.

Gunshots, explosions, sword slashes.

Blossoms and Blood.

Chapter 951: Chance

The fans of Team Hundred Blossoms often wished they could witness Blossoms and Blood again, but no one had thought that when they did, it would be in such a situation,

This was a Blossoms and Blood with more splendor than any pro match they had seen before. This was because, in the online game, there were many more people to kill. The blood that splattered amongst the bright lights of flashing explosions created a blood-drenched scene. The players of Blossom Valley fell continuously. They were shocked, seething, unaccepting, but also unwilling to back down. That was when another flash of blades joined. Yu Feng had finally struck back, and the two broadswords locked together aggressively.

The Blossom Valley players were panting for breath. They stared dumbly at the Berserker called Another Summer of Sleep. Just who was this? He bore the words Heavenly Justice over his head, so was he that Berserker from Team Heavenly Swords?

Originally, normal players weren't nearly as perceptive as pro players, who could estimate the player behind a character from their playstyle alone. However, for many of Hundred Blossom's old fans, Sun Zheping was a name they would never forget, and his wild and crazed playstyle was burnt deep into memories.

As they watched Another Summer of Sleep, this long unthought of name surfaced in their minds.

However, they didn’t get the chance to question it further.

Another Summer of Sleep and Dazzling Spring, a Berserker and Spitfire duo that was once the target of their admiration and love, was mounting a furious offense against them. Yu Feng’s Berserker jumped out to defend, but was quickly consumed by the scene of Blossoms and Blood.

It wasn’t at all difficult to realize who, exactly, was protecting them now. The Team Hundred Blossom fans also suddenly realized, had they been neglecting their new core player?

"All healers, heal Captain Yu!!" Blossom Valley’s guild leader, Blooming Blossom, was the first to react and yelled out a command. He was a Hundred Blossoms fan, but was also a department head in the club. At times like this, he could still keep his cool, and was the only member of their guild that still remembered what they had come here to do.

He didn’t want to see things like this, meeting Zhang Jiale’s Dazzling Spring and getting into such a mess. His wishes also represented Club Hundred Blossom’s wishes.

The club was much more rational than the fans. They didn’t want their fans to cling to Zhang Jiale’s shadow like this when the man refused to look back. Zhang Jiale’s influence in Team Hundred Blossoms had become a handicap they wanted to overcome.

The club had recently been continuously brainstorming a way to

negate the effects that Zhang Jiale's return to the Glory scene as part of Team Tyranny had on Team Hundred Blossoms. Blooming Blossoms had also attended many such meetings.

Team Hundred Blossom's fans were too stuck on the past, and didn't seem to care about their new core player, Yu Feng. This was a problem that the club was helpless against and it gave them quite the headache.

Yet now, seeing Yu Feng's Berserker charge forth like a hero, defending against Zhang Jiale and someone who was possibly Sun Zheping's offense, Blooming Blossom realized that this was a chance they had to grab.

The new hero of Team Hundred Blossoms would be born on this day. No matter what, he had to make him shine.

So Blooming Blossoms used his yell to make all of Team Hundred Blossoms notice Yu Feng, to make everyone notice who it was that protected them when their once beloved duo had turned against them.

"Captain Yu!!"

As expected, Hundred Blossom's normal players soon yelled out this encouraging shout that came from their hearts.

"Don't worry about me. Everyone spread out, pull some distance and use ranged attacks to cover the area with firepower!" Yu Feng's

voice came out from within the Blossoms and Blood. It wasn't any sort of incredible plan, but it was like a light in the darkness for Team Hundred Blossoms. All the Team Hundred Blossoms players ran to obey.

However, this was nowhere near enough to break Blossoms and Blood, only to lower its effectiveness. Under the cover of Blossoms and Blood, the extremely experienced veterans, Zhang Jiale and Sun Zheping, could still easily move about in this sort of AoE firepower coverage.

The only one who was fighting the two head on was still Yu Feng's Berserker. Though Blooming Blossoms called for healing, they couldn't see Yu Feng's Berserker at all amongst the flashes of light from the Team Hundred Blossoms former playstyle. If they got any closer, they might accidentally step into the Blossoms and Blood. Two healers whose names immediately darkened and were automatically kicked from the team showed everyone the consequences of approaching without careful consideration.

The reason why Yu Feng had wanted everyone to not worry about him, scatter and keep their distance, was obviously because he didn't want them to get consumed by Blossoms and Blood and get killed.

"Captain Yu...." In that moment, all the Team Hundred Blossom players finally completely accepted their new core players. However, could Yu Feng alone break Blossoms and Blood?

Zhang Jiale and Yu Feng's Blossoms and Blood had been a coincidence. It was probably impossible for them to repeat it or

continue it. The real Blossoms and Blood had been crafted through an entire season of trying to sync up from the extremely talented Zhang Jiale and Sun Zheping.

In the third season of the Alliance, Blossoms and Blood had been refined and had swept through the Alliance. All the powerhouses were shocked by this unseen playstyle and lost, disoriented.

It was that season that Blossoms and Blood reached their peak, and were also stopped at that peak.

Team Hundred Blossom, who had stormed their way to the finals, eventually fell to Team Excellent Era, who didn't allow them to stop the attainment of their yet unchallenged third consecutive championship. Blossoms and Blood had been struck through by One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation. God Ye Qiu, having made that mark in history, made a shocking move after gaining the championship and accepted an interview. Though it was only through QQ, he had managed to leave a sentence that would be remembered by all, "A few times is enough for a playstyle, so using it too much, doesn't that get tiring?"

However, even with this mocking sentence, Blossoms and Blood didn't become a joke because the only one who had the right to make light of it was God Ye Qiu. If others wanted to say the same, they needed to break Blossoms and Blood first.

No playstyle or tactic was unbreakable, but Blossoms and Blood was something invincible in the hearts of Hundred Blossom fans, yet now they were hoping that Yu Feng would be able to break Blossoms and Blood. This was because this title no longer belonged

to Team Hundred Blossoms, but rather their enemies.

Blooming Blossoms was secretly sweating in nervousness for him.

This was a good chance for Yu Feng to take the lead and the club had been hoping that he would be able to truly take the Team Hundred Blossom's flag sooner than later, bringing Team Hundred Blossom's fans away from clinging to the memories of someone who was no longer a part their team.

And now, this chance was right in front of them, but it really was a little too difficult.

With Sun Zheping's injury forcing his retirement, Blossoms and Blood disappeared from the Alliance. In those two and a half seasons, the only one who had managed to break Blossoms and Blood alone was Ye Qiu in the third season.

Yu Feng was a very talented player, but had he reached the level Ye Qiu had back then?

There was probably no one who would believe that.

Speaking of, no matter if it was Zhang Jiale or Sun Zheping, they had both passed their peak. Sun Zheping had even retired for so long due to an injury, but now he was somehow back. It was debatable if it was actually him or not though. These two weren't at the same level they had once been. On the other hand, Yu Feng

was at his peak condition to play, so maybe he could really break this Blossoms and Blood?

Blooming Blossoms was filled with hope. After all, using this to make an impression in the hearts of Hundred Blossom's players would be far better than using your own pain to do it. This sort of tactic wouldn't be able to truly vanquish the lingering emotions Hundred Blossom fans had for the past.

Thoughts flew through Blooming Blossoms' mind wildly, and he even considered if there was any way they could cheat to help Yu Feng. It was a shame that he couldn't think of any. This sort of pro-level face off wasn't something that normal players could get involved in. Watching the party window, Blooming Blossoms noticed the health of Yu Feng's Berserker dropping lower and lower, and he became more and more anxious. Then, he suddenly realized that because of the flashing light and shadows, they couldn't see Yu Feng's struggle at all. In the end, it was probably just be a corpse, tossed out. With that, Yu Feng's efforts would be no different from that of someone who died as soon as they stepped in. How much acceptance this suffering could gain could be argued.

A chance! A chance!

Chance?

This thought didn't exist in Yu Feng's mind.

Stepping out like a hero was all a thing of the moment.

He had heard Sun Zheping and Zhang Jiale's conversation; did he want to end things like this? Yu Feng couldn't accept that; he was even furious about it. Since he was now part of Hundred Blossoms, he understood better than anyone what Zhang Jiale meant to this group of fans. So when Zhang Jiale raised his gun at the Team Hundred Blossoms players, he had charged out to stop it. Not only was this for Zhang Jiale, but also because he didn't want the players of Hundred Blossoms to be hurt in such a way.

Yet it was Another Summer of Sleep who had popped up.

He wanted to truly, cruelly, use this method to bid farewell to the Team Hundred Blossoms fans.

Yu Feng couldn't accept that at all.

He stepped out to fight, not thinking of the consequences. He just wanted to do everything he could. He just wanted to battle…

They were hard to deal with, as expected…

Team Hundred Blossoms had wanted to recreate Blossoms and Blood through having Yu Feng join. Yu Feng, of course, had researched this playstyle extensively as well, watching recording after recording of the old Blossom Duo's matches. So, he was more certain than anyone, that this Berserker in front of him was truly the old First Berserker, Sun Zheping.

And when he was really up against Blossoms and Blood, he found that this playstyle was truly hard to deal with.

I don’t think I can do it...

Watching his health fall to the bottom, Yu Feng took a deep breath. His protection of Hundred Blossoms would have to come to an end here. Let him burn this last slither of health as brightly as possible!

Yu Feng didn’t spare a thought for anything else, directly activating Bloodthirst. This was a powerful status skill that Berserkers gained at level 75. After their status was in Bloodthirst, Berserkers could use their own health to increase their strength.

Yu Feng’s Berserker didn’t have much health left, so Bloodthirst’s effects were limited. However, what was more important was the fight until the end attitude that this decision represented. When his health only had one point left, he struck his final blow and burned the rest of his life.

A crimson flash of energy from his blade streaked out from the Blossoms and Blood, and yet that was when Blossoms and Blood was brought to an abrupt halt by this single slash.

Dazzling Spring’s attacks stopped and the flashes of light and shadows dispersed. Everyone saw that Dazzling Spring was lying there, somehow knocked down by Yu Feng’s Berserker.

苦肉计 is one of the Thirty-Six Stratagems in the seventh volume, Biography of Wang Jingze, of the Book of Qi. It literally translates

into bitter meat ploy. It’s originally referring to a ruse of being injured in order to gain sympathy or mercy from, or be underestimated by an enemy. In modern talk, it means any sort of situation in which you can utilize your own suffering or pretend to be suffering in order to gain benefits. - Jouissance

Chapter 952: A Confusing Chaotic Situation

"He broke through?" Blooming Blossom was ecstatic, but after checking the health on Yu Feng's Berserker, for a second, his smile wouldn't come out. Fortunately, the players from Blossom Valley reacted quickly. In an instant, the healers worked together and healed Yu Feng's Berserker back to full health.

However, Yu Feng's Berserker just stood there staring into space. It was as if he didn't know that he had been rescued and thought he had died.

Yu Feng really did think he had died. The outcome had astonished him. He should have been able to dodge that attack. This guy……

"You've become soft-hearted..." Yu Feng heard Another Summer of Sleep say.

These words weren't directed at him.

"Haha." Dazzling Spring laughed, but didn't say anything.

Another Summer of Sleep turned to look at Yu Feng.

"Little one, Blossoms and Blood looks as if it's birthed from the Spitfire's Hundred Blossom Style, but in reality, the Berserker is the one in control of this playstyle's rhythm. If you want to see Blossoms and Blood reborn again, you'd better work hard!" Sun

Zheping said.

Not waiting for Yu Feng to regain his composure, everyone in Happy entered the battle in an orderly fashion under Ye Xiu's instructions. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim led the charge. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shook. It transformed into its spear form and shot forward. Zhang Jiale and Sun Zheping saw it from the corner of their eyes.

"What are you doing?" Zhang Jiale shouted.

"You good-for-nothing. Cheating us to give the stage to you. What a waste of time. Give us control of the battle now!" Ye Xiu said and moved his spear. Zhang Jiale thought he was about to be attacked, so he had Dazzling Spring roll off to the side. However, Lord Grim was just faking it. He also moved to the side. From behind him, a handful of sand came flying out. Steamed Bun Invasion had also joined the fray.

Zhang Jiale dodged quite quickly, but Yu Feng's Berserker was still just standing there staring blankly. The handful of sand hit him directly. Yu Feng's screen went black. He had become Blind. However, that had woken him up in an instant. He couldn't see and he didn't know what was happening, but he could still hear the sounds from the game.

"You want to break our Blossoms and Blood again?" Yu Feng heard Zhang Jiale shout.

"Haha, your information is too outdated. Old Sun, stand aside.

It’d be embarrassing if I accidentally hit you." Ye Xiu replied.

Zhang Jiale was startled. He turned around and saw Another Summer of Sleep moving aside. It didn’t seem like he was planning on fighting alongside him. At this moment, Zhang Jiale finally noticed the guild tag above Another Summer of Sleep’s head: Heavenly Justice.

Zhang Jiale instantly realized something.

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Soon afterwards, Windward Formation summoned a Chaotic Rain. One Inch Ash drew an Ice Boundary. Concealed Light’s summons lined up and attacked. Dawn Rifle and Chasing Haze shot Stingers into the sky. The artillery shell exploded in the air and a dense forest of thorns rained down.

Zhang Jiale didn’t say anything more. Dazzling Spring nimbly maneuvered through these attacks. It was tragedy for Yu Feng’s Berserker though. While he was out of it, sand had hit him, inducing a Blind. No matter how experienced he was, there was no way he could suddenly defend against an attack from four sides without being able to see anything. However, ever since Yu Feng’s Berserker produced a Blossoms and Blood, he had already been recognized by Blossom Valley as their core God. The players from Blossoms Valley failed to remember that they were here to hunt the boss. Everyone rushed forward desperately to rescue their God. If they could do so, they would be delighted if they could also give Zhang Jiale’s Dazzling Spring a blow in the passing.

It wasn't hard to imagine how difficult the situation was for Zhang Jiale. The players from Blossom Valley were easier to deal with, but the group from Happy being led by Ye Xiu was very painful.

He dodged left and right, but he couldn't avoid so many attacks. Dazzling Spring's health continued to fall. In this chaotic battle, Zhang Jiale's spirit wavered. He couldn't react in time for the next wave of attacks. Suddenly, a figure came in from the slide, rescuing his Dazzling Spring.

Zhang Jiale turned around absentmindedly and clearly saw who it was.

It was Lin Jingyan's Brawler.

Zhang Jiale's spirit shook.

Correct. This was his teammate. A partner who he could rely on. The past was the past!

Zhang Jiale looked around. Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep was on the other side of the battlefield swinging his greatsword.

Zhang Jiale returned to that summer many years ago. It had been a chaotic battle too. In the end, they were the only two remaining. That youth carried his greatsword on his shoulders and charged

into the fray in a Berserk state. Zhang Jiale no longer had the will to keep fighting and thought he was definitely dead, when he heard that person say: "Hey, you're pretty good. Do you want to be my partner?"

The two joined Team Hundred Blossoms together that year, forming the Dual Blossoms. They studied the tendencies of their opponents and created an unheard of playstyle together. Blossoms and Blood shocked the entire Glory scene the following year....

And today, in the same kind of chaotic battle, the two were on different sides. The blood shadows from his greatsword were as wild as before. The Hundred Blossoms Style was as dazzling as ever. However, Blossoms and Blood would never appear again.

Goodbye!

Just like how he raised his gun towards Guild Blossom Valley, Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Sprint lifted up his right hand and shot accurately at Another Summer of Sleep.

Blood splattered from the bullet hole in Another Summer of Sleep. He roared and slashed in this direction using Wild Blood Strike. The player in front of him was sent flying away. Zhang Jiale seemed to see a smile on Another Summer of Sleep's expressionless face. Another Summer of Sleep lifted his greatsword onto his shoulders and then turned around carefreely.

"Leave!" Finally, after saying goodbye, Zhang Jiale regained his composure and quickly realized that participating in this chaotic

battle was meaningless. Everyone was here to snatch the boss. Where’s the boss? With Herb Garden! Why were these people even fighting? He immediately told Lin Jingyan to leave.

The two wanted to run, but Happy refused to comply and did not let the two off.

"Have you gone senile from old age? Why aren’t you letting us go?" Zhang Jiale angrily rebuked.

"It’s more like your eyes have gone blurry from old age. Are you the only ones we’re not letting go?" Ye Xiu retorted.

Zhang Jiale focused and saw that they weren’t the only ones being trapped by Happy. As soon as a pro player on the battlefield passed by, it didn’t matter if he didn’t provoke them, Happy would take the initiative to attack them.

"How low!" Zhang Jiale exclaimed.

Lin Jingyan was perplexed: "Why do you think he’s acting so lowly?"

Happy’s crude and rough training method wasn’t within the scope of the imagination of these pro players.

"We can’t let them keep doing this!" Zhang Jiale said.

"But I feel like taking the initiative to attack is exactly what they want!" Lin Jingyan said.

"Could he be threatening from the east and striking from the west!" Zhang Jiale reflected on it from a tactical perspective.

"Luring a tiger from its home in the mountains?" Lin Jingyan added.

The two turned to look at Herb Garden. Happy and the guild alliance had surrounded them.

"Sure enough!" The two slapped their thighs. Happy's training method was to restrict these pro players, stopping them from attacking the boss.

The two were incomparably experienced Gods. They saw through Ye Xiu's scheme and obviously wouldn't let him go through with it. They had to escape by any means possible and rush over to aid in the boss battle.

The pro players weren't cooperating, making it difficult for everyone in Happy. Happy encircled, chased, blocked, and intercepted. In any case, they got to fight with these Gods, so it could be considered as accumulating high-level combat experience!

The two from Team Tyranny were nipped at the heels fiercely. Team Hundred Blossom's Yu Feng had been dragged into the fray. There was also Team Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian. He had never

tried escaping from the very beginning. And ever since Lu Hanwen's Blade Master was killed, he kept on spouting out word bubbles filled with declarations of revenge.

Sun Xiang, who had entered the battle on his own accord, had finally been urged back by Xiao Shiqin.

In the end, Excellent Era wasn't able to be dragged in. Those who had been watching for awhile, like Guild Samsara and Guild Misty Castle had an easier time making a move after clearly seeing what the situation was. The pro players from those two teams circled around Happy as if they were stinking piles of dung towards Herb Garden.

The pressure on Herb Garden multiplied. With so many guilds and so many pro players, even with a God watching over them, it was still extremely difficult to hold their advantage. However, if Wang Jiexi wasn't able to predict such an outcome, then his two championship titles and narrowly recreating Excellent Era's reign over the scene would be unjustified.

When the guilds and pro players surrounded them, Herb Garden created a path. This path wasn't a welcoming path, but an exit path. Wang Jiexi's Witch zoomed through the sky on his broom and moved bizarrely through the crowd. Behind him was the boss, Shadow Commander Shaan.

When the guilds saw this, they wanted to cry. It was clear that Shaan's number one target was Wang Jiexi's Witch. Usually, this target should be the first to be killed, making it easy to transfer the aggro to someone else. However, the target was the Alliance's

mysterious Magician! How many could catch up to him?

Team Misty Rain's newly joined beautiful sisters were new-born calves who didn't fear tigers. The two Sharpshooters rushed forward to block him. However, Wang Jiexi's Witch made a few right angle turns and several feints, confusing these two sisters. By the time they recovered, Shadow Commander Shaan reached them and slashed at both of them.

How could a level 75 wild boss's attack power be a joke? It looked like a plain and simple slash, but it nearly killed the two of them instantly. The two couldn't help but feel fear. When they went to intercept Wang Jiexi again, they needed to be more careful and shoot from afar, but Wang Jiexi's was moving around in the crowd. In the end, their bullets only injured the normal players of other guilds.

The pro players on the battlefield sympathized with these beautiful sisters.

In the end, rookies were still green. They were being led around by the nose by Wang Jiexi.

Chapter 953: Knowing When to Stop

If Wang Jiexi was just simply rampaging about on his own, no one would bother him and risk drawing his attention. However, the problem was that he held the aggro of the boss. From the perspective of boss stealing, Wang Jiexi was a core problem that everyone had no choice but to face. Before dealing with him, they couldn't take the boss. Otherwise, they would just be helping Herb Garden kill it.

Wang Jiexi wasn't a target normal players could even dream of dealing with though. Even pro players, the ones just starting out, like the Misty Rain sisters, would only end up in an awkward situation if they tried. However, apart from these two, the pro players had popped up today were all big names in Glory, perfectly capable of causing Wang Jiexi a lot of trouble. The problem was, these pro players didn't have the time to do so, because they were struggling with their own troubles.

Team Happy!

Ye Xiu and his group's goals were simple and direct. They didn't care about the wild boss at all, so they didn't bother spending any effort on Wang Jiexi, who was flying all over the map. On the other hand, the other pro players were perfect targets for them. As they fought furiously with the pro players they had already engaged, they ran about harassing new targets as well.

The pro players were extremely vexed, but didn't want to waste time on Happy either, so they all began to take an avoidance approach towards Happy. As for Ye Xiu's group? They really didn't

like the avoidance approach the pro players were taking. We came to get battle experience, so if you keeping dodging about and running away, then we can't use this to our advantage!

They couldn't provoke most of the pro players to fight them, and the ones that they were entangled with, they couldn't finish off. The pro players weren't fighting on their own either. No matter if it was Yu Feng or Huang Shaotian or Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan, they all had guilds supporting them. None of them would sit by and watch their Gods get led around by the nose. A few people to provide ranged support or healing was already a great help.

However, Ye Xiu wasn't worried about this, because their goal really was too simple. Victory didn't matter. If these pro players were impossible to kill, then it would be great if they could fight them for three days and three nights!

The situation was chaotic, but it somehow managed to maintain this chaotic balance to the end.

Team Happy and the pro players they had managed to engage were locked in a stalemate. As for stealing the Boss, no one could really do anything to Wang Jiexi, so the guilds began to strike at Herb Garden's normal players, so Wang Jiexi began to lead the Boss rampaging through the guilds and destroying their attack formations.

Was Shadow Tactician Shaan even a boss anymore?

No one thought it seemed like one anymore. It was evidently

Wang Jiexi's summons, following Wang Jiexi's Witch, attacking and causing chaos among the guild players wherever it went.

The normal players had learned something new today, that the Magician was so incisive, even when stealing bosses. Seeing that their pro players didn't seem to be able to do much, they also began to lose hope.

Shadow Tactician Shaan's health was rapidly falling as he barged through the crowd. In addition to Herb Garden's relentless attacks, the damage it took from the crossfire was probably upwards of ten percent of its health.

It was until Shaan's health fell to ten percent and entered the enraged state that the situation began to unstabilize. In an enraged state, Shaan would summon Shadow Soldiers. Many masked assassins in black cloaks appeared together, killing anyone they came across.

Normal players wouldn't be able to win against these assassins one on one. Pro players had the ability to, but they didn't know if they should! What would they gain from killing these Shadow Assassins? Nothing. They would only be helping Herb Garden!

The situation had already come to this and they had no way of dealing with Wang Jiexi, so the guilds finally began to give up. After giving the order, Samsara, Misty Castle, Excellent Dynasty, and the other guilds had already recalled their troops. However, many people came over to watch Happy fight the other gods out of curiosity.

Seeing everyone clearing the field, Zhang Jiale and the others knew that the conclusion was set. They seethed at Ye Xiu in their hearts! If it wasn't for Ye Xiu causing trouble, then Wang Jiexi definitely wouldn't have had such an easy time, what with all them gods here.

"What the hell were you thinking, fucking around like this? Now look, have you managed to get the boss?" Zhang Jiale said with contempt, believing that Ye Xiu had completely miscalculated.

"Heheh," Ye Xiu laughed.

"What the hell are you laughing about!" Zhang Jiale was enraged, and Dazzling Spring directed his fire at Lord Grim.

Lord Grim hurriedly dodged. Speaking of, Ye Xiu was a little disappointed. He had hoped that Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and the others could get the chance to gain some experience by fighting pro players, but these pro players just seemed to love coming at Lord Grim. To be honest, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was more like a bystander in this battle, mostly taking command. The few times he went up to fight, it was only when he was forced to.

"Let's crush this guy together!!!" People n units away could even still see the speech bubbles coming from Huang Shaotian's Blade Master. Sun Xiang, who was about to leave with his guild, immediately raised his spear, eager to come over, when he saw this.

"We probably shouldn't waste any more time here, yeah?" Xiao Shqin's Mechanic quickly came over to talk him down.

Ye Xiu looked around then and saw that the boss fight was over and the guild members were shuffling over to watch them. If they continued to fight, Blue Brook, Tyrannical Ambition, and Blossom Valley's players could participate wholeheartedly. Like that, if Ye Xiu and co continued to fight without the help of a guild, they wouldn't be able to do much training before being annihilated. If they called their guild over to fight, that would just become a massive guild war. Not only was such a thing probably not helpful to Happy's training, but their guild would also take heavy casualties. Continuing this was meaningless.

"Ahem, what are we still fighting for, now that the boss is gone?" Seeing that there wasn't any use in continuing, Ye Xiu immediately expressed his opinion.

This meaningless fighting wasn't something that any rational guild leader would want, so they all came to try and talk down their Gods.

With the Gods complying, the other normal players were easy enough to persuade. The battle over on Happy's side petered out just like that. Everyone looked towards the boss fight then, seeing that Herb Garden, with Wang Jiexi present, were easily taking down the boss, now that the other guilds weren't making things hard. It didn't take much before Shadow Tactician Shaan was finally announced by the system.

"Okay okay, let's all leave," Ye Xiu called to his people.

"Are we not fighting anymore?" Tang Rou seemed disappointed for it to end. For the current her, there was no fun to the in game arena anymore, because it was far too easy. If it wasn't for the fact that she had seen that there was more to the world of Glory, she would've probably completely lost interest already.

"Yes, let's end things here for today! Everyone is probably exhausted, right?" Ye Xiu asked.

In this chaotic free-for-all, they had been no clear goal. All they did was fight, fight until they ended up rather befuddled. Hearing Ye Xiu's words, everyone came back to the present and only then did they realize that this battle really had been exhausting!

They had been tense, unable to relax, a continuous stream of high-intensity mechanics. This was true exhaustion. Even Tang Rou, who had been unsatisfied just now, found that she really was burnt out after being reminded by Ye Xiu.

This was also one of the reasons Ye Xiu had called for them to stop.

The Glory Pro League had a match every week. This wasn't just to lengthen the match season. Though in Esports, it seemed like you only needed to sit there and there was little movement involved, it still took a lot out of you. Especially for certain areas, like your hands, which had to complete an immense amount of actions. Losing feeling in them when walking out from the match wasn't uncommon. Many players even had lasting symptoms. For

example, Sun Zheping's injury wasn't really some sort of accident. His battlestyle had taken a toll on his hands, and his injury was the result of the accumulation of overwork.

The better your skill in Glory, the larger the toll on the player, but the pro teams took careful consideration of this. Through the use of science, they obtained ways of practice while caring for their hands and the career lifespans of pros were constantly on the rise.

For Happy, they had limited resources. Sometimes, everyone had to keep playing under exhaustion and stress. If they didn't know when to stop when fighting these high intensity battles with pro players, it wouldn't be a good thing for Happy's players. Happy's current situation was like those teams from the beginning of the Alliance. They didn't have good foundations, so everything they gained had to be earned themselves, so the pro players had to expend a lot of effort.

It was because of this, as well, that the players from the beginnings of the Alliance found it hard to endure until this day. After Ye Xiu's retirement, Han Wenqing had become the very last of the first generation of Glory pro players that was still fighting matches. Compared to Sun Zheping, who had a similar playstyle, but debuted in the second season and retired from injury in the fifth, you couldn't deny that natural talent did exist.

Compared to the first generation, the Golden Generation was much more fortunate. When they joined, the Alliance had already seen great improvements and the majority of clubs' structures were very wholesome already. Under these great competitive conditions, the career lifespans of these players were far better

than the first generation. By this season, the Golden Generation had been in the Alliance for a full five seasons. Compared to the first generation who had all gradually been forced to retire and part ways within five seasons, the Golden Generation were all still in peak competitive condition. Their experience, mechanical skill, and awareness, all of it was still at its peak, making their current state optimal for their performances.

Although, when you thought about it, another reason for the first generation's rapid retirement was because a lot of players were like Wei Chen; they weren't young even before they had entered the Alliance. In two or three years, their performance would naturally drop. After this, the Alliance began to develop further and the debuting ages of the players would only get lower and lower.

For example, Lu Hanwen, the 14 year old All-Star, could keep his title for at least ten years, if no accidents happened. This was enough for the veterans that could only stay in the league for two or three years to cry a face full of tears.

Considering all of this, Team Happy, whose goal was the Pro League, couldn't be too careless either.

"Everyone should do some hand exercises before going to bed," Ye Xiu ordered the others, who were all logging off and preparing to rest.

Chapter 954: An Explosive Increase in Mistakes

As the name implies, hand exercises were exercises to stretch and relax the hands and wrists. For pro esports players, the hands were their most important physical assets. Happy had limited conditions. They could only do some general exercises. The powerful clubs had their own medical team that would design more focused hand exercises depending on the habits of each pro player; the effects were much better.

Apart from needing to protect their hands, their mental health had to be maintained as well. If their hands were fine, but they felt exhausted, that wouldn't be good either. Taking care of their mental health was more complicated. Food, a healthy lifestyle, a proper biological clock, and so on all affected their mental health.

Team Happy's various practice routines were mainly to help Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, Luo Ji, and An Wenyi's skill level, but in pro teams, apart from helping their players improve, another important part was regulating the conditions of their players.

Every person had their ups and downs. Through these scientific regulating, they had these ups and downs conform to the pace of the competitive format. Every team hoped to have their players be at their peak condition every Saturday night. As a result, how to design practice routines was actually a very deep school of knowledge. There were Glory specialists, who constantly researched this area.

As for Team Happy, as they gradually moved towards the

standards, these areas naturally had to be looked into. Unfortunately, Ye Xiu didn't understand the scientific basis for these practice routines, so he could only rely on his own experience to design practice routines for each person.

As for the training currently being carried out at Happy, in a pro team, that sort of training would only be directed towards practicing for their matches. A more comprehensive training would usually wouldn't consist of practicing for the match every day because that type of training consumed too much energy. Practice was for improving, not to squeeze their players dry.

Today's practice made everyone feel exhausted. The next day, Ye Xiu didn't organize everyone to hunt pro players in the game. Instead, he arranged for a more relaxing practice routine for recovery.

In the blink of an eye, another day passed. That marked the end of the week. A new week started and the bosses refreshed. After everyone in Happy went through a day of recovery, they were once again ready and waiting. Waiting in the game was too much of a waste of time. With the advantages of a guild, they could simply go on once they received the news.

As for the big clubs, when the new week started, the pro players rubbed their fists and wiped their palms in anticipation. However, the teams clearly weren't willing to have their pro players waste their energy here. They had set up a rotation system. Each team had pro players come, but it wouldn't be the same few every day. Everyone would rotate each day. When match day approached, most would beat the gong and have their troops retreat to focus on

the upcoming match.

Happy had grasped the timing of these big clubs and took advantage of it. For example, there definitely wouldn't be any pro players in the early morning. They needed to keep a good sleep schedule to maintain their condition! As a result, Happy followed the pro team's schedules and also kept a good sleep schedule. At day time, they waited for news from their guild. As soon as news came up, they would immediately set out. Their target wasn't the boss, but the pro players. They weren't picky with their food. It didn't matter if the pro player was a God or a main roster player or a substitute player, if he or she was a pro player, then he or she would be attacked.

As a result, because Happy wasn't focused on killing the boss and instead focused on causing trouble, the various teams viewed them as thorn in their side. It had to be known that going wild boss hunting wasn't a fun get-together. It was a competition. Even though other pro players would fight each other, from an overall perspective, the boss was the objective. If fighting wouldn't help them get the boss, then they wouldn't fight. However, Happy wasn't proper. As soon as those guys saw a pro player, they would fight. It didn't matter if it was related to the boss or not. One time, they found a character, who was suspected to be a pro player, inside the city and they also mercilessly killed him……

Because of Happy causing trouble, quite a few guilds failed to take down bosses that should have been theirs, and quite a few pro players ended up snatching a bellyful of anger when they tried snatching the bosses…..

Two months passed in the blink of an eye. The Glory Alliance completed four matches this month. At the end of the month, they began summarizing this month's matches like usual, including the number of seats filled in the stadium, their TV ratings, the numbers for their online streams, as well as several other general statistics. The Glory Alliance wasn't just the tournament organizer. The Glory Alliance was also the manager that needed to keep track of the profits from running the league. From one perspective, the Alliance could be seen as a company. The Alliance's chairman was this company's chief executive officer….

When the February briefing came out, many of the numbers were startling. The most noticeable was that in February's matches, the number of mistakes made by players shot up in a straight line. In comparison to January's matches, it was an explosive increase.

The distribution of these mistakes was outrageous. From the numbers, the top ten teams contributed to seventy percent of this explosive increase of mistakes.

What happened to these teams?

The staff members of the Alliance analyzed one step further and discovered that the following distribution of mistakes was quite even. Each team and each player had contributed. When they compared this data to the other data throughout the Alliance's history, the staff members would realize that this February was a new record. Numerous teams and numerous players had broken the record for the highest number of mistakes this February.

In fact, many jokes and discussions had come up because of the number of mistakes in the matches this month. It was only until they summarized everything did they realize how unprecedented it was.

What did mistakes mean?

It meant that their condition of the players wasn’t at its peak.

A poor performance led to a lackluster match. A lackluster match would not be looked at well by spectators. If the spectators didn’t like it, it meant a loss in revenue. It was a very scary thing for the Alliance. What had happened for all these teams to collectively be in a slump? These were all the powerhouses in the Alliance too. In fact, it was the bottom ten teams whose increase in mistakes made appeared rather modest. Their strong suit in making mistakes actually lost to these powerhouses.

The Alliance didn’t dare be negligent. After organizing the data for February’s matches, they immediately convened to analyze and discuss this issue.

The Alliance had many talented people, and there was no lack of retired pro players, who held a position in the Alliance. This February, what exactly happened to these teams and players? These specialists quickly found the answer.

The new update made it so that teams needed new materials to upgrade their Silver equipment. Starting from January, the teams gradually began having their pro players go into the game and

help. After the Spring Festival, this phenomenon reached its peak. There were even players, who didn’t have much of a goal this season, that went to the game on match day.

"I have some information here." A staff member in the meeting handed a piece of paper with information to everyone, "This paper shows the monthly summaries of the league after each Glory update. Everyone, take a look at the green numbers and compare it to the red average. You can clearly see that the league is affected by each update. The most direct observation is the increase in mistakes made. There are many reasons: change in equipment, different skills, and splitting their attention to obtain materials in the game..."

"Haven’t we already discussed this reality long ago?" The Alliance chairman Feng Xianjun skimmed over the information and then placed it back onto the table, "But this time, the number of mistakes has increased explosively. It clearly doesn’t conform with our past data. That’s the reason why we urgently convened this meeting. From the information we have, even though the Level 75 update had taken several years to complete, it wasn’t an overhaul of the game engine. Everything was developed according to the original rules, so from conventional reasoning, the effects of this update should conform to our past data. No, it should even be said that as Glory grows, the ability for teams to adapt should be even better. The effects this time should actually be less than before. That’s what the data should tell us. But this time, the number of mistakes actually increased explosively. There must be another reason."

"How about... we have an informal discussion with these teams and these pro players..... The numbers are so clear. I think they

must have the whole story." Someone suggested.

"Let’s do that then....." The chairman Feng Xianjun approved of this idea.

Soon afterwards, the Alliance sent people to visit these teams to inquire about this matter and understand the whole story. They soon go the information they wanted. They didn’t need to summarize anything. The story that every team talked about was astonishingly all the same.

Ye Qiu. Team Happy.

These two key terms made the chairman Feng Xianjun speechless for a long time.

"This punk..." Seeing this name, Feng Xianjun could feel a headache coming.

As Glory’s most glorious pro player, Ye Xiu’s status didn’t need to be discussed. However, despite his outstanding achievements and his countless fans, the Alliance didn’t like him very much.

The Alliance’s former chairman, Jin Chengyi, had once sighed ruefully. Ye Qiu’s existence had slowed the growth of the Glory Alliance by at least two years.

Many people would interpret these words as Ye Qiu’s reign over the championship title, making the matches less suspenseful

during the early years of the Alliance. But those who knew the inside matters would know that chairman Jin Chengyi was talking about Ye Qiu not cooperating with publicity.

As the founder of Excellent Era's great dynasty and the undisputable number one player in Glory at the time, Ye Qiu should have absolutely been that era's representative. Unfortunately, this number one player refused to participate in any activities. The Alliance could not borrow his popularity to promote themselves. In the end, all of the players that had been propped up by them were defeated by him. This put the Alliance in a difficult spot. Countless Glory fans even suspected that there some dark secrets going on. Was there some sort of unwritten rule? If not, why would they not be supporting Ye Qiu?

Even after Ye Qiu made an announcement to make things clear, the players were more than happy to use their imagination. Their guesses made the Alliance feel dejected and depressed.

Unable to ride on the east wind, Ye Qiu, the Alliance's publicity team had to do twice the amount of work for half the results. This was why Jin Chengyi sighed ruefully, saying that Ye Qiu's existence had slowed the Alliance's growth by two years.

Chapter 955: Let's Talk

Compared to his predecessor, Feng Xianjun's luck was quite good. When he started managing the Alliance, Ye Qiu's era had ended, and the Golden Generation had emerged. The competitive scene prospered with the explosive advent of new talents.

However, even though his luck was good, Feng Xianjun had his worries due to his luck.

It was because there were too many talents. No player like Ye Qiu, who had the ability to dominate the scene and become the Alliance's representative, had appeared since then. It truly made Feng Xianjun feel distressed.

In terms of achievements, after Ye Qiu, there were a total of three teams that had become champions: Tyranny, Tiny Herb, Blue Rain……

Team Tyranny's ace player and Ye Qiu's rival, Han Wenqing, finally toppled Team Excellent Era's reign of three consecutive championship titles. Feng Xianjun had taken up his position as the Alliance's chairman that year. As soon as he took office, he wanted to raise Han Wenqing up as the number one player in Glory. However, no matter how they tried marketing it, Han Wenqing's aggressive appearance made it seem like they were promoting a crime film…..

Games were viewed as terrible things in many people's eyes. Having someone who looked like he was a violent criminal as their

representative would not be different from having their Alliance beat down. In the end, Feng Xianjun had to hastily put a stop to this plan.

After Team Tyranny, Team Tiny Herb won the championships. Their ace player Wang Jiexi was a player with the title Magician. Unfortunately, Wang Jiexi had a clear flaw in his appearance. He had one big eye and one small eye. In front of the camera, he would often look very terrifying. Wang Jiexi's appearance wasn't easy to work with. After Ye Qiu, Wang Jiexi's two championship titles was more than enough. He could be considered as the leading figure during that period of time. In the end, the Alliance didn't directly shirk away from Wang Jiexi like they did with Han Wenqing. However, they didn't display too much enthusiasm for him.

In between Team Tiny Herb's two championship victories, Team Blue Rain won one championship. The two leading players were from the famous Golden Generation. Their appearances and personalities were easy to work with too. Unfortunately, Feng Xianjun personally detested Huang Shaotian. In the eyes of older people, his chatty personality was very frivolous behavior. Feng Xianjun didn't want the Alliance's representative to be this type of person.

In the blink of an eye, four seasons passed since Feng Xianjun took office. Without any suitable targets, he could only spread the net wider. As a result, the campaign to build a star became very successful. Numerous All Stars deeply loved by countless fans emerged in the Alliance. This could be seen since the start of the All Star Weekend. However, even though the group of stars shined brightly, it was always missing the very brightest one up until Zhou Zekai came.

When this player rose and swept the skies, the Alliance's campaign to build a star reached its peak. He innately possessed many desirable characteristics. Later on, he perfectly piled on one glorious achievement after the other.

Team Samsara was the Alliance's nouveau riche. Before Zhou Zekai's addition, Team Samsara was part of the mid-tier and bottom-tier group that couldn't even make it to the playoffs.

But because of Zhou Zekai's addition, they were like a salted fish that moved once more. They transformed from a weak team to the current defending champions. Team Samsara's abrupt rise was unprecedented in the Alliance. Besides Samsara, the former champions Excellent Era, Tyranny, Tiny Herb, and Blue Rain had all been established names since the start of the Alliance. All of them possessed powerful guilds. It was the best proof of their solid foundation. As for Samsara, this weak team broke through the monopoly formed by these powerhouses. Everything had started with their new star, Zhou Zekai.

The current Samsara had joined the ranks of the powerhouses. Zhou Zekai became the undisputed number one player in Glory. The leading figure that Feng Xianjun had been waiting for had finally appeared.

In fact, starting from season seven, the Alliance's support for Zhou Zekai was already very obvious. However, Glory was still a competitive eSport. Without a championship cup, Zhou Zekai was still a bit lacking. Everything changed after season eight. From the public to the officials, Zhou Zekai was indisputably placed at the

top. Numerous media outlets rallied for him, declaring that Zhou Zekai had pushed the Alliance to new heights.

From the Alliance's statistics, Feng Xianjun would not deny this point. After Team Samsara won the championships, the Alliance's overall revenue had increased explosively compared to the previous few seasons. The new season had numerous widely-discussed transfers, further pushing the season nine's viewership to an all-time high.

The Glory Alliance was moving towards an even more prosperous era. At this moment, a sudden increase in mistakes couldn't help but make Feng Xianjun worried. From the data, the epidemic of mistakes this month and its effects on the quality of the matches had yet to be extensively noticed by their players.

For one, very few players closely followed everything that went on in the Alliance. Secondly, players wouldn't pay much attention to this statistic. But even if the players didn't notice, how could those media outlets specifically looking for topics to write about ignore it? The media also did a monthly briefing on that month's circumstances. The abnormality in February wouldn't escape the media's attention. They would certainly be reporting it without restraint very soon. After the players became aware, the Alliance needed to provide an acceptable explanation. The truth found through asking the various teams wasn't a beautiful story. They couldn't just tell these players that the lackluster quality and increased number of mistakes in the matches this month were because the pro players were absorbed in the game, right?

That would be too comical!

What made it even worse for Feng Xianjun was that he had no way of stopping these teams from competing in the game because this ensured that the Alliance would continue to grow. The league that was established could not be separated from the game. This had always been one of the features of the league. When the league first started, it had been designed to be extremely close to the players and fans, making the Glory competitive scene stand out among the numerous other esports and prosper until today.

Esports was dependent on the game. Whether it was an online game or a standalone title, keeping such popularity for so long could be considered a miracle. This was a win-win for the Glory game and the Glory Alliance. Neither side had considered breaking up this format.

What made Fang Xianjun depressed was that if it was just the teams competing against each other in the game, it wouldn't result in this type of outcome. Their past data explained this point. This time, everything was because of Ye Qiu and his Team Happy. The feedback from the various teams seemed to prove this point.

Ye Qiu... did he have to find him and tell him to stop messing around?

Feng Xianjun thought about it, but shook his head. Let alone this request being too broad, the other side had no reason to listen. Even if the request was reasonable and fair, was Ye Qiu the type of person who would just listen to orders? If not, the former chairman Jin Chengyi wouldn't have sighed, saying that Ye Qiu's existence had slowed the Alliance's growth by two years.

In the end, the most reasonable decision that could be made by Feng Xianjun was to advise the teams and to communicate with them. He could not directly prohibit them. After thinking about it, he might as well convene a private conference for the appropriate people in the Alliance's top ten teams.

Convening a conference for every team was very normal. Because of February's abnormality, the various teams also had their own thoughts, so they quietly responded to this time's conference and ran over to the Alliance headquarters to drink tea together.

Feng Xianjun hadn't called for anyone in particular, so the various teams just arranged for their usual participants: the Club manager and the team captain.

Ten teams. Twenty people. At the big roundtable in the Alliance headquarters meeting room #1, everyone was familiar with each other. Sure enough, this conference didn't seem too official. There weren't even seating arrangements. The various teams came, greeted one another, and then picked a seat to sit down on. When it was about time to start, chairman Feng Xianjun also came to the meeting.

The room was silent. Everyone knew what they were here to talk about because in front of everyone was a newspaper: the 2/28 Friday edition of the Esports Home. In eye-catching font, the headlines had put the total number of mistakes made in the Alliance's February matches. Below, there were comparisons to past numbers, letting the readers know just how shocking the the total number of mistakes were.

"Ahem...." Feng Xianjun seemed to accidentally but also intentionally put his hands on the newspaper on the table. He cleared his throat before starting to speak.

"This situation isn’t too good..." Feng Xianjun got right to the point*.

"Now that it’s been reported, the effects cannot be avoided, so I hope that everyone can hurry and go back to their regular routine." Feng Xianjun said.

The managers and team captains forced a smile. How could they have not thought about it? But if there was fish, how could the bear not want some? They had to fight for materials in the game, but they also didn’t want the conditions of their players to be affected. How could they not want the best of both worlds? But what could they do?

"Honestly... if it wasn’t for Ye Qiu making trouble, it wouldn't turn out like this." The team captains would also need to fight for bosses. They had been on the front lines, so they had the most authority to make any statements. The captain of the tenth place team, Team Thunderclap’s Liu Hao, decisively brought out the topic of Ye Qiu.

The former vice-captain of Excellent Era, Liu Hao, had been transferred to Team Thunderclap this summer. Along with his teammate He Ming, they became the bargaining chip for Excellent Era’s purchase of Xiao Shiqin. At Team Thunderclap, Liu Hao was

chosen as the general among the dwarfs, and became appointed as the team captain. But how could the current Team Thunderclap be anything in Liu Hao's eyes? From the very start, Liu Hao had always been seeking for a better path. But even if he thought of a better path, he first needed to perform well. As the team captain this season, he had actually performed spectacularly, bringing Team Thunderclap to tenth place. They even had hopes of making it into the playoffs.

Liu Hao would obviously cherish this type of achievement. As a result, he put more and more effort and even fought for wild bosses for Team Thunderclap, naturally in order to strengthen his team. Any pro player would spare no effort if they had the chance to enter playoffs.

Unfortunately, their guild's strength wasn't that strong. Along with Ye Qiu making trouble, they were doing so poorly at snatching bosses that it made Liu Hao feel ashamed. Liu Hao would obviously do his utmost to push the blame onto Ye Qiu. His resentment towards Ye Qiu was unrelated with him being in Excellent Era or not.

Chapter 956: Discussing the Details

Liu Hao decisively pointed out Ye Qiu. The other team captains didn't have much of a reaction. They sipped on their tea, peeled their tangerines, or peeled their bananas.....

Ye Qiu was the main culprit. Liu Hao wasn't wrong. It was just supposed to be fighting some bosses. How could that be any burden for pro players? Competing against one another? That didn't need to be as intense as competing in a match. However, Ye Qiu's existence changed everything. Happy went all out fighting these pro players. Even worse, they never stopped. What's more, both sides were supported by their guild, so even if they wanted to die, it wouldn't be easy. It was easy to imagine how exhausting such non-stop intensive fighting was. Then, they had to play in a high-level match, which didn't allow for even the slightest bit of negligence. How could they not keep making mistakes?

Everyone understood this reasoning. However, none of the team captains uttered a word, mainly because they didn't want to increase Ye Qiu's might. They were also thinking of ways to deal with Happy causing trouble!

Only Liu Hao directly said it because of his personal grudge towards Ye Qiu.

Feng Xianjun saw everyone's reaction and knew what was going on. Today's meeting was mainly towards these team captains. As for the managers, playing in matches and snatching bosses weren't their responsibilities. What they said about the players' conditions and what not didn't count.

"Haha, Ye Qiu... no one is a stranger to this name!" Feng Xianjun said.

"Since everyone's so familiar with him, I'll put it bluntly. I understand everyone's feelings towards Ye Qiu."

"Wenqing, you and Ye Qiu have been rivals for many years. He's already retired. You still won't let it go?" Feng Xianjun smiled in Han Wenqing's direction.

"Jiexi, you almost built a new dynasty like Ye Qiu. Are you perhaps a bit unwilling to accept that your legacy cannot compare to Ye Qiu's?" Feng Xianjun looked towards Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi.

"Wenzhou, Li Xuan, Yunxiu. You three are from the Golden Generation. How could you guys claim the world belongs to the young under Ye Qiu's oppression? Haha, you guys aren't too happy with him either, no?" Feng Xianjun looked towards these three team captains.

"As for you others, perhaps you've been oppressed by Ye Qiu too? Or perhaps when you come out with your proud accomplishments, someone always splashes a bucket of cold water on you and compares your accomplishments to Ye Qiu's, so you're also not accepting of him either."

"I know all that!" Feng Xianjun smiled.

These team captains were smarter than a majority of normal players. When they first heard Feng Xianjun call out their names, they were startled, but when he finished speaking, they suddenly didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

Feng Xianjun was implying that when they came across Ye Qiu, they were unable to put down their past grievances and refused to let Ye Qiu go. But it was in fact the opposite! Everyone was focused on snatching bosses, but it was Ye Qiu and his team that refused to stop bothering them!

Chairman, you’ve reversed the main relationship. We’re the ones on the defensive!

The team captains looked at one another. Liu Hao once again rushed out excitedly: "Why don’t we ally together? If we see Ye Qiu, we first get rid of them before doing anything else?"

Feng Xianjun heard his suggestion and was truly angry! F*ck, didn’t I just say all of that to advise you guys not to split your attention when you see Ye Qiu? Good, good. You even want everyone to split their attention together and make trouble for me, is that it?

Feng Xianjun glared at Liu Hao, but Liu Hao was so excited that he didn’t notice. He was even looking at everyone expectantly.

Seeing how the team captains appeared to be in deep thought, Feng Xianjun was truly afraid that they would ally together to go

hunt Ye Qiu down. If that happened, was there still going to be a league? We might as well just organize the players to go to the game and watch you guys chase him down.

"Ahem!" Feng Xianjun cleared his throat and got everyone's attention: "What I have to say is very simple. We're under special circumstances right now. Everyone needs to put some effort into the game. We all understand that. It's one of the selling points and features of the Glory Alliance. However, everyone needs to focus when they're in the game! Don't let your personal feelings interfere with proper business. It wouldn't be good if it affected your matches in the league! This time of year is when everyone needs to perform at their best."

Feng Xianjun's final words weren't wrong. This season, all of the teams appeared very ambitious, allowing such an exciting season to form. If the teams wanted good placings, the matches would naturally be more fun to watch, and the Alliance's growth would be more powerful too. This was why Feng Xianjun was worried of a minor problem growing out of control.

"The problem is that this isn't the current situation..." This time, the team captains didn't stay silent. The first to speak was Team Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou.

"Chairman, we all understand what you're saying. We aren't that unprofessional." Wang Jiexi said.

"Right now, it's Ye Qiu who's taking the initiative to make trouble for us." Han Wenqing said.

"As a result, we aren't able to concentrate on the bosses. We have to split our attention to face them." Team Hundred Blossom's Yu Feng said. It was easy to see that he had been deeply affected by it.

"Everyone would thank the heavens if he didn't give us trouble. Who wants to provoke him!" Team Misty's Chu Yunxiu said.

"Last time, our team's Li Xun hadn't even left the city yet and he was killed by Ye Qiu's group." Team Void's Li Xuan said unhappily. He did prove a rumor though: Happy had killed a character, who was suspected to be a pro player. It turns out that it really was a pro player.

"It doesn't seem like he's here to snatch bosses. It seems like he's deliberately looking for trouble." Team Wind Howl's Tang Hao said.

"He's specifically targeting pro players." Team 301's Yang Cong said.

"Yeah..." Team Samsara's Zhou Zekai.

"Let's ally together and get rid of him!" Liu Hao immediately suggested, but this time, he saw the chairman glare at him. Liu Hao thought he had been seen through by the chairman. He instantly shrunk back and didn't dare let out a peep.

"What is this Ye Qiu doing!" Feng Xianjun seemed to be talking to

himself, but everyone still heard him.

"Bothering us and diverting our attention is convenient for his group....." Wang Jiexi replied. Everyone nodded their heads, looking at it from a tactical perspective for snatching bosses. It had been a month, and the teams still hadn't figured out that Ye Xiu was actually bringing his team to get experience from them! After all, from a tactical perspective for snatching bosses, Happy's behavior was very logical, so no one was imaginative enough to think about it from another perspective. They all thought Ye Xiu's actions were appropriate! It was just that his appropriate actions were harming them.

His Happy was still playing leisurely in the Challenger League. They had plenty of energy and time. On the other hand, the other pro teams still needed to maintain their peak conditions to face their upcoming matches! But every week, they needed to waste so much of their energy on snatching bosses. How could the quality of the matches not go down?

The one comfort was that it was everyone who fell, not just one team. As a result, even though the quality of the matches this month decreased, it didn't really affect the placings in the Alliance. The pro players only cared about their placings. They didn't care too much about the Alliance's growth or whatever, so even though they were all grumbling about Ye Qiu, in reality, they weren't nearly as worried as Feng Xianjun. It was everyone playing poorly, so who cares!

"Ban his account!"

"The Alliance doesn’t have that sort of authority, does it?"

"Remove their qualifications for the Challenger League! That way they can’t fight back!"

"Yeah yeah, that’s good. Remove them!"

As a matter of fact, the team captains were even in the mood to joke around! It truly made Feng Xianjun burn with anxiety. The Alliance obviously had the power to remove their qualifications for the Challenger League, but they couldn’t just randomly abuse it. They had to follow the rules, no? They didn’t have a proper reason to remove Happy’s qualifications! How could the team captains not understand that? As a result, they were just messing around. Those guys sounded all depressed, but in reality, no one was taking it seriously.

"Honestly, I feel like Liu Hao’s suggestion could be one solution." Yu Wenzhou suddenly said.

Feng Xianjun was startled. Why are you also making trouble for me? Most players wouldn’t consider things from a manager’s perspective, but Feng Xianjun didn’t think Yu Wenzhou was that type of player. In his eyes, Yu Wenzhou was a talent that could join the Alliance’s management level after retiring as a pro player. Why did he make this kind of suggestion?

At this moment, Yu Wenzhou continued: "Everyone knows how many people are in Ye Qiu’s team, right?"

"10." Wang Jiexi said.

"You count that one?" Han Wenqing said.

"Are you talking about Chasing Haze?" Wang Jiexi said. Everyone was clearly someone who fully understood the matter. They even knew the names of everyone in Team Happy.

"Chasing Haze is weak, but if you draw the line with her, then there are a few other ordinary ones among them." Wang Jiexi said.

"Little Cold Hands?"

"Concealed Light?"

The captains of the Alliance's top teams could already name everyone in Team Happy. These were just the rather weak ones in Team Happy, yet they were still very familiar with them.

"It doesn't matter if they're strong or weak. In any case, my suggestion is that the next time we hunt for bosses, everyone be on the lookout for them. We'll take the initiative to send out a few players to form a team and specifically contest against them. They want to fight with us, so we might as well fight with them. If we have people specifically to deal with them, then we won't need to worry about wasting too much of our energy. The others can then focus on the boss. The faster we finish, the earlier we can leave. What do you think everyone.?"

Yu Wenzhou said to everyone, but his eyes were still focused on Feng Xianjun. Feng Xianjun let out a sigh of relief. He nodded his head with a smile.This Yu Wenzhou truly was a talent. This method was one move, two gains! With each one having a specific goal, they wouldn't be splitting their attention. It was an excellent idea.

"Yes, I think Yu Wenzhou's solution is good." Feng Xianjun approved and immediately supported it. He didn't wait for everyone's response and first declared his position.

If the chairman approved, then everyone had to give him face! What's more, Yu Wenzhou's solution was truly a good one. Soon afterwards, everyone discussed the details. Liu Hao was the most fervent and he actively came up with many plans.

"You punk, are you planning on destroying Happy? Who would have thought that even after leaving Excellent Era, you still care about them so much." Li Xuan suddenly said.

"Ah... what are you talking about!" Liu Hao panicked slightly. He really want to destroy Happy, but he definitely had no intentions of helping Excellent Era. It would be wonderful if Excellent Era could be destroyed too. He still needed to hide his personal feelings though: "Do you guys really think that this team can threaten Excellent Era?"

"Haha, who can say?" All of the team captains smiled.

Chapter 957: League Influence

It was a good thing that the conference had started feeling like a tea party because the atmosphere became more and more relaxed. Chairman Feng Xianjun became more at ease and couldn't help but give a bit of encouragement to every team. Of course, he didn't care whether the team was the current first place Tyranny or the tenth place Thunderclap. As the chairman of the Glory Professional Alliance, he had to treat everyone equally. If he showed even a little bit of favoritism, it would be hard to avoid being trapped by people making a fuss.

Soon afterwards, the managers and captains of various clubs all thought about what had happened. This meeting had been resolved with just a few words from Yu Wenzhou, succinctly offering a resolution. Everyone had been called in from distant areas, when in fact just communicating over QQ for a bit could have led to this idea. It seemed that the chairman had indeed been very nervous.

Only, the big club teams hadn't thought of the fact that the explosion of mistakes in February had been reported on by the media. But despite the discontent from the pro players, the number of players in the Glory Heavenly Domain was actually rapidly increasing. Why? Just going online to the Heavenly Domain and taking a look would give the answer. In the global chat, everyone was asking where the boss fights were. Everyone wanted to witness pro players battling at a close distance, especially the popular Gods, whose whereabouts were directly asked for by players.

For a short while, this kind of enthusiasm from the players

covered up quite a bit of the discontent caused by the poor competition quality. But the Alliance didn't dare neglect what was happening! Feng Xianjun was even worried that the large clubs, seeing this reaction from the players, would take the situation even less seriously. He personally called each of them on the phone, repeatedly warning them to be careful and protect the current state of affairs.

How to cope with the players enthusiasm, each club sent specialists to deal with the enthusiasm of the players. At the same time, Yu Wenzhou's proposal was also decisively put into practice.

Thus, the new week began. For every level 75 wild boss that spawned, all the teams once again used their power to gather players together. When Ye Xiu began to search the guilds for pro players, he was astonished to discover that a group of troops had directly appeared in front of Team Happy.

This group of players had mixed names and tags, coming from nine different guilds. At this very moment, however, they resolutely stood together.

Before Ye Xiu could figure out what was going on and react, these nine players actually took the initiative to begin fighting.

Exchanging blows, Happy was caught by surprise and put in a bad position. But after they reacted, Ye Xiu was wild with joy.

These pros were really too reliable! Knowing that we were looking for them to train, they now specifically dispatched people

to form a group specifically to PK. This was simply too considerate in every way!

After coming to an understanding, all of Happy's members felt very moved, to the point that they were reluctant to fight back against these nine.

However, these nine weren't polite at all in their attacks, looking like they wanted to quickly send Team Happy back to the city. But although these two teams appeared to be fighting against each other alone, in reality, they were both backed up by guild troops. With that much healing, even if they wanted to die, it would really be quite difficult for them to do so.

As a result the two sides could only exchange blows to kill time until the boss was killed. In this way, the conclusion was unexpectedly joyous for everyone. Every pro team finally thought that Happy had stopped being a nuisance. Happy, on the other hand, would no longer have to use every means possible to get close to and harass those pro players, who were using every means possible to avoid them. Now, everyone lined up in an orderly manner in front of them, volunteering to fight.

"This is good news!" Ye Xiu was happy to the point where he couldn't keep quiet. The professional teams continued to do this time after time, fighting Happy again and again and hunting bosses one after another. This saved them quite a bit of energy. On Happy's side, Ye Xiu and the rest could also focus on fighting pro players hand to hand, not having to randomly run around like in the past. The effectiveness of their training naturally increased as well.

Previously, Happy had trained every other day. But seeing this happy occasion, they couldn't bring themselves to give it up. They would just need to train a bit harder! Even pro players couldn't have this kind of training method. Their competition training would at best involve dividing the team into two groups to fight 5v5, practicing with a few fixed strategies. With the same few opponents every time, they wouldn't be able to to break away from their familiarity with their teammates. But now because the teams in the Alliance rotated the players that they sent to fight wild boss, the players Team Happy faced also rotated every day. In this way, it was as if the pro players were coming out one by one to specially train with them.

This was a unique way of refining their skills and accumulating experience! They also an opportunity to better understand future opponents! Even in the Pro Alliance, if the two teams didn't face one another in the playoffs, they would at most fight on stage twice. This kind of firsthand fighting experience wasn't as common as most people thought.

Happy could finally face pro players in combat without any distractions. Pro players could finally stop trying to do two things at once. Both sides were content with the present arrangement. This went on for many days. Happy appeared as if they couldn't break through the pro players' formation, but they continued to persevere in their attempts. All the clubs felt conflicted, hoping that Happy would finally retreat, but they also afraid that after retreating Ye Qiu would also think up some new evil idea. After weighing the pros and cons, they decided that just continuing the status quo might be for the better.

In a flash, March had passed.

This month the Alliance didn’t dare look up the numbers only after the end-of-month competitions. They closely followed the whole trail of statistics throughout the month.

There was still a higher-than-average number of mistakes, but it wasn’t anything like the weird explosion that had happened in February. Rather, it returned to a consistent level. level Feng Xianjun finally let go of his worries. He couldn’t stop himself from calling up each of the teams to give more encouragement and praise, while calling for the other teams to watch and learn.

The other teams appeared to not be affected too much, but their strength was weak to begin with. They already made more mistakes on average than the other teams. They were not that competitive in these boss fights either, so it wasn’t easy to be affected by this. There was an even more important reason though. This time within these other teams, Heavenly Justice, Conquering Clouds, Parade, and Radiant, were in an alliance with Happy. Ye Xiu’s group had decided to make increasing their skill level a priority, but it wasn’t like they could attack their allies, right? That would obviously break up the alliance between these guilds. This was a safeguard for materials when fighting for a boss, so they wouldn’t break it up for now.

As a result, these teams weren’t affected in the slightest, ensuring that the data for the "other teams" became worse . And in the process of fighting for wild boss, these pro players could also continue fighting together. This allowed them to make repeated gains during the boss fights. And in splitting the materials

dropped, none of them really took issue with the current method, because as far as they were concerned, Happy's valiant fighting off to the side stalled a lot of the pro players. This was one of the crucial factors in their success. This was also a merit that the players of small teams possessed. Being the disadvantaged group within pro players, they didn't possess any arrogance or self-importance. Thus, they could easily see the value contributed by others.

Their frequent displays of strength only magnified Happy's "tactics". The large clubs remained unaware that they were being used as Happy's training partners. The Alliance management really wasn't easy to deal with. Pro players had to directly come out. From time to time, some temporary alliances would be formed. With this new generation's special background, these temporary alliances were not similar to the usual guild alliances, where the groups turned on one another at the earliest opportunity. After all, pro players all cared quite a bit about their public images. On the other hand, those who played dirty suffered. To the other pro players, these players stabbing them in the back was a certainty, so it was very difficult for these players wanted to make an alliance with others.

No matter what, another month of bustling activity passed.

This month, in-competition skill statistics weren't as strange anymore. However, the team placements after this month were turned upside down.

These changes mainly came from the bottom half of the rankings, with Heavenly Justice, Conquering Clouds, Parade, and

Radiant in the lead.

In reality, these changes had been visible during February. It was just that the difference between strong and weak teams in the Alliance was also quite scary. The divide between the top half and the bottom half seemed like a wide ravine. Thus, although the accumulated points had changed during February, the placements remained relatively steady. Everyone simply treated this as a fluctuation, not taking it seriously. It was only in March, when these so-called fluctuations persisted, that everyone discovered that these four teams had improved by leaps and bounds. From their initial positions among the weak, they had drilled their way through the bottom tier teams, steadily climbing towards the top half.

March 30th came, and the fifth round of battles in March finished. Among the four teams, Radiant had actually climbed to tenth place, and Conquering Clouds had reached eleventh. The ninth place team, 301 Degrees, was only 3 points ahead of Radiant by 3 points, and 5 points ahead of Conquering Clouds. The original tenth place team, the unexpectedly well-performing Thunderclap, was now kicked to twelfth place, with Heavenly Swords and Parade hot on its heels. It looked as if the team's standings could continue to drop at any moment.

Based on performance data and points, the abrupt rise of these four teams was due to the fact that they had performed more steadily than other teams in this shaky environment. However, looking one step further, the reason was more obvious: in the online game, these teams were the ones in an alliance with Happy!

Happy was Happy, but Happy was also Ye Qiu.

Feng Xianjun was speechless. The teams that were in the Challenger League, by means of the competition in game, actually affected the state of the Alliance. If this continued to develop, these four teams might actually have a chance of making the playoffs!

Of course, this was something that Feng Xianjun couldn’t easily say to the teams. Even if he secretly wanted the playoffs to include as many current All-Stars as possible, a competition is still a competition, and first and foremost the competition had to be fair. This kind of thing, he could only hope in his heart. He couldn’t just go and underhandedly influence the results!

"This Ye Qiu only creates trouble! I don’t know what he’s going to do to the Challenger League...."

Regarding the Challenger League, the Alliance Chairman usually cared little about it, only appearing to follow what was happening, but now, he had truly become interested.

Chapter 958: Proactive Preparation

Because the competition for materials affected a team's placing in the Alliance, it wouldn't be good for Feng Xianjun to push this matter further. He could only console himself by saying that it was a feature of the Glory Alliance. In any case, the main offender being Happy made Feng Xianjun filled with interest towards this year's Challenger League.

On the first of April, the teams participating in the Challenger League received official notifications from the Alliance. The teams would need to report in on the weekend of 4/19 and 4/20. The Challenger League's offline tournament would officially start on 4/21.

The teams were notified early to make it easier for players to plan out their schedules. After all, apart from pro teams, most players were either studying or working. The Challenger League offline tournament would last for at least a month. To clear out a schedule for such a long period of time required some work.

At Happy, Luo Ji and An Wenyi were two students. However, Ye Xiu had told them about it a long time ago, so the two had even more time to get ready. Did they request a leave of absence or were they just going to skip class? Ye Xiu didn't ask, but he preferred if they handled it appropriately. Skipping class was very worrying. It could greatly affect a player's condition.

In the beginning of April, the pro players were still busy on both ends. Ye Xiu's side had dwindled somewhat. Their two months of training consisted almost entirely of fighting with pro players

every day. How much time they got to fight with these pro players depended on what bosses spawned that day. The pro players would be most active towards Level 75 wild bosses. Level 70 wild bosses were okay too, but pro players would almost never show up for bosses lower-leveled than Level 70. Apart from that, they often wouldn't show up for past midnight or on match days. As a result, Team Happy's sleep schedule started conforming to the sleep schedules for the pro teams.

During these two months, not only did their skill levels improve immensely, everyone was in a good mental state. Their equipment had also improved another step. The blueprint for the Level 70 upgrade of Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had been ascertained. The team was only missing a solution for skill books. Their understanding of level 75 materials was still very poor, so Ye Xiu didn't have plans on getting his umbrella to level 75 for now. The current Happy didn't have the resources to do brute force it by trial and error. Whatever extra materials they had would better be used for other Silver equipment.

Right now, it seemed like Soft Mist would be the first besides Lord Grim and Windward Formation to get a Silver weapon. After all, Ye Xiu's experience towards Battle Mages was too deep. Let alone a Silver weapon, Soft Mist would have an enormous advantage for how to develop her other pieces of Silver equipment because of Ye Xiu's knowledge base. As for the other classes, even though Ye Xiu was proficient with them, his experience with those classes couldn't compare to his former main class that he had played as for so many years.

Silver spear: Dancing Fire Flowing Flame.

Although it hadn't been created yet, the blueprint had been completely drawn out. Luo Ji had performed some calculations and confirmed that there were no mistakes. It just hadn't been created yet because they lacked a few materials. The uncommon material requirements from the normal servers were the most difficult for Happy. They truly didn't have the energy to spare to split their attention and participate in the boss competitions in the normal servers. Even though they had trained their guilds in the normal servers to a certain extent, they still couldn't improve so quickly in such a short amount of time.

Ye Xiu was prepared to trade for these materials because despite these being wild boss materials, the club guilds enjoyed a monopoly on these materials in the normal servers. Those game studios were out of stock. In the end, Ye Xiu could only look for his good friends Conquering Clouds, Radiant, and Parade. These three guilds might be relatively small, but it wasn't like they were extremely poor. Seeing how their relationship with each other was good, the three guild leaders expressed that they could help out and ask if a trade could be made.

The value of uncommon materials wasn't ordinary. A single guild leader didn't have the authority to make a trade on their own. They needed to talk to several departments in their club.

Ye Xiu wasn't in a big hurry. He still had many things to do. Their recent training routine continued, but it was dying down. Everyone was saving energy for the upcoming offline tournament. Before it began, they needed to finish as much as possible in terms of their equipment. Dancing Fire Flowing Flame was only one part of their work so far. Ye Xiu's knowledge wasn't limited to just one weapon.

During these two months, while organizing their materials, Ye Xiu and Wei Chen thought up of numerous ideas for Silver equipment. Then, they gave these ideas to Luo Ji to check. If their blueprint had been confirmed and there were enough materials, they could immediately create one. If it wasn't for them already creating quite a few pieces of Silver equipment, they wouldn't be stuck on creating Dancing Fire Flowing Flame. Most of the 2 million RMB worth of materials from Samsara's trade were mainly from the normal server because Ye Xiu had been clear that his future activities would mainly be in the Heavenly Domain. He wouldn't be able to manage their materials problem in the normal server, so he had planned ahead.

They used bits and pieces of those 2 million RMB worth of materials, so their set of materials gradually became incomplete. The number of missing materials for their Silver equipment increased as time went on. But before Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, they had already created 19 pieces of Silver equipment. All of them had reached Level 70. Along with the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and Death's Hand, if they hadn't gotten anything from when Team Everlasting disbanded, they would have one more piece of Silver equipment than Team Heavenly Swords.

At Happy, Ye Xiu and Wei Chen came with their own Silver equipment, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and Death's Hand.

When Team Everlasting disbanded, they had purchased three pieces of Warlock Silver equipment.

After a period of time, they had created 19 of their own pieces of Silver equipment, bringing their total Silver equipment count to 24.

Among these, Wei Chen's Windward Formation stood out the most. He had his own Silver weapon, and the three pieces of Silver equipment purchased from Team Everlasting had been for his Warlock. Later on, he and Ye Xiu researched Silver equipment, and just like how Ye Xiu was most familiar with Battle Mages, Wei Chen was obviously the most familiar with Warlocks. Of those 19 Silver equipment, 4 of those were for Warlocks. Windward Formation currently had 8 Silver equipment on him, far surpassing the average of 5.23 Silver equipment on a character in the Alliance. He was almost at the level of the God characters. Team Blue Rain's number one Warlock, Swoksaar, only had 10 Silver equipment. It was only 2 more than Windward Formation. But then again, Windward Formation's Silver equipment were only at Level 70... he couldn't compare to Swoksaar in that area.

Besides these 4 Warlock equipment, there were also 5 Battle Mage equipment among these 19 Silver equipment. These two classes took up half of the total Silver equipment. There were 3 Brawler equipment, 2 Cleric equipment, 2 Ghostblade equipment, 2 Summoner equipment, and 1 Ninja equipment.

Ninja equipment was for Mo Fan's Deception, which made Chen Guo a bit worried. Mo Fan also followed along when they practiced, but because both sides had the support of their guilds, there were very few deaths in battle, so his scrap picking talent couldn't be fully displayed. His combat experience had improved significantly from fighting pro players though. However, Mo Fan was still as emotionless as ever. Chen Guo could never feel

reassured about him. She always felt like one day, Mo Fan would suddenly leave without saying a word. At best, it would be in front of everyone……

Chen Guo was worried that giving Mo Fan Ninja equipment would result in a loss. Ye Xiu was quite imposing though. He didn’t hesitate to hand over the Silver equipment that he made to Mo Fan. Mo Fan was even more imposing. He took it without even saying thanks and directly put it on.

Chen Guo couldn’t say anything about her displeasure. She really wanted to grasp Mo Fan by the neck to make him understand, but with Mo Fan’s personality, Chen Guo wondered that even if she did it, she still wouldn’t get a response.

After these 19 pieces of Silver equipment, it was either they didn’t any ideas on how to create any more Silver equipment, or they didn’t have enough materials like with Dancing Fire Flowing Flame. It would be best if those materials could be traded for as fast as possible. As for coming up with ideas for other Silver equipment, Ye Xiu and Wei Chen no longer spent all their energy on it. After all, the offline tournament was approaching. The two also needed to rest and adjust their mental state. Moreover, compared to Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and the others, the two were "old". Keeping up their energy wasn’t as easy.

Under Ye Xiu’s experienced control, the day before the offline tournament, Team Happy slowed down their pace. If it was said that Happy had learned like crazy over the past year, then it was finally time for exam day. Before that, they needed to properly digest the accumulated nutrients obtained during this period of

time in order to completely display their full potential.

4/5. On the first Saturday of April, a guest came to visit Happy early in the morning.

Su Mucheng. Everytime Chen Guo met with her, the two would chat about random things forever, but today, when Chen Guo saw her, they only did some small talk before quickly changing into the appropriate attire.

Chen Guo knew why Su Mucheng had come today. It was the Tomb Sweeping Day**. Su Mucheng, Ye Xiu, and her would all be going to the same place.

When the three went out the door, they called a taxi and headed over to Nanshan Public Cemetery. Along the way there, the three chatted casually. The mood was neither heavy nor light.

"I'll go find you guys later."

Just like last year, Chen Guo's destination was slightly closer, so the left the group for now and first went to visit her father.

"See you." Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng called out and then headed over towards Su Muqiu.

"Dad, I'm here." Chen Guo placed fresh flowers in front of the grave, while cleaning up the surroundings. Chen Guo didn't only come once a year on the Qingming Festival. She would often come

ordinarily. She just didn’t tell anyone, that’s all. However, Chen Guo was more formal on the Qingming Festival. She would be more traditional and explain how her year went to her father.

"It’s been a busy year! Who would have ever imagined that our team would actually be formed. I didn’t see wrong. Even though that guy gives me mixed feelings, he’s truly very reliable! I honestly feel like I haven’t helped him at all, but even so, we were still able to form a team. Right now, we’re participating in Glory’s Challenger League. If we win, then we’ll officially become a pro team! Happy! It won’t just be the Internet cafe. It’ll be a professional club!"

"But no one is too optimistic about us because there’s a Team Excellent Era in this year’s Challenger League. Team Excellent Era! Did you know? They’re our next door neighbors. I used to love that team. Not anymore though, of course. Because now they’re our opponents and because they’re not nice. Then again, if they were nice, I would never be able to have this type of opportunity and I would never have experienced everything I did this year. I’ve been very happy, and my life has been filled with things to do. In the last third of the month, we’ll be playing in an offline tournament. We have to win! Don’t you think so?"

Chen Guo said with a smile.

Sorry, another long TLN. I wish there was a better way to post long notes and images :(

The Qingming Festival is also known as Tomb-Sweeping Day. It's a day where people visit the graves and pray to their ancestors. They sweep the tombs of their ancestors and give offerings such as flowers, food, joss paper.

There are other traditions often celebrated on this day too such as going for a walk, planting trees, flying kites, and a bunch of other things. They engage in physical activites so that they don't harm their bodies after the Cold Food Festival, where you're not supposed to eat cooked food three days before the Qingming Festival.

The origin story comes from the Cold Food Festival. The story or at least the prince is pretty stupid in my opinion, but here it is:

"During the Spring and Autumn period, Prince Chong'er of the state of Jin endured many hardships while he was exiled from his home state because of the Li Ji Unrest. While heading towards the Beidi, only 15 men accompanied him, one being his friend and subject Jie Zitui (介子推; or Jie Zhitui 介之推). Jie Zitui was the only one who followed the prince through his 19 years of hardships, seeing his final ascension to the throne as Duke Wen of Jin.

Once, when Chong'er and Jie Zitui passed through the State of Wey, all their provisions were stolen. In order to help the prince who was tormented by hunger, Jie Zitui cut off the flesh from his thigh and offered it to the prince for sustenance.

Later, when Chong'er became Duke Wen of Jin, he ordered a search for Jie Zitui who had gone into hiding in the remote mountains with his mother. Jie Zhitui had no political ambitions and felt ashamed to work with his hypocritical fellows, hence refused invitation of the Duke. Duke Wen ordered the mountains to be burned down in order to force Jie out of hiding. However, the fire ended up killing Jie and his mother.

Filled with remorse, Duke Wen ordered that each year during these three days the setting of fire is forbidden – all food was to be consumed cold. Therefore, the Festival is thus named.[4]

Thus, there exist a Chinese Proverb that goes "While one can burn off an entire mountain, others are refrained even to light up to eat their rice" - depicting what transpired in the burning of the

mountain and the subsequent annual banning of using fire on that day to commemorate." -Wiki

(未雨绸缪) The original phrase translates to before it rains, repair the doors and windows of your house. It means make preparations beforehand to prevent anything unexpected from happening. It comes from the Book of Songs.

Chapter 959: Everything Ready

Chen Guo finished talking with her father. Just when she was about to say goodbye and leave, she saw Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng returning. They were standing along the side of the path, waiting for her.

"Ah..... that was fast." Chen Guo was surprised.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng chuckled, but didn't say anything. Chen Guo checked the time and was even more surprised: "It's already been so long!" After looking at the time, she realized that it wasn't Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng being fast, but her being too slow.

"Sure enough, it's been an eventful year..." Chen Guo turned her head to look at her father's gravestone and mumbled happily to herself.

The three immediately headed back and chatted with each other along the way. They were still talking shop the entire time. But when they got to the offline matches, Chen Guo felt a bit awkward because Su Mucheng would be their opponent in these offline matches. It was hard for her to accept. However, seeing how Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were chatting without caution, Chen Guo was very curious how Su Mucheng really felt about this. Chen Guo didn't think Su Mucheng favored Excellent Era even 1%, but if that was the case, how could she be allowed to stand on stage? Chen Guo could already feel how twisted her feelings would be when the time came just thinking about it. In the end, she never asked before the two sides parted.

Once the Qingming Festival passed, there were only two weeks remaining.

Their request to trade materials with those three guilds was finally approved. In addition, the good relationship between Happy and their guilds had spread to their clubs as well. When Happy took the initiative to request for a trade, the three guilds didn't take the opportunity to raise the price and happily reached an agreement on the trade of materials.

Ye Xiu used some of their Heavenly Domain materials to trade for some urgently needed normal server materials. The Silver weapon, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, was immediately crafted. The process went smoothly, and it was successful on the first try. Happy now had three Level 70 weapons along with the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and Death's Hand.

Dancing Fire Flowing Flame.

Weight: 3.3 kg

Durability: 33

Attack Speed: 4

Physical Attack: 920

Magic Attack: 635

Strength +57

Attack Speed +1

Physical Critical Strike Chance +12%

Fire Attribute Damage Increase +11%

Fire Chaser Level +3

When attacking, there was a 5% chance to inflict a Burn.

Compared to the current Orange weapon held by Soft Mist, Falling Moon Piercing Cloud, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame had slightly higher attack and also increased Strength by 2 more points. Apart from that, it was lighter by 0.2 kg and had 1 higher Attack Speed. Weight and Durability were directly linked, but in a normal match, 30 Durability was more than enough. 33 Durability and 35 Durability wasn't any difference. However, a lighter weight was a small advantage. A lighter weapon meant that the character's overall weight would be lower, resulting in a slight increase in speed, even if it was a minute 0.2 kg difference. But 1 point of Attack Speed was not a minute difference.

A +12% increase in Physical Critical Strike Chance was the same story. Falling Moon Piercing Cloud had a light attribute, while Dancing Fire Flowing Flame was neutral, but because it increased fire attribute damage by 11%, if it was a fire attribute weapon, it

would be a powerful buff. But as of now, the effectiveness of a fire attribute damage increase was rather limited. The only skills with attributes that a Battle Mage had were Chasers. There was only one type of Chaser with a fire attribute too, so this seemingly powerful stat wasn't too useful.

Self-made equipment should have this kind of flimsy support stat, but Ye Xiu still crafted it like this, naturally with a plan in mind. The current Dancing Fire Flowing Flame couldn't get a fire attribute, but with Ye Xiu's understanding of Level 75 materials so far, he was certain that when it upgraded to Level 75, it would have a fire attribute. Thus, this fire attribute damage increase of 11% was like a salted fish flipping its body. It would be an extremely formidable stat bonus.

It also increased Fire Chaser level by 3. It was a stat that increased a skill's level. For this type of stat, even if a skill reached its max on the skill tree, it could still continue to level. A Fire Chaser could be leveled to 9. With Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, the max level would be 12. Skill points didn't need to be used for those three levels either.

An extra level in Fire Chaser not only increased its base damage, but it also increased the strength buff from the chaser, so it directly improved the Battle Mage's overall damage output. A 3 level increase was very very good.

Finally, it had a 5% chance of producing a Burn. Ye Xiu had created this stat, so he obviously knew what it did. He had considered Tang Rou's playstyle and habits. When making the choice, Tang Rou herself offered some ideas before confirming this

Burn effect.

With Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, along with 5 other Silver equipment, Soft Mist now had a total of 6 Silver equipment. However, One Autumn Leaf was considered Glory's number one character. Admittedly, some of it had to do with Excellent Era's three consecutive championship victories, but it couldn't be refuted that their victories were closely related to One Autumn Leaf's superior fighting strength during that time. One Autumn Leaf claimed that title back then and after many years, it remained unshaken, so it was naturally considered the number one character. Soft Mist currently had 6 Silver equipment. She had surpassed the average Silver equipment on a character in the Alliance, but she was still far from One Autumn Leaf. One Autumn Leaf had a total of 12 Silver equipment, just one away from a complete set.

This was still when Ye Xiu was around. He didn't know what One Autumn Leaf was like now. After all, every player was different. When Ye Xiu was there, One Autumn Leaf was still missing a Badge. It wasn't that Excellent Era couldn't craft a Silver Badge. It was just that Ye Xiu felt like his current Orange Badge was more suitable. Right now, One Autumn Leaf's player had switched to Sun Xiang. Perhaps because Sun Xiang had different habits, that Orange Badge had been switched to a Silver one.

As for whether One Autumn Leaf had any Level 75 Silver equipment, Ye Xiu didn't know. Even if it did, it wouldn't be a lot because when the new update came out, Ye Xiu would especially target Excellent Era during the wild boss activities. It was taking drastic measures for a desperate situation. The goal was to stop Excellent Era from upgrading their equipment during this period

of time. This way, Happy could rely on Level 75 Orange equipment to pull their disparity in equipment closer.

From the looks of it, Ye Xiu's strategy was very successful. To Excellent Era, this move was similar to cutting off their food supply. The cleverest housewife cannot cook without rice. No matter how great Excellent Era's R&D team was, without materials, there was nothing they could do. Of course, if Excellent Era threw their money to purchase materials, Ye Xiu had no way of stopping that. Even though Level 75 materials were extremely important to teams, the Alliance was becoming more and more business-like. Too many owners sought money. If they saw a heartbeat-raising price, selling their materials wasn't impossible. Short term benefits easily enticed them. If Excellent Era truly chose this path, they would bleed quite a bit, but it would definitely solve the problem.

The last two weeks before the offline matches passed by in a flash. These final two weeks were everyone's last opportunity to strengthen themselves. And during these two weeks, Happy did not get any new equipment.

New equipment would lead to a change in a character's stats. For a high-level competition, this type of change required time to get used to. Although the Challenger League could not compare to the Pro League, those who could reach the offline matches could not be underestimated. Moreover, the final boss would be a formidable team like Excellent Era. That detail alone was more than enough to not be careless.

April 19, Happy boarded a plane to City B, where the Alliance

Headquarters was located. In the offline matches, all participating teams would gather together in one place. Food, drink, and living quarters would all be provided by the Alliance. The accomodations were quite nice.

As for the stadium... The Alliance had only just begun utilizing projections. The Challenger League clearly didn't have this kind of luxurious arrangement. Everything was in accordance with before. However, rumors said that this time's group stage would be using the new tournament format. If it went well, it might even be used in the playoffs.

Everyone in Happy arrived at City B. Lou Guanning had sent people over to pick them up. It was Saturday today though, and Team Heavenly Swords had a match, so Lou Guanning couldn't make it. Instead, Sun Zheping came. This former number one Berserker, as agreed upon, would be helping Team Happy. These days, even though Sun Zheping was still at Team Heavenly Swords, his Another Summer of Sleep was frequently together with everyone in Happy in the game. They would be playing together in a tournament, so the players needed some time to get used to each other. Sun Zheping had even gone along with Happy to attack pro players. But because of his injury, he couldn't participate in too many of this type of highly intense practice.

He was an experienced pro player though. Even with these limited amounts of practice, he easily integrated himself into the team.

The Alliance set up check-in places everywhere in the hotel lobby. When Happy came, they saw many people there. There

were 20 teams participating in the offline matches. If each team followed the standard guidelines, there would be 200 people. However, most of these teams were player teams. They had reached this step, so they had strength, but they couldn't be compared to a pro team. Nearly half the teams only had six players, the minimum requirement.

As for Happy, along with Sun Zheping, they had 11 players. It was standard for a pro team. When they arrived and went to a check-in location, the other players felt like they were very professional.

"You guys are?" An Alliance staff member went over to welcome them. Before Ye Xiu and the others could reply, someone forced his way through and shouted: "Sis Chen, Sis Chen, you're here!!"

Everyone in Happy turned their heads and saw that it was Esports Home's City H reporter, Chang Xian.

The offline matches had finally come. This young reporter seemed very excited because once the offline matches started, the Esports Home would give a page specifically for the Challenger League. Usually, the offline matches took place in City H. There were quite a lot of Esports Home reporters there, so just two or so reporters was oftentimes enough.

But this time's Challenger League had Team Excellent Era and Team Happy, both teams with many stories. As a result, City H required the reporters from City H to follow these teams. Challenger League teams also having team reporters? Esports Home hesitated on this treatment, but they also knew that the City H reporters this season were quite lonely. Moreover, Cao

Guangcheng was Excellent Era’s team reporter, so it was approved in the end.

Chapter 960: Special Treatment

Chang Xian had came specifically for TeamHappy, but Cao Guangcheng wasn't the same. As a well-known reporter in the esports circle, he wouldn't have bothered to come to such an insignificant event if it wasn't for Team Excellent Era's presence. So while he might have come along this time, he only came for Team Excellent Era and was completely uninterested in the other teams.

There was quite a bit to talk about in regards to Happy. Cao Guangcheng was willing to admit that. Yet even then, so what? No matter how hot of a topic they were, being in the Challenger League meant that they still wouldn't garner much attention. More importantly, the topic of Happy had no future, since they were eventually going to be eliminated anyways.

Cao Guangcheng was more than happy for Chang Xian to not compete with him for Excellent Era, so he encouraged the other to work on his reports on Happy. From Cao Guangcheng's perspective, his bitter days this year would finally come to an end as the Challenger League did. With their current lineup, Excellent Era would definitely be able to compete for the championship after they returned to the pro league.

Speaking of which, Su Mucheng would definitely leave the team after the end of this season. Then, they would be one All Star short. But after returning to the Pro League, Cao Guangcheng was certain that Excellent Era would invest more into washing off the blemish of being in the Challenger League for a year. With the two Gods Sun Xiang and Xiao Shiqin overseeing things, Excellent Era already had incredible competitive ability. If they managed to

bring in another God, the new season's Excellent Era would be even more spectacular, creating even more news and he, as Excellent Era's team reporter, would reach new heights.

Thinking of this, the awkwardness he had to experience this year suddenly seemed not as terrible. Watching the boisterous round of welcomes as Chang Xian approached Happy, Cao Guangcheng gave a sardonic grin. To him, it seemed like a last celebration before leaving for the execution grounds. He didn't bother joining in.

Cao Guangcheng left after completing the registration for reporters at the reception and obtaining his reporter's pass. He didn't linger because he knew Excellent Era wouldn't come here.

For the arrangements of the Challenger League, all the teams would be treated the same, even Excellent Era. However, since Excellent Era was an old powerhouse, it was awkward enough for them that they were even in the Challenger League in the first place; there was no way they would want to to stay with these grassroots teams to mingle. So they refused the Alliance's arrangements, preferring to pay out of their own pockets and find another place to stay. As for Cao Guangcheng, he was a reporter so the Alliance wouldn't have made arrangements for him anyways. He had to take care of his own food and board. He felt like he was a cut above all of these others, so he didn't bother lingering to mingle either, booking a room in the hotel Excellent Era had also chosen.

As he left the hotel arranged by the Alliance, Cao Guangcheng saw two H City reporters who had been assigned to the Challenger League standing in front of the main entrance, looking around

with eager anticipation. Cao Guangcheng knew what they were waiting for, laughing internally. However, as he passed by, he was still recognized by his two colleagues, who hurried over to stop him.

"Hey, Reporter Cao, when did you get here?" The two approached hastily upon seeing Cao Guangcheng. Cao Guangcheng might not have published any good pieces, but he hadn’t fallen to the point where even these two could look down on him. Anyone who was sent to report on the Challenger League wouldn’t be any important person in Esports Home.

"Haha, I just got here," Cao Guangcheng greeted the two with a smile.

"We don’t really have anything to do right now, so how about we interview you, since you’re a big shot reporter." One the two reporters suggested jokingly.

"How could you have nothing to do? Aren’t there many teams that have already gotten here?" Cao Guangcheng pointed towards the registration area inside.

"These teams?" The two turned to look, their disdain evident. They obviously didn’t think these grassroots teams were worthy of their attention.

"What’s there to ask these teams? Hey, lemme ask you, when is Team Excellent Era coming, huh?" One of the two asked.

Cao Guangcheng smiled. How could he not know what these two were trying to do? These two had the same idea as he did. To be blunt, they wanted to take this chance to grab the high-quality resource that was Excellent Era. After all, what everyone paid attention to wasn't the news from the Challenger League, but the future of Excellent Era.

This was a great source and Cao Guangcheng was in no way willing to hand it off to someone else. After having to hold it in for a year, he wouldn't give anyone else even half a chance.

"Excellent Era? I'm not sure either! I looked around for them, but didn't see them. They probably didn't come yet. Ok, I have to go because I have something to do. I'll catch you later, bye!" Cao Guangcheng waved and bid farewell. Yet these two reporters had their eyes set on Cao Guangcheng's luggage.

For convenience, reporters like them would usually just live in the hotels the Alliance arranged for the teams, but Cao Guangcheng seemed to be leaving for a different place to stay if his luggage had anything to say.

The observation abilities of reporters were rather good. The two exchanged a glance and, seeing Cao Guangcheng hail down a taxi, hurried after him and hailed their own taxi to follow.

Inside the hotel, the registration continued neatly. Happy's members finished their registration and subsequently obtained the key to their assigned rooms. Chang Xian followed and even offered to carry the ladies' bags.

"Hey, Little Chang is pretty strong huh? Here, try mine." Seeing this, Steamed Bun gave his luggage to Chang Xian as well.

"Ah?" Chang Xian had already taken Tang Rou and Chen Guo's bags. Their journey this time was to another city and it was for a month. Their luggage was far more terrifying than a guy's. Chang Xian had taken both of their bags, already reaching his limits. Now with Steamed Bun shoving another bag at him, he immediately turned to stone.

The group went upstairs as they laughed and joked amongst themselves. The rooms were all standard two beds. Happy had eleven members, so they were arranged more or less the same way as they were back home.

Ye Xiu and Wei Chen had a room, Chen Guo and Tang Rou had a room, Steamed Bun and Luo Ji, Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi. Sun Zheping had only just joined, and ended up rooming with Wu Chen. The only one to experience the pleasure of having a room to themselves was, naturally, Mo Fan who didn't interact with anyone else.

Being a hotel arranged by the Alliance, it wouldn't be far from the stadium, and in addition, it had another important feature: training grounds.

It was unimaginable to not have training for a nigh pro competition. So the Alliance would always arrange for training grounds for the Challenger League teams. After settling in, Happy

found the staff manning the registration and asked about the training grounds. As expected, there were immediately people there to show them the way.

The training grounds the Alliance had arranged for them lifted Ye Xiu and co's spirits. This environment was too familiar; it was the hotel's Internet cafe!

The reason for the Alliance choosing a hotel with average commodities was clear now. They had probably chosen the hotel for the fact that it came with an Internet cafe...

The hotel Internet cafe had since become closed to the public and became the Challenger League's exclusive training grounds. The interior had been arranged as well so that each team had their own area, separated by temporary partitions. By the time Happy got there, there were already teams working inside. The Alliance wouldn't bother with if they were using these computers to train or to do something else. During the Challenger League, they were free to use the area they were assigned as they pleased.

Team Happy's eleven members were a massive group relative to the other teams in the Challenger League and was assigned the innermost corner of the Internet cafe. As an experienced Internet cafe owner, Chen Guo gave the environment and equipment of the Internet cafe high praise. After they took a small tour and familiarize themselves with the place a little, Happy's members weren't impatient to start using the equipment like some of the other teams. Having travelled quite a ways over, it was important for them to rest. After their small tour, Happy's members returned to their rooms to rest.

At the same time, Team Excellent Era had checked into their own hotel upon arriving, but they still had to register. The Alliance couldn't arrange for a registration spot in their hotel just for them, so after settling in, they still had to go to the hotel arranged by the Alliance.

Yet as Excellent Era made their way into the lobby, three people immediately stepped forth to meet them.

Reporters... Excellent Era's members immediately knew this, seeing the manner of the three. As a powerhouse team, Excellent Era had no need to pander to the media outlets. Usually, reporters would be falling over themselves to interview them; there was no need for them to pay reporters to come, unless they needed the media to express a certain voice to the public, of course. Though the season had lost them their face, they had never lost their status as a powerhouse. However, thinking of all the ruckus in the past when they entered the playoffs, three reporters seemed very bare! Among the three reporters, Cao Guangcheng was a familiar face. They had been in contact before coming and if it wasn't for how there was some business they couldn't manage to adjust around, Cao Guangcheng would have definitely departed on the same flight as Excellent Era. He was the team reporter, after all, so he would usually stick close like that.

As for the other two? Excellent Era's gaze fell to them. The two ignored the fire that seemed to spit from Cao Guangcheng's eyes and came up to introduce themselves.

They were also from Esports Home? Excellent Era was stunned.

However, as the club manager, Cui Li had a lot of experience dealing with reporters outside of the player interviews.. He was pretty clear on the going ons about the media. Seeing Cao Guangcheng's pissed off expression, he immediately realized what was happening. They were fighting amongst themselves!

This sort of thing would be something that would make Cao Guangcheng depressed, but not Excellent Era; they wouldn't neglect any side.

Cao Guangcheng was seething! He had never thought these two shameless colleagues of his would follow him. These two had gotten off their taxi right after he had gotten off his. When they came to greet him with faces of triumph, he felt like he had the will to eat them.

And now, they had engaged Excellent Era like this right under his nose.

During Excellent Era's peak years, they might even be disdainful of talking with unfamiliar reporters, but hadn't Excellent Era fallen? They had to play nice with the media, so they wouldn't give the two the cold shoulder. Cao Guangcheng understood this all too clearly.

The two chattered on one after the other, engaged in a enthusiastic conversation with Excellent Era and making Cao Guangcheng like a little sidekick. This made his rage flare up further. However, Cao Guangcheng hadn't followed Excellent Era for so long for nothing. Seeing the two clinging to Cui Li and chattering, he decided to switch targets to one of the players. Yet

as he turned his gaze, he managed to get a glimpse of Excellent Era’s owner who was standing behind the team, Tao Xuan.

Cao Guangcheng was delighted. The owner of a club wasn’t a person one could easily get a chance to interview! He was about to approach and engage the other when he suddenly heard the two others suddenly ask Cui Li, "There’s always been the rumor that Team Happy was a team created by Ye Qiu, but just now, we obtained the finalized name list of registered players, and Team Happy didn’t have the name Ye Qiu in it. This..."

"What did you say?" The other hadn’t even finished speaking when Tao Xuan heard, and immediately began to rush forward.

Chapter 961: Team Reporter

The two reporters had come especially to conduct interviews for the Challenger League. They had more or less done their homework. Team Excellent Era was naturally one of the most important parts of their homework. The team's owner, Tao Xuan, didn't appear in public too much, but the two still immediately recognized him.

"Boss Xuan!" The two were pleasantly surprised.

"Hello." Tao Xuan nodded his head and greeted them. Then, he started asking about Team Happy's situation: "You just said that there was no Ye Qiu among the list of registered players in Team Happy?"

"Yeah, take a look..." The reporter took out his phone. The final name list was displayed on the phone's screen. Tao Xuan glanced suspiciously at him.

This reporter seemed a bit unnatural, but what could he do? They hadn't gotten this information from behind the scenes. At that time, the two had been running over here with Cao Guangcheng. In fact, the final name list had just been released on the Glory website's Challenger League page.

From the list of names on the screen, Tao Xuan clearly saw that the name of the player behind Team Happy's Lord Grim was Ye Xiu.

Ye Qiu and Ye Xiu was a difference of one letter, but for an official competition, which examined the identities of the players very strictly, this tiny difference was huge.

Tao Xuan glanced at Cui Li and couldn't help but look at Su Mucheng too. His intuition told him that Su Mucheng definitely knew what was going on, but he didn't think he could get anything out of her. In fact, not letting Su Mucheng play was something that he didn't want to talk about.

Excellent Era's group of people left the hotel. As a powerhouse, lining up and waiting for a taxi would be too lowly. Excellent Era had already arranged a vehicle for them. Their boss, Tao Xuan, didn't arrange anything specifically for himself and went on the luxurious bus together with the other players. Esport Home's three reporters followed Excellent Era's people onto the boss as well, but they soon discovered that their main targets, Excellent Era's boss and manager, didn't have any open seats. The three tactfully found an open seat in the back to sit at.

Afterwards, those two reporters smiled exuberantly as they looked for interview targets. Cao Guangcheng glanced coldly at them and sneered.

Those two didn't have any experience as team reporters.

Team reporters had much more time and many more opportunities to interview a player compared to normal reporters, so there was no need to chase after targets and bombard them with questions.

Great team reporters would try to become members of the team, thus allowing them to know the true face of every player. Their interactions with each other would be like friends chatting together. They would user their eyes and ears to look for interesting material among the countless trifling details. Then, they would use that to supplement their writing to produce an article that could not be done by another reporter in terms of content and perspective.

But these two were grabbing players as if they were conducting an interview. That was too inappropriate. True, all of Team Excellent Era was here, but did they plan on doing eight interviews in one trip? It wasn't that easy. If they wanted to conduct an interview, then even as team reporters, they had to follow the standard procedure and request the clubs first.

Two reporters excitedly went around in a circle, and soon realized that the players from Excellent Era weren't happy with them. Unfortunately, the two still didn't know what they had done wrong. They went back to their seats and grumbled to themselves in fear. They snuck a glance at Cao Guangcheng and saw that he didn't seem to know what a rare opportunity it was right now. He was sitting with so many newsworthy people, yet he was actually leaning on the window and dozing off.

The two reporters didn't dare to randomly look for players again. They could only strain their ears and try to listen to what the Excellent Era players were chatting about. However, the bus was completely silent. Only boss Tao Xuan and Cui Li, who sat together, were chatting about something. However, the two didn't dare move closer to eavesdrop.

"There’s actually no Ye Qiu....." After Tao Xuan sat down, he spoke to Cui Li.

Cui Li also took out his cellphone and went online to check. Not only did he look at Lord Grim, he checked everyone in Happy. There was no Ye Qiu, but... what was going on with the Berserker at the bottom of the list?

"Sun Zheping!" Tao Xuan had only seen Lord Grim on that reporter’s cellphone. He didn’t scroll down. When he looked at the list on Cui Li’s phone, he was dumbfounded.

He had been in the scene since the start of the Alliance. How could he forget Sun Zheping’s name?

"Why did he end up on their team?" Tao Xuan couldn’t understand.

Cui Li didn’t know either. He only knew that this addition would only make Team Happy even more terrifying. Was Team Excellent Era’s chances of beating Team Happy still 100%? Cui Li wondered, but he didn’t dare say it out loud.

"Let’s put that aside for now. What’s going on with Ye Qiu?" Tao Xuan was puzzled. After exposing Ye Qiu for forming Team Happy to Esports Home confirming that Team Happy had no Ye Qiu in their roster, they had discussed this matter not just once. In the end, they always believed that when the offline matches came, Ye Qiu would have to join. As for Ye Xiu, it was probably some

random person that they found. In any case, the online matches weren’t supervised, so there was no evidence that Ye Qiu was the one secretly controlling Lord Grim. There was nothing they could do about that.

Why would they go so far as to find a Ye Xiu? In Excellent Era’s eyes, it was so that Happy wouldn’t exposed to the public. If that happened, the pressure from the fans would be too great. But in the offline matches, the organizers checked identities very strictly. Only the real person himself could come. Who would have thought that in the offline tournament, Ye Xiu would still be Ye Xiu. Was Ye Qiu not going to be appearing on stage?

To Excellent Era, this should have been very good news, but neither Tao Xuan nor Cui Li could smile. Their intuition told them that this wasn’t good news. There should be a scheme somewhere in here.

"It looks like we’ll need to personally pay him a visit." Tao Xuan said.

When they arrived at the designated hotel provided by the Challenger League, the Excellent Era players needed to go to the reception desk and sign in. At this moment, there weren’t any other participating players in the hotel lobby, so Excellent Era didn’t receive too much attention.

"Did Team Happy’s Ye Qiu arrive yet?" After signing in, Cui Li immediately got right to the point and asked an Alliance employee.

"No." The employee shook his head. He didn’t recognize Ye Qiu, but he was the person responsible for signing players into the hotel; he hadn’t the name Ye Qiu appear yet. In fact, there was also quite a big discussion going on among the employees in private!

"Then what about this Ye Xiu? Which room was he placed in?" Cui Li asked.

"Team Happy is in Section A 7th Floor Rooms 721-726. We don’t know which room he’s in exactly." The employee answered.

"Okay, thanks." Cui Li didn’t ask further and returned to tell Tao Xuan. Cao Guangcheng was neither closeby nor far away. He had a general understanding of what was going on and was also astonished. Soon afterwards, Tao Xuan and Cui Li went towards the Section A elevators. It wasn’t convenient for Cao Guangcheng to follow them. He could only follow the Excellent Era players back and go back to the bus. The other two Esports Home reporters were feeling awkward. Should they go onto the bus or not? Excellent Era didn’t invite them. If they went on the bus, they would still be sitting quietly in the back like before. Even if they went to the hotel, there might not be any interview opportunities either……

No! It’s still better to go!

The two discussed with each other for a bit. If they didn’t go, they might not be able to get any piece of the big fish. When the time came, Cao Guangcheng’s article would definitely be related to Excellent Era. If they wrote about other teams, how could they view for the front page?

They had to go onto the bus. They even changed their hotels to live together with Excellent Era! The two came to a decision and then immediately pretended to laugh as they boarded the bus.

"How brave!" Cao Guangcheng guessed their intentions and gave them a thumbs-up in praise.

The two knew that he was mocking them. They didn’t answer back. After boarding the bus, they found a seats and didn’tdind’t dare to worm their way closer to a player.

Cao Guangcheng sat in the middle of the bus. He was wondering about what was up with Ye Qiu too. That kid Chang Xian had been following along Team Happy the entire time. Maybe he knew something?

Even though he felt that the teams besides Excellent Era were beneath him, his reporter’s intuition told him that he should ask Chang Xian. He immediately took out his phone and made a call. He was familiar with Excellent Era. From the top to the bottom, he was just like a member of Excellent Era. He didn’t feel any qualms about doing this.

When he got off the bus and started dialing, Cao Guangcheng saw a person get off a car in front of the hotel main entrance. This person seemed very familiar.

"Who’s that?" Cao Guangcheng looked from a different angle. He moved closer two steps and suddenly remembered.

This was the Alliance’s chairman, Feng Xianjun!

Getting an interview with such a powerful person was even more difficult.

A team reporter like him had many opportunities to meet, chat, and even be on friendly terms with a team owner. He might even have the possibility of requesting an interview. However, a team reporter didn’t have the status to request an interview with the Alliance’s chairman, Feng Xianjun. Only the editor in chief of Esports Home had the appropriate status. Usually, getting a reply to one or two questions at a press conference was enough to feel blissful.

Those two idiots were only fixed on Excellent Era and missed such a grand character. Cao Guangcheng laughed inwardly at his two colleagues. He stopped caring about his phone call and immediately walked over.

Feng Xianjun’s group had three people. When they arrived at the lobby, the Alliance employees obviously recognized their big boss and got up.

Cao Guangcheng moved closer and easily overheard their conversation. The first thing he heard was: "Where was Team Happy placed?"

"Section A 7th Floor Rooms 721-725." The employee replied.

Cao Guangcheng was shocked.

It looked like the Alliance's chairman had come here for Happy? How capable was Happy? Wasn't Happy just going to be another team that would be eliminated in the offline tournament? Was that worthy of being noticed by the Alliance's chairman? Even if this team had the halo of Ye Qiu surrounding it, that still wasn't enough, no? Cao Guangcheng was completely at a loss.

Chapter 962: Real and Fake Identity

Cao Guangcheng really wanted to pounce on Feng Xianjun and pry some answers out of him, but even if he had ten guts, he wouldn't have enough to do that. Feng Xianjun's group of three merely asked for Happy's room numbers before turning and leaving for Elevator A. The staff that received them looked nothing but confused.

The staff began a whispered discussion among themselves, but when they turned their head, what they saw was Cao Guangcheng gaping like a fish.

Cao Guangcheng was a well-known journalist and had checked in, obtaining his pass today, so the staff recognized him.

"Reporter Cao..."

The call woke Cao Guangcheng from his stupor.

"Ah..." How could Cao Guangcheng, who had returned to the present, still have his mind on the problem of interviewing or not? His mind had already supplied a scene for him: inside Happy's room, Excellent Era's two big heads and the chairman of the Alliance; what scene would all these big shots sitting together make?

As his thoughts turned to this, Cao Guangcheng couldn't stand standing around and waiting anymore, dashing to elevator A like a cheetah. However, out of the three elevators, one had just left and

two were still at floors above ten. Cao Guangcheng was extremely impatient. Then he thought, well, it was just seven floors and whirled around for the stairs. As he ran, he took out his phone. Was Chang Xian still with Happy's members?

"Hey, Brother Cao." Chang Xian answered the call and by his tone, he seemed pretty cheerful.

"Where are you?" Cao Guangcheng asked.

"In the hotel!" Chang Xian replied.

"Which room?" Cao Guangcheng asked.

"723..." Chang Xian had noticed the anxiety in Cao Guangcheng's tone.

"Who's in the room?"

"Happy's team members... Steamed Bun and Luo Ji..." Chang Xian wasn't a stranger to the members of Happy anymore. He was even playing around in Steamed Bun and Luo Ji's room now! Though no one had ever taught him, Chang Xian had a talent for being a team reporter. He didn't try to pry information out of these guys as soon as he saw them, but truly became friends with them, especially with the younger few.

"Which room is that guy called Ye Xiu in?" Cao Guangcheng asked.

"722..."

"Go over there," Cao Guangcheng ordered.

"Why?" Chang Xian couldn't understand. Room 722 was Ye Xiu and Wei Chen's room. In front of these two veteran players, Chang Xian always felt under pressure. So when he was free and wanted to relax, he wouldn't seek those two out. Chang Xian was closer to Steamed Bun and Qiao Yifan. Since Luo Ji and An Wenyi weren't often at Happy, so he was more distant with them. Even though he wasn't as close with them, it was much less nerve-racking than being with Ye Xiu and Wei Chen. Thus, hearing that Cao Guangcheng wanted him to go to Ye Xiu, Chang Xian involuntarily questioned him.

"Hurry up and go; I'll be there soon," Cao Guangcheng yelled.

"Ah..." Chang Xian was stunned for a moment. The call had already been ended, but by now, he had realized that this was probably implying that there was huge news to report.

"I'm going to visit the room opposite," Chang Xian informed Steamed Bun and Luo Ji before charging out. Ye Xiu and Wei Chen's room 722 was just on the other side of the hall to 723.

Room 722's door was unlocked and as Chang Xian approached, he immediately heard voices coming from inside. It didn't sound like Ye Xiu or Wei Chen. Chang Xian didn't dare dawdle, hurriedly knocking on the door. Hearing a voice inside telling him to enter,

he immediately charged inside.

There were many more people inside than he had expected. There were four from Team happy alone. Ye Xiu, Wei Chen, Chen Guo and Tang Ruo were all inside. There was also another two who were standing inside, having yet to sit down. Hearing Chang Xian entering, everyone looked towards him. Chang Xian instantly recognized the two people standing. It was Excellent Era's owner and its manager, both big shots!

Tao Xuan didn't know Chang Xian, but Cui Li felt that he was a little familiar. As a reporter stationed in H City, Chang Xian had come to Excellent Era a few times, but he was usually there to run errands for Cao Guangcheng. For Excellent Era, he might recognize others, but others usually didn't recognize him.

"You're here, Little Chang," Ye Xiu greeted him then, but didn't say anything after that.

"Ah... You seem... Rather busy..." The average person would leave upon seeing that the others seemed occupied with something. However, Chang Xian was a reporter and it was his job to be a bit more nosy than was usually expected. Seeing the two big heads of Excellent Era here, he knew there was bound to be drama, so there was no way he was going to leave.

He stood there dumbly and Happy's members didn't chase him out. Cui Li, in the end, didn't manage to figure out where he had seen this familiar young man before. Tao Xuan had the air of a boss, merely glancing over before dismissing Chang Xian. Even if you wanted to ask someone to leave, it wasn't the job of a boss. He

turned away, saying what he wanted to say without caring about anyone else.

"So this is where you are. What about that captain of yours, Ye Xiu? Where is he? I want to meet him!" Tao Xuan said.

Hearing this, Chang Xian was confused. Captain Ye Xiu? Wasn't he right in front of them? Was the boss of Excellent Era drunk? Chang Xian sniffed, not smelling any alcohol, and then he saw Captain Ye Xiu smile and say, "Ye Xiu? Isn't that me?"

"You really dare to admit it?" Tao Xuan gazed at him.

"Why wouldn't I dare?" Ye Xiu smiled uncaringly.

"Are you crazy?" Cui Li, standing beside them, couldn't figure out Ye Xiu's attitude. "You're using a fake identity to play; do you think everyone is blind or something?"

"Who said that this identity is fake?" Ye Xiu retorted.

"Haha," Tao Xuan laughed dryly after hearing this. "That's the funniest joke I've ever heard. If this identity isn't fake, then are you going to tell me that Ye Qiu is a fake identity? Don't think that because barely anyone recognizes you, you can go around changing your identity freely, Ye Qiu!"

Bang...

The door to the room suddenly slammed heavily. Everyone looked around and saw that it was Chang Xian, who hadn't really moved after coming in. Hearing Tao Xuan's words, he had been unable to stay standing straight, stepping back and slamming the unlocked door into its place, which was now locked. He stared, dumbfounded, at Ye Xiu, his face full of surprise. He opened his mouth, wanting to speak, but couldn't manage to make a sound.

Captain Ye Xiu was Ye Qiu?

So that meant he had seen the God Ye Qiu that brother Cao had never seen multiple times? And spoke to him a lot? He had even interviewed him already?

But how could he also be Ye Xiu?

And how could he use Ye Xiu's identity to register?

Using a fake identity to enter the Alliance? That was a serious violation of rules! The entire team might be punished because of it! How could they get through this? Though not many people recognized God Ye Qiu, there were still some! Like his ex-teammates from Excellent Era; they must recognize him, so wouldn't he be caught easily?

Chang Xian's head full of question marks had quickly turned towards Ye Xiu in worry. That's when he saw Ye Xiu rise and look towards Tao Xuan with a smile. "You guessed it. In reality, Ye Qiu is the fake identity. This isn't a joke, but a... lie."

"What did you say?" Tao Xuan and Cui Li stared in shock at this.

"Back then, the Alliance was just starting out and the teams had only just been formed. Management wasn't as structured and ordered. Many people had to go against the rules to become pro players, especially when it came to age..."

"You weren't of age?" Tao Xuan frowned. When the Alliance was just starting, without the same industrial system and commercial outlook of the present, there were naturally many strict rules regulating things. For example, those who weren't 18 yet couldn't become pro players. That was a rock solid rule of that time. After all, video games had long since been seen as a sort of digital heroin. A pro Alliance was a gathering for this addiction in the eyes of many people. They couldn't do anything but prevent underage people from entering, or else there would be an unbearable pressure from the outside world.

However, while there might be policies from above, there were ways to deal with them down below. To avoid the restrictions placed by this rule, faking your age became a trend of the early years of the Alliance. But Tao Xuan knew Ye Xiu from before the Alliance was formed. He had known Ye Xiu's age before that and it made the requirements set by the Alliance back then. It wasn't possible that Ye Xiu was have predicted the formation of the Alliance and the rules and made a lie preemptively.

"No," Ye Xiu shook his head, "My situation was much worse than being underage. Back then, I... didn't have an ID card."

"So you made a fake ID!" Tao Xuan exclaimed in shock.

"Not exactly, I just borrowed someone else's ID card," Ye Xiu said.

"Someone else's..." Tao Xuan and Cui Li looked like they were listening to a cultivation novel.

"Yeah. Does having a twin make this seem like the plot to a novel?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Twin..." Tao Xuan and Cui Li thought that cultivational novels were far too weak compared to this.

"Yup, that's how it is. I used my younger twin brother's ID to register and the Ye Xiu I'm using now is my real identity," Ye Xiu summarized.

"This... this..." Tao Xuan felt a little dizzy. Something seemed a little wrong about this; he needed to think for a moment.

Cui Li managed to react rather quickly though and immediately sneered. "You can't possibly think that now that you're using your real identity everything would be like nothing had happened. Do you think people are stupid?"

"Of course not." Ye Xiu shook his head. "So that's why we all have to deal with this problem carefully."

"We?" Cui Li looked like he had just heard a joke.

"Yes, we." Ye Xiu nodded solemnly. "Back then, I was in Excellent Era, no? And I even used this identity to win three championships for Excellent Era, or have you forgotten?"

"...." Cui Li didn't know how to react and Tao Xuan finally realized what he had felt was wrong about this. This guy's use of a fake identity was strapped to Excellent Era's name. So now, not only could Tao Xuan no longer use this fake identity issue to bring Happy down, he had to do his utmost to cover this up. He had to do it, not for this guy, but for Excellent Era.

Chapter 963: Let's Make the Storm Even More Violent

Reporter Chang Xian felt the urge to rush out the door. It was true that he was a reporter and that he needed all sorts of news topics, but the information he just heard was too fierce, so fierce that he was having trouble standing up. The greatest God in the history of Glory, Ye Qiu, was actually a fake identity? Since the founding of the Glory Alliance, this was the biggest... biggest what?

Chang Xian wanted to use the word "scandal" to describe it, but from the bottom of his heart, he didn't consider it as a scandal.

The person in front of him was using a fake identity, but he was still the one playing in the competitive matches. The opponents were defeated by him, and the victories were won by him. Ye Qiu monopolizing all sorts of honors and being a three-peat champion were genuine accomplishments. However, these accomplishments didn't belong to "Ye Qiu", but the person in front of him.

His actions may have violated the Alliance's rules, but they didn't have an effect on anything from a competitive standpoint. He was borrowing an identity, but he was the one playing. In comparison, those players, who lied about their age, broke the fairness of the competition more heavily, no?

This was why Chang Xian felt conflicted. It was groundbreaking information. If it was revealed, he might even become famous in an instant. However, at the same time, he would cause a lot of harm to many people. Ye Xiu, Team Happy, Team Excellent Era,

and their countless fans would need to bear the pain.

If it was a scandal like taking stimulants during a match, Chang Xian wouldn't feel ashamed to reveal it. However, Chang Xian didn't feel like this could be considered that type of scandal. It was just borrowing an identity. Everything else was real. Every match, every victory, and every championship win were genuine. The only exception was that the person called Ye Qiu wasn't actually Ye Qiu. That didn't affect the outcome of a match though, did it?

Ye Xiu said he didn't have his ID card back then, so he used someone else's. That was clearly out of helplessness. Afterwards, he never changed it after so many years because once you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off. Perhaps there were other reasons too, but Chang Xian didn't know. He just felt like using another identity in this way shouldn't be counted as fraud.

It was because of this thinking that Chang Xian didn't know how to handle this information. He was very conflicted. Going left and going right made him feel bad. He regretted entering this room. He wished he could travel back in time. He would definitely avoid this room and walk away.....

Thinking about all of this was already too late. Chang Xian's thoughts were in a whirl. How could Excellent Era's Tao Xuan and Cui Li not be the same as him? This news was like thunder to them. But what the two even more annoyed was that after Ye Xiu leaked such a huge secret, he looked as nonchalant as ever. It was as if this matter had nothing to do with him. He looked like he was sitting there watching a show.

"If this is taken seriously, you would have to undertake legal responsibility for identity theft." Cui Li couldn’t bear seeing that guy’s nonchalant look any longer. He suddenly spoke coldly. His threat was clear as day.

But Ye Xiu still had that annoying nonchalant look on his face: "Yeah. Do you guys plan on taking this seriously?"

Cui Li coughed blood. This guy was truly shameless. Take this seriously? What did that mean? Take Ye Xiu into court and accuse that he stole someone else’s identity to sign several contracts with them? How was that any different from exposing the truth? Shouldn’t Excellent Era be trying to cover this up and not get involved? What’s more, if an investigation was made, although Excellent Era would legally be in the right, they would certainly receive criticism from a moral perspective. Ye Xiu may have impersonated as someone else, but his contributions to Excellent Era were genuine. If Excellent Era made such an investigation, it would be a model example of gaining a favor and calling it a disfavor. This move would not be wise.

As for bringing in the person who got his identity stolen, that was even more of a fantasy. That guy was his twin brother. It’s not like they could count on the other side to stand out and tell his own brother to get punished by law for stealing his identity.

"I want to confirm something." Tao Xuan finally spoke, "Over all these years, you were the one completing the entire time, right? Your brother, the real Ye Qiu, never appeared in a match before, right?"

"It’s always been me. It’s not as much of a mystery as you’re making it out to be." Ye Xiu smiled.

"That’s good then. That gives us a lot of room to work around with...." Tao Xuan had been struck by thunder too, but he was stronger than his subordinate, Cui Li. He didn’t lash out because of Ye Xiu’s attitude. He had already calmed down and started thinking about how to deal with this matter.

"The Alliance wouldn’t want to accept this truth either. A three-peat champion, the greatest player of all time, the Alliance’s number one God, yet that player’s identity was actually fake. It would be a big blow to the Alliance’s reputation." Tao Xuan thought about things from a management perspective. The Alliance wouldn’t want this information to be known to the public.

"But he’s about to appear in a match. There has to be good explanation for that!" Cui Li said.

"As long as we communicate it with the Alliance internally, an explanation to the public would not be difficult." Tao Xuan said.

"Mm, that makes sense." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

"It’s best if we hurry and talk with the Alliance. How should we go about telling them this..." Tao Xuan started thinking, when he heard a knock on the door.

Everyone in the room suddenly felt like thieves that had been

caught. The one closest to the door, Chang Xian, hadn’t regained his calm yet. He asked with a trembling voice: "Who is it!"

"It’s me. Feng Xianjun."

"Feng Xianjun? Who’s that? It sounds kind of familiar?" The reporter interacted with lower level people, so it was hard to avoid reacting slowly to such a big name.

As for the two from Excellent Era, after being struck by thunder, they were dealt another blow. Cui Li had to support himself up with the wall. Tao Xuan no longer keep his calm like before. He had analyzed things well and was preparing to find someone in the Alliance to talk to, but who would have thought that the f*cking Alliance chairman would directly come over.

The ones from Happy could no longer keep up their spectator mentality. Chen Guo decisively suggested: "Should we hide? The restroom? Underneath the bed?"

The calmest one was still Ye Xiu. He had a smile on his face like he didn’t care: "Forget about it. What’s to come will come. Tao Xuan’s analysis of the pros and cons was very clear. I don’t think it’ll be difficult to making things clear."

"Okay…. Open the door…" Tao Xuan knew that they would need to face Feng Xianjun sooner or later. He was already at their door, and Tao Xuan wasn’t the type of person who ran away.

Chang Xian had finally realized that the person outside was the Alliance chairman. He was extremely shocked. It made him feel like "the storm was about to get even more violent" and began to calm down. He opened the door quite calmly.

"Oh, there’s quite a lot of people here!" Feng Xianjun entered and saw Excellent Era’s Tao Xuan. He was quite surprised.

Tao Xuan smiled and went forward to greet Feng Xianjun. Feng Xianjun looked around the room and saw Ye Xiu. He laughed and pointed with his hands: "Ye Qiu, so you’re really here."

Chang Xian suddenly felt that an even more violent storm was about to come. At this moment, the two others with Feng Xianjun entered the room. At the stairway, Cao Guangcheng had just sprinted up seven flights of stairs and was gasping for air. He saw them go in and immediately sprinted forward again. He saw that the door was slowly closing and hastily shouted: "WAIT."

Chang Xian stretched out his neck to look. It was Cao Guangcheng. He was immediately filled with joy. He had no idea what to do with this piece of information, but everything would be fine with Brother Cao here. From when he entered the room to now, it was his first time feeling relaxed. Just when he was about to open the door to let Cao Guangcheng in, Cui Li immediately asked: "Who is it?"

"It’s our correspondent station’s Brother Cao." Chang Xian hastily answered.

Correspondent station? Brother Cao? Cui Li realized who it was and immediately responded: "Cao Guangcheng? Shut the door!"

"Ah?"

"Shut the door!"

Chang Xian didn't dare utter "No!" He promptly closed the door in panic. Cao Guancheng was almost there. He could see that Chang Xian had ignored his shout and locked the door. He was furious. That little brat! He was usually so well-behaved and kind. Who would have thought he was so cunning? You plan on monopolizing this piece of news?

Cao Guangcheng was in a rage, but he didn't dare go out of control in front of the people in the room. When he reached the door, he calmed down and knocked politely.

"Reporter Cao, right? Please go back. It's not a convenient time for an interview." Cui Li's voice came through the door. Cao Guangcheng listened and his body turned ice-cold. He understood Excellent Era's people. Cui Li was saying that he'd better not think of even trying to get in. Not a convenient time for an interview? That f*cking brat Chang Xian was in there!

Why? Why did things turn out this way?

You'd let Chang Xian watch on the sides, but you won't let me in? What did method did that little brat Chang Xian do?

Impossible! He was a young and green little kid. What method could he have to monopolize Excellent Era all for himself? Cao Guangcheng was furious, but he didn't dare make trouble. He took out his phone and called Chang Xian, but Chang Xian's phone was turned off.

F*CK!

Cao Guangcheng cursed. He couldn't go in, but he wasn't willing to leave. He went up against the door and tried to see if he could hear anything. However, the hotel picked by the Alliance wouldn't have such poor walls. If the people inside talked normally, he had no chance of hearing them. Cao Guangcheng despaired.

In the room, Feng Xiangjun felt that the atmosphere was a bit strange. Cui Li was angry again because when he heard Chang Xian talk to Cao Guangcheng, he finally realized who this person was. He was a reporter!

Internal communication, internal communication, how could a reporter count as someone from the Alliance? At this moment, the people that they needed to guard against the most were reporters! But they actually talked about all of this in front of a reporter. He and Tao Xuan didn't know Chang Xian was a reporter, but how could those from Happy not know? Ye Xiu, did your brain turn to mush? When he came in, how could you not know to shoo him away? Are you deliberately trying to make things harder for us? Cui Li really wanted to strangle Ye Xiu.

As for Feng Xianjun, he felt like the atmosphere was a bit strange, but he didn't ask about it. He continued to the main subject: "It

seems like your Happy has someone called Ye Xiu?"

"Hahahahaha..." Ye Xiu laughed. He kicked Wei Chen, who was sitting on the sofa: "Chairman, have a seat first."

"What is it?" Feng Xianjun once again felt the strange atmosphere in the room. He walked over and sat down.

"How's your heart these days?" Ye Xiu asked.

"..."

"If your heart's fine, then listen up." Ye Xiu said.

"What do you want to say?"

"I'm Ye Xiu." Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 964: To Seize an Opportunity

Feng Xianjun deserved to be the Alliance's chairman. He had seen all sorts of winds and waves. To Tao Xuan, Cui Li, and Chang Xian, this news was like thunder to them, but after Feng Xianjun heard it, his expression remained calm. His eyebrows only wrinkled a bit. Soon afterwards, he extended his hands to his attendants: "Medicine! Medicine!"

Ye Xiu's concern for Feng Xianjun's heart wasn't without reason. The attendants by Feng Xianjun's side took out some heart-relieving pill in a panic. Ye Xiu, on the other hand, already had a cup of water in his hand. The others looked at the painful expression on the chairman's face and felt sympathy for him.

After swallowing the pill, Feng Xianjun rested for five minutes before fully recovering. He let out a long sigh .

"Do you need to go to the hospital?" Ye Xiu asked. Feng Xianjun glared at him and then sucked in a deep breath, asking: "What's going on?"

Everyone fixed their attention on the chairman's reaction. The room was completely silent. Tao Xuan felt sweat running down his palms. From his understanding, Feng Xianjun cared very much about the Alliance's development, so Tao Xuan felt like they should be able to reach a consensus on this issue. But before the chairman gave his statement, he still felt very nervous. What if Feng Xianjun shook his head and said no? Retreating back a step after that would be too difficult. Right now, it wasn't that the arrow was pulled back on the bowstring waiting to be released, but

rather that the arrow was already flying and they were just waiting to see if it would hit.

"What does your brother do?" Feng Xianjun suddenly asked.

"He does many things... You're not thinking what's wrong is wrong and treating him as the original Ye Qiu, right? That loophole is too big." Ye Xiu said.

"There's no need for that. I just wanted to confirm that you were the only one playing in the matches."

"Definitely." Ye Xiu nodded his head. Feng Xianjun's concern was identical to Tao Xuan's. Now that this issue came up, Tao Xuan let out a sigh of relief. He knew that the Alliance's test had ben passed.

"How do you plan on explaininig this issue?" Feng Xianjun looked around the room.

"Pseudonym, name change, anything works." Tao Xuan relaxed. After all, this matter violated this Alliance's rules, so the Alliance's attitude towards this matter was extremely important. As long as the Alliance was willing to cover it up, any reason would work.

Feng Xianjun kept silent. He got up, walked around the room, and mumbled, "What was I here for originally?" Then, he left the room along with the two attendants.

In the end, Feng Xianjun didn't give a precise statement. Tao

Xuan’s heart rate immediately rose again. He understood that the Alliance’s stance on this issue was still blurry. Their final stance would depend on how they handled it. The Alliance wasn’t going to be their errand boy. They could only provide the appropriate support to whatever Excellent Era did. If this issue exploded into a huge mess and couldn’t be covered, the Alliance would certainly come out with a devotion to righteousness, giving a fair and impartial judgement.

"Ye Qiu is your online name. Your real name is Ye Xiu." Tao Xuan suddenly said.

Ye Xiu understood the implications and nodded his head with a smile.

"We’re leaving." Tao Xuan called out to Cui Li. Cui Li glanced at Chang Xian with unease. He chased after Tao Xuan and whispered to him his worry.

Tao Xuan turned his head fiercely and glared at Chang Xian. Then, he glanced at Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu wasn’t stupid. If he was willing to let this reporter listen, then this reporter was most likely trustworthy. Thinking of this point, Tao Xuan didn’t say anything and turned around to leave. When he left, he suddenly thought of Feng Xianjun unexpectedly coming over to Happy himself. He probably hadn’t come to give the team a warm welcome. Team Happy was able to get the Alliance’s chairman to personally give a greeting. Tao Xuan suddenly became uneasy again. He wasn’t able to get a good sleep that night.

Room 722. After everyone left, apart from looking at one another, no one knew what to say.

This entire thing... was caused by Ye Xiu, but in the end, the one to wipe his butt wasn't just Excellent Era, but the Alliance too. It felt like it had nothing to do with him? Thinking of this, everyone couldn't help but show admiration for Ye Xiu.

The few from Happy felt very moved. When they looked at Chang Xian, they saw that he was still standing dumbstruck by the door!

"Little Chang! You'd better not treat this as interview material and leak it out!" Chen Guo said to Chang Xian in a normal voice. Usually, whenever Chang Xian visited Happy, if he saw anything fun, embarrassing, humiliating, he would say "I'm going to talk about this!" It soon became his catchphrase.

However, none of the things he reported ever appeared on the papers. He obviously knew about Happy's current fame. Details about their daily lives couldn't be considered news material. However, this time's information was more than ferocious enough. Chang Xian was certain that if he wrote a piece on it, he would be able to make the headlines on the weekly paper.

Headlines!

For a small reporter like Chang Xian, if he could get his manuscript passed and onto a tofu-sized block on the paper, that

was already enough to make him happy for many days. A chance to make the headlines was in front of his eyes. Chen Guo only told him gently not to report it.....

This wasn't Chen Guo not understanding the severity of the situation, but rather her trust in Chang Xian. She didn't put her guard against him as if he were an outsider.

Chang Xian had originally been conflicted on what to do. Chen Guo's trust in him only added fuel to the fire. Exposing the truth should be the goal of a reporter, but if he revealed the truth, he would feel too evil. Chen Guo expressed her trust in him. If he turned his back and spilled it, Chang Xian would feel too guilty.

"Don't worry. I won't talk about it." Chang Xian finally made his decision. While this decision made him feel relieved, he couldn't help but feel regret at letting go of such a huge opportunity. Feelings of regret and annoyance continued to poke at him.

Really... neither going left nor going right feels good! Chang Xian wanted to find somewhere with no one around and yell loudly. That would feel great. Just when he was about to leave, Ye XIu suddenly laughed: "That type of report isn't too meaningful. Even if you wrote about it, you might not get praised for it. In fact, your choice to follow us was very wise. There will be many more things worthy of being written in the future."

"I... I understand..." Chang Xian replied with surprise. He understood Ye Xiu's meaning. Team Happy beating Team Excellent Era and entering the Alliance was obviously much more interesting. Chang Xian looked forward to it too, but it wasn't too

much. How could it be so easy for a newly formed team to beat Team Excellent Era?

But Ye Xiu expressed his confidence in what everyone thought was impossible. It was as if this conclusion was set in stone. Others might feel that he was overestimating himself and would laugh and jeer at him. However, Chang Xian felt like while this possibility was small, it wasn't zero. In competition, there was never such a thing as a guaranteed win. Every powerhouse had been toppled by weak opponents before. Why couldn't that happen to Team Happy and Team Excellent Era.

"Go to bed early!" Ye Xiu smiled. Chang Xian nodded his head and left.

Chen Guo didn't plan on sleeping yet. She first recalled with delight how scared Excellent Era and the Alliance chairman had been frightened. Then, she began thinking about how Excellent Era and the Alliance would handle this issue. In the end, she was worried about what would happen if it wasn't handled well. Wouldn't that be a disaster?

"You're thinking too much. You probably won't get any information on it in a short amount of time. Whether it's Excellent Era or the Alliance, they can't just suddenly jump out and start talking about Ye Qiu Ye Xiu. Trying to force the issue would only make it worse. In order to cover it up, they have to wait for it to get revealed. Whether this reveal is natural or planned doesn't matter. I reckon that they'll plan it themselves. That way it'll be more controlled. Especially after seeing Old Feng's stance, I think Tao Xuan would rather be more proactive."

"Oh oh oh..." Chen Guo listened to Ye Xiu's analysis and felt more confident. Only then did she pull Tang Rou away to go to sleep.

On the afternoon of the second day, the 20 participating Challenger League teams had all gathered together. The Alliance had arranged a reception for all of the players. There was a slight adjustment in the schedule. Instead of Monday, the offline matches would start on Tuesday.

When the Esports Home paper on Monday came out, besides the highlight matches of the league, there was an eye-catching section of a topic unrelated to the league: Ye Qiu? Ye Xiu??

Chen Guo bought that day's newspaper. She rushed over to Ye Xiu's room and handed it over to Ye Xiu to look.

"Oh? They've started?" Ye Xiu was calm. He checked and saw that an Excellent Era player found in astonishment that the Team Happy player behind Lord Grim, Ye Xiu, was actually their former team captain, Ye Qiu. In view of the past……

When looking at the past, there were many questions towards Ye Qiu and Ye Xiu. Fortunately, this reporter didn't directly point out that Ye Qiu was a fake name. The reporter discussed about why Ye Xiu would change names? Then, the reporter collected material from the Alliance and Excellent Era. This dual identity of Ye Qiu and Ye Xiu was actually legal?

Why did he do that?

The article switched topics, pushing the issue into this direction.

Ye Xiu looked and didn't doubt that this was Excellent Era's writing because afterwards, the reporter analyzed whether Ye Qiu was worried that his new team would encounter a lot of pressure from his fans, so he changed his name to Ye Xiu and so on.

Excellent Era knew that Ye Xiu would jump out an explain the true reason, so they used this opportunity to splash a bit of black paint onto him. They successfully seized this opportunity. The fans were in an uproar not about the issue of Ye Qiu and Ye Xiu... but that Team Happy really had been created by Ye Qiu. Sure enough, he really planned on destroying Excellent Era and even put on a fake name. It was too despicable and shameless.

TLN: It's some sort of Chinese meme:

(Author's Note: The attendants sang "Yo yo, check it out (切克闹 qie ke nao)! Could I have a jianbing?" and then quickly rushed out to buy jianbing.. The chairman's heart failed, and he passed away. I really wanted to write it like this... but I don't think everyone would be able to accept it. Okay, forget about this apart)

Chapter 965: Controversy

"Excellent Era has no shame!!!"

When Chen Guo heard what Ye Xiu had said, she immediately tore the newspaper into pieces.

"How should we counter that?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu lividly.

"Beat them." Ye Xiu said.

"Uh... what else?" Chen Guo asked.

"Isn't that enough?" Ye Xiu was astonished.

"That's a must, sure? But what about right now? How should we strike back?" Chen Guo asked.

"We don't really need to." Ye Xiu's expression seemed as if he feared more trouble.

"Do you have a future? Why are you always taking the blame. You're being smeared to sh*t!" Chen Guo yelled.

"Too vulgar!" Wei Chen watched with disdain, while he laughed hysterically.

"Stop laughing!" Chen Guo glared. She wasn't in the mood to joke around. She was actually angry.

Wei Chen hurriedly refrained himself from laughing, and seriously analysed the situation. "It's not that easy to strike back on this matter. We can't actually tell the truth, right? This was something Excellent Era chose to do."

"I'm so angry." Chen Guo looked around, as if she was searching for something to smash. However, they would need to pay for things they break at a hotel, so Chen Guo couldn't find anything suitable to throw around. In the end, Ye Xiu stuffed a pillow into her hands. Chen Guo received the pillow without throwing it, she merely held it while being lost in thought.

"Don't be angry. We have a competition tomorrow, so let's just leave these matters to them. Don't be distracted." Ye Xiu consoled for the first time.

"We must beat Excellent Era!" Chen Guo said.

"Of course, of course." Ye Xiu agreed.

Chen Guo left. After hearing Ye Xiu's analysis, she knew what sort of storm Excellent Era's manipulation would bring up. Chen Guo also knew that whatever stays unseen, remains clean, but she couldn't help but to care about the matter. But after taking a look online, she deeply regretted why she couldn't control herself.

Last time Excellent Era revealed the fact that Team Happy was recruited by Ye Qiu, the fans got worked up.. They even went to besiege Happy Internet Cafe in order to protest. However, Excellent Era and their fans' face were brightly slapped from the Esports Home paper. Now, Excellent Era finally found a chance to return the new and old grudge, and had a reasonable explanation for the unfinished matter last time: See? We weren't in the wrong. This guy changed his name, so he managed to slip through it.

As a result, it seemed as if using the name Ye Xiu was to avoid responsibility. This was why the reaction from Excellent Era's fans was even fiercer than last time. A lot of fans even expressed having complete heart break, and that they would change from fans to haters. Chen Guo was annoyed! She explicitly organized what information she knew about the situation, and posted on the forums. She hoped that the fans would reflect on it objectively and logically.

The reaction from the post was quite fierce, and there were countless replies. When Chen Guo looked through them, she nearly died from anger. Though there were some who believed her words, the majority of the players were mocking her. Chen Guo thought what she wrote was reasonable, but those people picked some quotes out to mix up truths with lies. Chen Guo tried to speak up and argue, but after disputing for several pages, Chen Guo received a nickname: Qiu's Dog.

Chen Guo wasn't sure if it was someone from Excellent Era, since they deliberately twisted black and white after seeing the truth. She didn't want to give up, so she continued to debate according to the facts. After several pages, Chen Guo upgraded. She was no longer 'Qiu's Dog'. Someone gave her a new nickname: Ultra

Villain.

Chen Guo finally gave up.

On Tuesday 4/23, the offline tournament finally began.

There weren't any opening ceremonies. The league's chairman Feng Xianjun personally came and announced the start of the tournament.

There were four groups of five teams. Two pairs of teams went against each other, so there would always be a team without an opponent. Apart from pro teams, the majority of the players didn't have experience on stage, so even if that team wasn't required to come, they would still like to witness the stadium atmosphere.

Team Happy managed to pick an empty slot on the first round, but they still came. The biggest difference between the stage now and on match day was naturally the crowd. For many, being watched so attentively by so many people made everything feel unnatural. As a result, this was something the newbies had to learn to adapt to.

For Team Happy, it was obvious that people like Ye Xiu wouldn't have such obstacles. As for the newbies, Ye Xiu felt that it wouldn't be much of a problem for Tang Rou and Steamed Bun. So the ones who needed to adapt were the remaining members.

Despite being a participating team, they couldn't just go onstage

to look around since they had no opponent this round. Happy could only sit in the dedicated seats for the contestants on the side and enjoy the match like a crowd member.

The stadium didn't have too many people, but there were teams like Excellent Era who were competing, so the number of seats occupied was already much better than the years before. The Alliance had considered making an exception by setting the Challenger League in City H, so there would be a good box office. However, on second thought, it meant that they were making it a home ground for Excellent Era. They would be siding with Excellent Era too much, so they could only drop the idea.

However, Excellent Era was a powerhouse, so they had fans supporting them all over the country. Let alone those fanatical fans who would pursue their teams everywhere to watch their matches and activities. Many fans in the crowd held up banners and placards in support of Excellent Era. Other teams could only take part in admiring and envying. There weren't on the same level, so they wouldn't fantasise about those treatments.

The eight matches began at the same time, but they didn't finish at the same time. Excellent Era, who was the strongest team here, undoubtedly finished the quickest. Simply put, it was instant destruction for the other team. As for the other seven matches, some were even tangled up in the individual competition still, while Excellent Era had a complete victory of 10:0. The difference in strength was fairly great. When the pro players of Excellent Era went off stage, they weren't really proud or arrogant. The team that lost also wasn't dispirited or crestfallen. It was as if all of this should happen.

"What losers!!" Chen Guo just had to look down contemptfully at such attitudes.

The ones that Team Happy cared about most had to be the two matches within their group: the two matches form Group B: Team Trader versus Team Ten Steps One Kill; Team Mysterious Fantasy versus Team Cloud View Pavillion.

Teams that could make it to the offline matches had to be fairly strong. They were worthy of being watched. Every year, quite a few pro teams would pick out players that made it this far, and would immediately sign them as pro players. There were active players that entered the pro scene with this as the springboard. The most well known players had to be Li Xuan of Team Void, and Fang Rui of Team Wind Howl. Those two were discovered at the Challenger League, and they were now All Stars. They were constantly used to advertise Challenger League.

Ye Xiu had the same intentions. He paid attention to every match in the competition. Compared to the victories and losses, he cared more about every player's performance. However, until now, they wasn't anyone who could make his eyes light up. Even if they were especially outstanding, Ye Xiu didn't dare to have high hopes. It was unknown how many teams were sitting in the crowd searching for potential stars.

It took over an hour for the eight matches on the first day to completely finish. After the matches in Group B, Team Mysterious Fantasy gained nine points, and was ranked first. Team Ten Steps One Kill was ranked second with seven points. Team Trader was ranked third with three points, and Team Cloud View Pavillion

fourth with one point. After watching, Ye Xiu had a clearer idea of the strength of the four teams. Team Mysterious Fantasy was a pro team, so their strength was obviously stronger. However, they were only strong to a certain point. They weren't able to get a clean set of ten points like Excellent Era. Instead, they had lost a point in the individual competition.

The second round would take place Friday night. In this round, Team Cloud View Pavillion of Group B would be vacant. Team Happy would go against Team Ten Steps One Kill, while Team Mysterious Fantasy would go against Team Trader.

In the few days before their match, there was no peace at all. There was a huge wave of controversy over Ye Qiu-Ye Xiu in the Esports Home. This wave had nothing to do with the matter of Ye Xiu's identity, which everyone had been worried about earlier. No one had any suspicions about this matter. What people cared about was that God Ye Qiu was clashing with Excellent Era in Challengers League. The fans weren't able to understand, while other people merely watched for fun. As a result, it was extremely heated. As for Happy, they immediately received many requests for an interview from media all over the country. They wished that Happy would make some sort of response towards the matter. The majority of the requests for interviews was ejected. It wasn't until the Esports Home paper with a page layout just like last week's did everyone see an interview with Ye Xiu from Happy.

The interview was with Ye Xiu, who was also Ye Qiu, which was something very rare to see. However, no one really cared about this fact at this point.

In this interview, everyone was able to see Ye Xiu's response towards the heated question.

"I created a team to join the Challenger League. Excellent Era also joined because they were eliminated, so we happened to meet. That's all."

"So you're saying that, you were already preparing to create a team before Excellent Era was eliminated?" The journalist asked.

"That's right. After I left Excellent Era, I picked up my current character in the newly opened tenth server. I met some companions along the way, so we decided to create a team."

"Judging from what you just said, you guys didn't have that ambition at the start?" The journalist asked.

"Yep, everyone was just playing for fun in the beginning. If I had such ambitions, why would I retire?"

"What was it that caused you to make such a big resolution in the end? From what I know so far, your team was formed in an Internet cafe across street from Excellent Era. There was even a lot of unpleasant disagreements with Excellent Era fans at the time." The journalist mentioned.

"That's because I later found out that the people in my team had a lot of potential. They definitely had the skill, so they should have the opportunity to perform on a better stage. That's why I decided

to give it my all in the Challenger League."

"Then why are you targeting Excellent Era in particular? Some people think that it's your way to promote the hype." The journalist asked.

"Of course we need to target Excellent Era. This is because Excellent Era is undoubtedly the strongest opponent in the Challengers League. By targeting Excellent Era, we can show our ambition."

"But you were once a core member of Excellent Era. Now you have to compete with Excellent Era in the Challengers League to get the one and only spot. How do you feel about it?" The journalist asked.

"Do all I can to beat them. This is my respect towards Glory."

"Have you ever thought that doing this would hurt a lot of people?" The journalist asked.

"This is not something I can decide. This is the nature of competition. There can one champion."

"Then what about the champion of this season's Challenger League?" The journalist asked.

"I would like to say that it's going to be Happy, but wouldn't that seem disrespectful towards our opponents? Let's wait and see..."

But you still said it... This remark came from Chang Xian, the interviewer.

Chapter 966: On Stage for the First Time

Owing to Excellent Era's leadership, why did Ye Qiu change his name to Ye Xiu? Although this question wasn't asked, it already wasn't the main point of the interview. During the whole interview, she couldn't help but wish that she would hear simple answers like "Excellent Era is a piece of sh*t. This senior is going to destroy it."

Except, Chen Guo also knew that everything Ye Xiu said was true. Revenge? In reality this was just something Chen Guo thought of every day. Ye Xiu had never revealed such thoughts.He only wanted to defeat Excellent Era because the two sides had encountered one another in the Challenger League, and only one could survive in the end. It was that simple.

It was a pity that saying this truth in an interview sounded like empty and polite words anyone would say in the situation. When the Friday news report came out, Chen Guo immediately went online to search. Sure enough, people were mocking Ye Xiu's hypocrisy and false politeness. However, Chen Guo had learned her lesson from last time. This time, she didn't dare go to fight with those guys again. Returning to the team, she also didn't dare tell them the news, afraid that it would affect everyone's moods for the match that evening. She could only smother her anger and endure.

Eight o'clock, the second round of the offline portion of the Challenger League began. Team Happy's opponent was Team Ten Steps One Kill.

Through the first round of the competition, they had gathered some information about Ten Steps One Kill. Before the match, Ye Xiu had created a few targeted plans.

A normal player team didn't have the qualifications and balance of a professional team. The strength of the players within these teams often varied greatly. Ten Steps One Kill had a total of seven players, in order to avoid forcing a healer to fight during the individual part of the match. However, their seventh member served more as a placeholder. With his skill level, which was close to that of any regular player, he would have trouble beating even Chen Guo. In addition, among the remaining three players, there were three that were clearly at a level far above the others. In the past, the tactics employed by Ten Steps One Kill relied heavily on these three winning in the group arena, earning two points. During the team competition, these three would also lead, usually being able to win and get the five points. As for the individual competition, they would let the other three non-healers fight. If one of them managed to earn a point, well, a point was a point.

From the previous round, it was obvious that this kind of arrangement had already become habit for them. During the individual competition, the three weakest members didn't earn a single point between them. This kind of opening would usually mean very low morale. However, because the players in Ten Steps One Kill were all very used to this kind of situation, they weren't affected one bit during the group arena, having three experts who could steadily take two points. Only, during the later team competition, Team Trader displayed a much more harmonious team strength and coordination. Ten Steps One Kill finally lost a team competition, only obtaining two points against the others team's eight points in Round 1.

The group placements were determined through total accumulated points. Every point could potentially affect a team's final standing, and so every point should be fiercely fought for. Team Ten Steps One Kill, using their present arrangement, was left in a helpless situation.

On Happy's side, if speaking about individual strength, there were also large disparities. However, at least every member was above the level of a normal player. Outside of Chen Guo, no one was merely serving as a placeholder. Thus, they didn't have to use this kind of sacrificial strategy. They would vigorously strive for every point.

However, outside of fighting for points, Ye Xiu also hoped to let every player (especially the newcomers) experience the atmosphere of an official match. Therefore, in the space for the final individual round, Ye Xiu wrote in Luo Ji's name.

By this point, Luo Ji had played Glory for more than a year already. Having trained under the guidance of Ye Xiu, he had also greatly improved his skill. At his current level, beating Chen Guo wouldn't be a problem. This made Chen Guo feel both gratified and depressed. After all, she was also a veteran player of Glory! In the end, she had still helplessly watched as Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, Luo Ji... One by one, all these new players that had started from scratch quickly left her behind in a cloud of dust.

Chen Guo couldn't just not accept this. Happy's various training methods, she had obviously tried them all herself. While she had indeed gotten better, she was still far behind these new players, who had improved like lightning. Tang Rou and Steamed Bun were

both extremely gifted from the start. With only on their hand speed, both had already been at a higher level than Chen Guo, so she didn't feel too strongly. However, Luo Ji had truly started from nothing, steadily improving until Chen Guo was far behind him. Throughout this entire process, every minute, every second, Chen Guo had vividly felt it all. She really was a bit envious, of these guys' youth, of them having so much room to improve, whereas she was entirely lacking. This, she knew well now after receiving so much high-level training. She knew exactly what her limits were now. It was like that whack-a-mole game Ye Xiu had given her. At a certain level, no matter how hard she tried, she wouldn't be able to pass.

Therefore, after reaching the offline tournament, Chen Guo never again made a fuss about going on stage to play a round. She knew that her days as a player had since passed. Here was the stage, and it belonged to the ones who truly had the ability to stand atop it.

The individual competition would be fought by Wei Chen, Luo Ji, and Tang Rou.

The group arena consisted of Steamed Bun, Qiao Yifan, and Ye Xiu himself.

In the team competition, Tang Rou, Luo Ji, Qiao Yifan, Ye Xiu, and An Wenyi would fight, with Wei Chen as the substitute.

Young people really had so many opportunities. Except one guy. Although Mo Fan had come together with them, he still maintained a completely indifferent attitude. As a result, Ye Xiu

continued his old method of ignoring the guy.

During the match that night, when their opponent's first player went on stage, Ye Xiu was dumbstruck. Team Ten Steps One Kill, which had always given up the Individual rounds in the past, had actually sent out one of their three experts this time!

"What? They changed their strategy?" Ye Xiu scratched his head.

The player from Team Ten Steps One Kill appeared very confident in this tactical move, taking sure and measured steps onto the stage. Seeing that Happy had sent out a raggedly old coot, one who had only tossed his cigarette after being berated by the referee, he silently laughed harder. Wei Chen, this name really did sound ancient. Although the online newspapers had given him an introduction once before, they had only mentioned him in once. There hadn't been any buzz at all. After all, there were very few people who would watch the Challenger League that closely.

Soon afterwards, both sides took a seat and loaded their characters from their account cards. The player from Ten Steps One Kill took a look at this Windward Formation's equipment.

Silver Letters, no description available.

Silver Letters, no description available.

Silver Letters, no description available . . .

The player from Ten Steps One Kill moved his mouse quickly, seeing that there was indeed only a silver name for each piece of equipment.

Silver equipment . . .

Eight...

The player felt numb. He really wanted to kneel . . . eight pieces of Silver equipment, what level was this character at? At the same time, the stadium was in uproar. By watching from this player's viewpoint, everyone was able to see that Windward Formation had actually been equipped with eight pieces of Silver equipment! The commotion didn't just come from the spectators. The competitors were in uproar as well, including those from Excellent Era.

A character with eight pieces of Silver equipment wouldn't be considered weak even in the Alliance.

The first match quickly began. Ten Steps One Kill's player was already entertaining thoughts of directly kneeling in surrender. The battle came to an end without suspense, with Wei Chen seizing the point. Afterwards, as Wei Chen walked off the stage in an exceedingly lofty manner, he turned to the audience and waved, drawing a lot of boos from the crowd. A majority of those who came to watch would be fans of Excellent Era, and in the eyes of Excellent Era's fans, Happy could only be called demonic.

"How about it? Seeing me suddenly come out with eight pieces of Silver equipment, I bet the opponent directly wet his pants in fear,

right?" Returning to the player's preparation area, Wei Chen continued to brag.

"Amazing." Ye Xiu said halfheartedly. At this moment, the second pair of fighters had already begun to walk on stage. Ten Steps One Kill had sent out another of their three great experts, against Happy's Luo Ji.

Although this expert's level was a bit higher than Luo Ji's, he had clearly been affected by last round's conclusion. He looked a bit panicked. On the other hand, Luo Ji's Concealed Light was equipped with two pieces of Silver equipment. This, along with a full set of Orange equipment, including the Orange Tiger Seal, gave him a stunning aura. The opponent was nearly trembling with fear. Yet, he quickly gained the upper hand, because in reality Luo Ji was was even more nervous than he was.

This kind of competition stage was completely new to Luo Ji. He was so nervous that his entire body was stiff, from his fingers to his facial expression. His mechanics were a mess. He made mistakes everywhere. His movements were choppy and not at all fluid. His opponent had practically no difficulty at all in annihilating him.

Victory?

This match had been won far too easily. The player from Ten Steps One Kill couldn't believe it, stepping off stage with a blank look on his face.

Luo Ji also had an upset expression. Although, as a high IQ math major, he was well aware of why he had lost, it was unlikely that this one defeat would destroy his confidence. After all, Luo Ji had grown together with Team Happy. When the team members compared notes with one another in the arena, even Chen Guo had been able to suppress him easily in the beginning. To think that Luo Ji would be affected by one loss was completely unfair. Who knew how many times he had lost in the past year?

"How was it? It's quite different from normally fighting online, isn't it?" Ye Xiu smiled.

"It's really very different." Luo Ji sighed regretfully, "For a second there, I even forgot where I was....

"It's good that you're getting used to it." Ye Xiu didn't say more. He let Luo Ji go onstage in order to help him adapt to this kind of atmosphere. Losing points because of this was to be expected.

After Luo Ji, Tang Rou was up. Ten Steps One Kill sent out their third expert. After a crushing defeat and a decisive victory, it was obvious that this player was at a complete loss. However, seeing Soft Mist's name, immediately his mentality was shaken. Soft Mist was currently Happy's most famous character after Lord Grim. Pretty much everyone knew that this person was a very powerful expert.

The match proved this point. In the third round, although the fight wasn't entirely one-sided, Tang Rou still won directly and efficiently, not giving her opponent the least bit of hope.

And so, the other side's three great experts had only obtained one point in total. These last minute tactics appeared as if they hadn't helped at all.

Yet in the later group arena, there would be no suspense about who would come out to fight. Ten Steps One Kill only had seven people total, so it could only be two weaklings and a placeholder.

From Team Happy, Steamed Bun was the first to go up, completing a magnificent 1v3. As he came offstage, he brandished his arm, showing off his biceps.

"Do you see this? Study this point well!" After coming down, Steamed Bun actually had an excuse to lecture his "little brother" Luo Ji.

The team competition afterwards ended with even less suspense. With Ye Xiu personally watching over, a win was basically guaranteed, so it was more about hoping everyone could adapt to the competitive atmosphere.

This match was also the debut of An Wenyi, who appeared completely unflustered and performed steadily. Even Luo Ji, who had been helpless during the individual match, returned to his normal self under the support of his team members.

In the team competition, they won another five points.

The original Chinese phrase is 丢车保帅, which refers to chess

(battle) tactics in which you protect your general or commander at the cost of a rook.

Chapter 967: Setback

Even when Team Happy concluded their match, they had no idea that the other match in their group had finished even faster.

This round, Team Mysterious Fantasy had taken their turn not fighting. The other matchup had been between Team Trader and Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion. Team Trader's strength wasn't bad at all. After beating Ten Steps One Kill 8 to 2 in the last round, they acted even more boldly this round, cleanly slaughtering Cloud Viewing Pavilion 10 to 0.

Up until now, two rounds had been completed. Surprisingly, Team Trader led the standings in Group B with 18 points, well above the other teams. Both Happy and Mysterious Fantasy had amassed 9 points, and were tied for second. However, compared to Team Trader, these two teams had competed in one less match. As for Ten Steps One Kill and Cloud Viewing Pavilion, both these teams were very pitiful. After two rounds, one of them had 3 points, the other had 1. Their futures looked very dim.

The other groups all finished at around the same time. In Group A, Team Jade Dynasty, the so-called "King of the Revival Tournament," was proving that their strength really wasn't the same year after year. After two rounds, although they had taken the lead with 14 points, they didn't show any of the strength that a pro team should have. The future of Group A wasn't obvious at all.

In the other half of the tournament, because Group C didn't have any pro players, they received the least attention. However, in reality, this group's matches were the most interesting to watch.

Because all of the teams had a similar level of strength, the fights between them were very intense. The rankings were very close, and even more chaotic than what could be seen in Group A.

As for Group D . . . Excellent Era's overwhelming strength couldn't be measured through points alone. For them, getting ten points was no trouble at all. Their strength was better reflected in how much time they took to finish each round. For the past two rounds, they had concluded in twenty minutes or less.

Thus, in the next issue of Esports Home, in the headline for the least suspenseful Challenger League in history, the writers reported on the overpowering dominance exhibited by Excellent Era. As for the circumstances in the other groups, after the two journalists offhandedly mentioned the results, they silently lamented, "Do we really need to pay attention to this stuff?" These two had attached themselves to Excellent Era's legs, sparing no efforts in trying to climb up; the article was filled with flattering statements.

Cao Guangcheng, on the other hand? Using the resources and connections he had amassed after years as Excellent Era's team reporter, he had been allowed to write a special column on the Challenger League to discuss Excellent Era.

Cao Guangcheng's commentary was far more leisurely than those other two. He certainly disdained those two's method of yelling compliments until they were hoarse. With Excellent Era's strength and status, wasn't this kind of performance in the Challenger League expected? With you two yelling and making a big fuss like this, people who didn't know better would think it was some kind

of fresh news! Are you guys writing satire or slapping faces or what?

The main focus of Cao Guangcheng's commentary wasn't Excellent Era's victories at all. After years of reporting about the Glory pro scene, Cao Guangcheng had gained quite a bit of knowledge about Glory as well. In the special column, he focused on analyzing the matches in order to let the readers know that this was how Excellent Era had always been. Even when giving examples of Excellent Era's strength, there was no way he would use the teams in the Challenger League for comparison. Rather, he would directly use one of the powerhouse teams in the Pro Alliance as a reference.

This season, Excellent Era was in fact one of the teams that had made major changes during the summer. It was unfortunate that they had sunk into the Challenger League, and as a result didn't have that kind of specialized reporting on their tactics. Only now, after they had reached the offline portion of the Challenger League, did they have specialized reporting. The new Excellent Era's tactics were only beginning to emerge before the eyes of the masses.

Consequently, Cao Guangcheng's special column received positive reviews for two issues in a row. However, Cao Guangcheng himself didn't feel proud at all. During these two issues, he was far more concerned with the news regarding Ye Qiu's name change to Ye Xiu.

Cao Guangcheng had always thought that within the reporter circle, he was the one who was closest to Excellent Era, and thus

the mysterious character that was Ye Qiu. However, this time he discovered that in these two recent reports, both had nothing to do with him at all.

In the first report, Cao Guangcheng could easily see that Excellent Era was using this event to create pressure on Happy, through the mouths of the media. This kind of matter, Cao Guangcheng had long become accustomed to. The thing that made him depressed was the fact that this information had been put in the hands of those two idiots! Through what means had those two obtained this information? There weren't many people who could recognize Ye Qiu. If Excellent Era had been the first to discover this information, why had they gone to some other reporter instead of him?

However, in comparison to the first article, the second article, which had been Happy's response to this topic, had made Cao Guangcheng even more depressed.

Ye Xiu, who was also Ye Qiu, had actually personally accepted an interview? However, in the past seasons, God Ye Qiu hadn't been less talked about than he was now. When had he ever cooperated with the media to respond like this? Why had be broken his own rule now? Furthermore, why did this have to help that kid Chang Xian?

Cao Guangcheng could in fact be considered a pretty good senior, always giving Chang Xian plenty of opportunities in the past. Except that day, Chang Xian and locked him outside the door, making sole use of all the juicy information in the room. Afterwards, when Cao Guangcheng had asked about it, he had

directly brushed it off and replied "Nothing." Just afterwards, this guy had actually gone and got an interview with Ye Qiu...

"This punk...." Seeing this issue of Esports Home with Chang Xian's name, Cao Guangchen could only grind his teeth. In this issue, Chang Xian had also provided commentary on Happy's first public match. Chang Xian's didn't have Cao Guangcheng's knowledge or his insider information about Glory, but how could Happy not have things to talk about? A Warlock with eight pieces of Silver equipment, a beautiful Battle Mage player, a former member of the championship team Tiny Herb, and the two other members who hadn't appeared on stage this round: one was the infamous Deception, the guy who had made countless players in the Heavenly Domain gnash their teeth in anger, and had also caused headaches for many teams. This guy, who ignored all the suffering he had caused, had unexpectedly joined Team Happy as well? As for the other member, he was even more well known. Sun Zheping! This former God, who was a senior to all three of Excellent Era's current All-Stars, had also surprisingly appeared on Team Happy's roster! Flipping through the information on the Challenger League, it was possible to confirm that Happy previously didn't have this member. However, when the offline tournament arrived, the team couldn't hide this person any longer, and suddenly a God had appeared out of nowhere! Just how many experts was Happy hiding?

Even Cao Guangcheng had no choice but to admit that while the Challenger League was in session, Happy was an even more eye-catching topic than Excellent Era. Excellent Era's current popularity came mostly from their original fans, who strongly supported and paid close attention to the team. Happy, on the other hand, used their fresh appeal to steal away the attention of the more neutral fans.

The third round of the offline tournament was set to begin the next day. In Group B, Team Mysterious Fantasy would be fighting Team Ten Steps One Kill, while Team Happy would face Team Trader. Team Cloud Pavilion would sit this one out.

During the matches against the non-professional teams Ten Steps One Kill and Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion, Team Trader had collected 18 points, exhibiting the strength similar to that of a pro team. In reality, this team wasn't really strong enough to be compared to a pro team. Their miraculous performance had been entirely caused by their mentality.

Group B had Mysterious Fantasy and Happy, and so it was publicly recognized as the Death Group. With these two teams locking in the spots at the playoffs, the other teams appeared as if they had become cannon fodder, without any opportunities. After that day when the lots had been drawn, the three teams that had drawn Group B had been in low moods, mourning as if they were attending a funeral.

However, after this, Team Trader had proactively adjusted their attitude. Even in this Death Group, even faced with unshakable opponents, they still weren't willing to give up. In the first two rounds, they had faced the other two cannon fodder teams. Team Trader had displayed a far more energetic and proactive style than the other two teams. In comparison, Team Ten Steps One Kill had employed their usual defensive strategy, looking as if they hadn't used their brains. With Group B's circumstances, if they had made an any attempt to think at all, the three should have done their best to completely crush the other two cannon fodder teams. Afterwards, facing Mysterious Fantasy and Happy, they could use a

defensive strategy to accumulate as many points as possible. Only by observing the tigers fight could they potentially gain an opportunity.

A team like Ten Steps One Kill, which couldn't understand the current circumstances, would only thoroughly become cannon fodder in the end.

In contrast, the energetic and active Team Trader, had already pinned down the situation after two rounds. The next step would be to steal points from the two more powerful teams, and afterwards watch the two fight.

Having such a good opportunity in front of them, Team Trader's players were in an outstanding mood. In fighting against Team Happy, a few of their completely unknown members shone. They actually managed to suppress Happy 7 points to 3.

The entire competition had many twists and turns that day. In the eight matches that took place that day, this match was the last that took place. However, none of the previous teams had left. All of them had been attracted to this fierce battle…

The final team competition had lasted a full thirty minutes. When the result finally came out, Trader's six participants went crazy, rushing off the stage in a group hug with their seventh member. Like Ten Steps One Kill, Trader also had seven players. However, their seventh player was definitely not a placeholder, also possessing quite a bit of strength. The final victory had caused the seven to laugh happily as a group. What they had accomplished, gaining seven points from Team Happy, made them

absolutely ecstatic.

The other competition in Group B had long since concluded, with Mysterious Fantasy winning 10 to 0 against Ten Steps One Kill. This gave them a small chance. After three rounds, Team Trader had amassed 25 points. After two consecutive rounds at the top of the Death Group, their morale surged. Mysterious Fantasy had obtained 19 points, in line with what was expected from a professional team. On the other hand, Happy, which had previously been considered a powerful team as well, had only taken 12 points.

This kind of result unexpectedly led to celebration among the crowd. Team Happy had never had a good reputation to begin with, especially in places where lots of Excellent Era fans were gathered. They had been hoping for Happy's boat to capsize for so long, yet round after round in the online matches, their faces had been slapped. Now, in these extremely important offline matches, Happy was met with unexpected failure. This made them even happier than Excellent Era's heroic 10 point wins.

The entire stadium was filled with sounds of heckling and jeering laughter. Happy walked off the stage with their heads hung low. Chen Guo, seeing Ye Xiu next to her, felt extremely conflicted.

For the team competition, Ye Xiu had actually not arranged for himself to go on stage. Chen Guo thought this was very unusual. In the end, her premonitions were right, no matter how much she wished they weren't. Happy had lost the team round, throwing away not a small number of points. How would Ye Xiu feel at this moment? Would he also regret not going onstage himself? Would

he blame himself?

Seeing everyone come down, Chen Guo directly went to offer greetings, giving everyone encouragement. "Everyone fought very well."

"Can you not talk nonsense . . ." Ye Xiu's voice came from behind. "If they had played well, they wouldn't have lost."

"You . . ." Chen Guo swiveled her head around, quite angry. At times like this, how could this guy continue being this straightforward?

As she turned around, she saw that Ye Xiu was completely ignoring the stadium's rules about no smoking. He lit a cigarette, giving it to Wei Chen, who had just come down. "Not bad eh?"

"It's really fucking exhausting . . ." Wei Chen took the offered cigarette and brought it to his mouth, collapsing sideways into one of the seats.

The Chinese idiom is 阴沟里翻船, which means to meet unexpected failure. This comes from the novel《三侠五义》from the Qing Dynasty. Literally, it can be translated as capsizing in a gutter or a ditch. Basically, there are no gusts or waves in a ditch, so it's nearly impossible to capsize a boat. Therefore, it is entirely unexpected for any boat to capsize. --Veriquity

Chapter 968: Problem

Wei Chen sat paralyzed at his seat. He stretched his neck and sucked in a deep breath of air. He took his cigarette and adeptly flicked cigarette ash to the side. A puff of cigarette smoke rolled out from between his fingers.

Wei Chen looked at his slightly trembling hands. He stared blankly for a bit before forcing out a smile: "Refusing to give into old age really doesn't work!"

Calling yourself old at 31 years old sounded like a joke, but in the pro scene, this truly was a grandpa's age. Up until now, no one this old had ever appeared before in the pro scene.

"Look at that guy." Wei Chen pointed. Ye Xiu followed his finger and saw the unwilling face on Steamed Bun, who had just gone down from the stage. However, Steamed Bun wasn't the type of person to get angry. He was talking with Luo Ji about the round he just played in. He was a real person acting like a Brawler in real life. He gestured with his arms and legs like a lively dragon and animated tiger*.

In contrast, even though he wasn't as exhausted as Wei Chen, a half hour team competition was truly very tiring. Right afterwards, he needed to listen to Steamed Bun's non stop chatter. He could almost see stars spinning in the sky at this point.

Tang Rou, Qiao Yifan, and An Wenyi were the other three that participating in the team competition. They sat down at their seats

silently. Their weariness was also obvious. At the same time, none of them were happy with the results. Everyone was brooding over the outcome of the match. They didn’t pay any heed to the boos from the crowd though.

"Yo, you’re resting!"

A delighted voice floated over. Everyone turned their heads and saw Sun Xiang excitedly walking over towards Happy. Sun Xiang saw them look his way and immediately clapped: "A brilliant match. Not bad, not bad."

"But if it’s just that, how are we going to meet in the finals? You’re really making me worry." Sun Xiang said.

Chen Guo was furious. Just when she was about to shoo him away, Sun Zheping suddenly said: "Who are you?"

Sun Xiang was startled. He hadn’t seen this person in Happy before, but he had seen the other two, who had pretended not recognize him, before. Sun Xiang wouldn’t fall for the same trap twice. He sneered and asked back: "And who are you?"

"You’re grandfather." Sun Zheping replied calmly.

F*ck!

The others on Team Happy had been too tired and too lazy to mind Sun Xiang, but when they heard this response, they felt

spirited again and looked at Sun Zheping with all sorts of reverent gazes. This reply was too powerful and too unexpected.

Sure enough, Sun Xiang couldn’t hold back his anger. He shouted furiously "What nonsense are you saying?!"

"I’m not talking nonsense. Go back home and ask your father. Stop being such an annoying fly in front of me." Sun Zheping was as calm as ever.

"You you you...." Sun Xiang said you a bunch of times, but he couldn’t say anything else. Sun Zheping ignored him and waved his hands. He called out to everyone: "Let’s go back."

"We’re going already? I still want to sit for awhile longer. That was so tiring!" Wei Chen said, but he had already stood up and was hobbling over to the player passageway. Who knew how he injured his leg.

The others followed behind him. The crowd saw Happy leaving and immediately gave their loudest boos. Chen Guo was indignant, but Sun Xiang had helped make her feel better. She waved her hands at the crowd as if those boos were cheers.

When they returned to the hotel, they obviously weren’t in a good mood. Slapping Sun Xiang a few times wasn’t enough to cover up their disappointment from losing. Chen Guo was hoping Ye Xiu would say something, but Ye Xiu remained silent. When everyone got back to the hotel, he told everyone to take care like it was a normal day and went back to his room.

Seeing the others go back to their room one by one, Chen Guo couldn’t help but worry. She chased after Ye Xiu.

In the room, Wei Chen was lying flat on the bed like a corpse. Ye Xiu had turned on his computer and was browsing Internet with much interest.

"You’re feeling quite good!" Chen Guo wasn’t happy towards Ye Xiu’s reaction. She felt very dissatisfied.

"Don’t be so nervous." Ye Xiu turned his head and smiled.

"What do you mean?" Chen Guo asked.

"It’s very normal for new players to be unstable. After all, our opponents can’t be beaten with just a few clicks anymore" Ye Xiu said.

"Then shouldn’t you at least say something to them?" Chen Guo said.

"Say what? Tell them losing is very normal? Don’t be discouraged and work harder? You tell me. Do you think anyone in our team needs to hear those kinds of words?" Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo stared blankly.

She felt like Ye Xiu should be consoling them and encouraging them, but when she heard Ye Xiu speak, she had second thoughts. Happy……

Tang Rou? Losing only made her more spirited. Did she need encouragement?

Qiao Yifan? He had previous experience as a pro player, but he was an invisible person that had never gone on stage. He had experienced these kinds of difficult setbacks before. How could a loss be put in his eyes?

Luo Ji? He was the one bullied the most in Team Happy. He knew he was weak. Losing was something he could be considered as skilled at.

An Wenyi? He was extremely rational and calm. The feeling of losing was just light appetizer for him.

As for Steamed Bun? Right after losing, he started reviewing the match exuberantly with Luo Ji. How could that be called being struck a blow?

As for Wei Chen? He had already started snoring. He was sleeping very soundly! He had probably already forgotten about all the boos from losing.

Chen Guo stared blankly. She realized that Ye Xiu was right. Console? Encourage? No one in Team Happy needed that because

all of them had their own ways of coping.

"Losing right now is actually a good thing. Everything had been going very smoothly for us the entire time. Even when we met with Team Everlasting, we beat them in an overwhelming victory. That sounds great, but it will actually hide a lot of problems. You're not thinking our team is already perfect and without flaws, right?" Ye Xiu said.

"Of course not." Chen Guo said.

"That's why discovering these problems early makes it easier for us to resolve them. It's much better than suddenly finding about these issues when we encounter a truly formidable opponent." Ye Xiu said.

"Then what's the current problem?" Chen Guo asked.

"From this match, the problem isn't anything new. It's just that new players aren't consistent." Ye Xiu said. His screen already had a recording of the match playing.

"I won't talk too much about Steamed Bun. He sometimes goes off the rails. Sometimes, that will make things difficult for the opponent, but sometimes, it makes it difficult for us. Just like when he got lost against Team Everlasting.... This problem will happen once, and it'll keep happening. This comes from his personality and it won't be easy to fix. In terms of the team, we can only increase our margin of error in our strategies. In terms of the individual, experience would be the best way to resolve this

problem. The experience he has towards he has towards the same situation, the more options he'll have. Probability-wise, the chances of him going off the rails will be lower. The other thing we can do is pray. Pray that when he goes off the rails, the ones that'll be injured will be the opponents and not us..." Ye Xiu said. His screen was playing Steamed Bun's match. In this 3v7 match, Steamed Bun had lost a point in this individual competition. The reason was because of "external circumstances".

"As for the others, their weaknesses were more obvious in the team competition. Little Tang is tenacious and eager to win. The harder the adversity, the better she performs. For a player in the group arena, she couldn't be more suitable. But in a team competition, her explosiveness will sometimes make the team fall apart. This is particularly obvious in this match. Speaking of which, Little Tang really should look at two players as references." Ye Xiu said.

"Which two?"

"Sun Xiang."

"That fool?" Chen Guo despised him.

"Uh, Sun Xiang is a reference for what not to do, especially in Excellent Era's matches last season. There were many cases, where his individual prowess made the team fall apart. Little Tang should take a look. They're the same class too. She can think about what she can do in those situations to truly be the turning point in a match." Ye Xiu said.

"Haha, I know." Chen Guo said happily, "Then what about the other one?"

"Zhou Zekai, of course. He's also an explosive player, but he can use his explosiveness to lead the team to victory. In terms of actual individual skill, Sun Xiang is no worse than Zhou Zekai, but in terms of his accomplishments in tactics and his ability to read the flow of the match, Zhou Zekai is N times better than Sun Xiang. Little Tang needs to improve in this area." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh oh, what about the others?" Chen Guo asked.

"Yifan is the most stable out of all the young ones. But even though he has prior experience as a pro player, he doesn't actually have any official match experience, even more so after he switched to a Phantom Demon. In a chaotic situation, his thinking isn't clear enough. This hesitation has to do with his mentality. Another part of it is because a pro player, who came from learning by the books, can't help but match his style with the standard methods. He needs to find his own path as a Phantom Demon. He's studied other pro players more than enough now." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh..."

"As for Luo Ji, he's still rather weak. When the others go all out, he can't keep up. That can't be forced. We can only wait for him to continue improving. He still has a lot of room to do so. As for An Wenyi, his foundation is quite good. He improved immensely during that period of specialized training. During these two

months, he’s accumulated a lot of high-level experience. His problem is the same as when he first came. His reactions are somewhat slow. However, he’s very smart. He’s trying to use more precise control of the pace to reduce the impact of this flaw." Ye Xiu said.

"But this is a match and not a boss! If it’s just controlling the pace, that won’t work in many sudden situations, no?" Chen Guo said.

"He’s also found a solution to this problem." Ye Xiu smiled.

"What is it?"

"Prediction. He’ll try to predict what will happen and respond to that. Relax. As he accumulates experience, he’ll become an outstanding Cleric." Ye Xiu said.

"Okay..."

"As for Old Wei..." Ye Xiu turned his head to look at the sleeping corpse, Wei Chen, "Age is his problem. He can only rely on his own willpower to overcome it..."

Chapter 969: Mysterious Fantasy's Coach

The age problem. Chen Guo could understand this problem the easiest because she also dealt with this problem. When she was just playing around for fun, age wouldn't really affect anything, but once she started delving deeper into the game, this problem instantly stood out.

"If you've discovered so many problems, shouldn't you talk to them about it?" Chen Guo said.

"Of course I will. Aren't I currently organizing everything right now?" Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo looked. It turned out that Ye Xiu was taking clips from today's match. Then, he would talk about these problems with everyone tomorrow. Now, she could finally feel at ease.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" Chen Guo asked.

Ye Xiu felt around his pockets. He nodded his head and looked at Chen Guo eagerly: "Yeah, help buy me a pack of cigarettes."

Black lines went down Chen Guo's head. She turned around and left. She originally wanted to directly go back to her room, but before she closed the door, she saw Ye Xiu working in front of the computer. Her heart softened. In the end, she couldn't steel her heart and ran to buy Ye Xiu a pack of cigarettes. When she returned, she gently placed it beside his hands and then quietly left.

When she returned to the room, Tang Rou still hadn't gone to bed yet. She was also in front of her computer. Chen Guo walked closer to take a look. Tang Rou was browsing through Battle Mage related material such as videos.

Chen Guo smiled. Ye Xiu was right. Their Team Happy members didn't need consolation or encouragement. Everyone was actively working to learn from their problems.

"Don't sleep too late. Go to bed early." Chen Guo was originally going to chat a bit with Tang Rou, but seeing how she was focused on studying Battle Mages, she softly said a few words and didn't bother her anymore.

"How'd you guys sleep yesterday?" Ye Xiu smiled as he asked everyone.

Everyone looked at each other. For a moment, no one said anything.

"We've been strolling through the Challenger League with ease the entire time. We only considered Excellent Era as our final opponents and overlooked our other opponents. In the last match, we paid the price for that with this loss. Our current situation in Group B is grim. We must do our best and win points in our following two matches. We can't be even the slightest bit careless." Ye Xiu said.

"Understood." Everyone nodded their heads. The atmosphere

was unexpectedly solemn. It was truly a bit different from the usual atmosphere at Happy.

"Then let's first review our previous match!" Ye Xiu said.

It was just like what Ye Xiu said. Winning concealed a lot of their problems. Losses exposed their problems. When they dominated their first match, Ye Xiu didn't really review the match much, but this time, the match review took up the entire morning.

The team worked as a whole. Every individual's problem was the team's problem. As teammates, everyone needed to understand each other's characteristics. This included strengths and weaknesses. Only by completely understanding one another could they coordinate well with each other. As a result, Ye Xiu directly took out every individual's problem and discussed it with the entire team. An individual's efforts and the team's help would make solving the problem half the work with twice the results.

In the morning, the team analyzed the problems that happened during yesterday's match. In the afternoon, they underwent the usual training. The next day, Ye Xiu had already put together information on their next opponents, and they began making preparations.

In the blink of an eye, three days passed. The fourth round would begin on Friday night.

Group B. Team Happy versus Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion, Team Mysterious Fantasy versus Team Trader, Team Ten Steps

One Kill versus no team.

Team Ten Steps One Kill only had 3 points and had already been eliminated early. Today, they didn't even come to the stadium to watch the other teams fight. As for Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion, they had one last hope. This one last hope was originally no different from disappointment, but after seeing Team Trader capsize Team Happy, Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion's spirits were high. They were ready to put their all into this fight.

How could Team Happy give their opponents any chance? Like breaking a dead branch from a tree, they crushed Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion. After just half an hour, Team Happy ended today's match.

But in this round, Team Happy still lost a point.

In this Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion, there was an Assassin called Brilliant Move . He was mediocre in every aspect, but he had extremely good mastery over his Life-Risking Strike. In the match versus Team Mysterious Fantasy, he had also been the one who won them a point.

This Brilliant Move clearly wasn't good in the group arena, so in their confrontation versus Team Happy, he appeared in the individual competition.

Ye Xiu had pointed out this person during their preparation stage, but in the individual competition, Tang Rou was still cheesed by him. Tang Rou was incredibly depressed with the

result. Tang Rou liked to fight face to face. She didn't like fighting dirty. She had trouble facing players like that. This match reflected another one of her problems.

As a result, after this match, Team Happy had 21 points. Team Cloud Viewing Pavilion was eliminated early as well.

On the other side, the match between Team Mysterious Fantasy and Team Trader was still underway. Because Team Happy lost quite a few points against Team Trader in the second round, their chances of making it out of groups went down. The outcome of this match was very important for Team Happy. After finishing up their match, they directly headed over to watch that match. Chen Guo was a spectator, so she could pay attention to both sides. Her expression was not looking good.

The match between Team Mysterious Fantasy and Team Trader had already entered the team competition. In the individual competition and group arena, the results were unexpected: 2 to 3.

In the individual competition, Team Trader actually took 3 points off of Team Mysterious Fantasy. If they beat Team Mysterious Fantasy in the team competition, they would have two upset victories under them, completely displaying their colors as a dark horse. With 8 points, they would be guaranteed to make it out of groups. In the final round with Team Happy versus Team Mysterious Fantasy, one of the teams would end up eliminated.

But even if Team Mysterious Fantasy won against Team Trader in the team competition, would that make it any easier for Team Happy?

Ye Xiu glanced at the player seats. A person caught his eye. He had a little notebook in his hands, and he also looked over at Happy. When he saw Ye Xiu looking at him, he let out a smile.

"Hey! Great Gunner." Ye Xiu greeted.

"Haha, I wouldn't dare to call myself that." The other side laughed. He turned his head back and continued to watch the match.

This person wouldn't go on stage, but in reality, he was the true core of Team Mysterious Fantasy.

Zhang Yiwei. He was a pro player who joined the Alliance in season two. That year, he was an extremely famous Sharpshooter. However, nowadays, his glory had been masked by the younger generation. Nothing could be done about that. Zhang Yiwei's successor was too dazzling.

Most of Zhang Yiwei's career had been with Team Samsara. His character was Cloud Piercer, which was now the Great Gunner. It was the character currently being used by the number one player in the Alliance, Zhou Zekai. Ye Xiu called him Great Gunner, but Zhang Yiwei didn't dare to call himself that. He wasn't trying to be modest. When he was still playing on Cloud Piercer, it hadn't earned the title Great Gunner yet.

Having such a successor was a blessing to the team, but for the senior, it was a rather sorrowful matter. Zhou Zekai's dominant

performance with Cloud Piercer made him seem incompetent.

After Zhou Zekai succeeded Zhang Yiwei, he sadly left Team Samsara and drifted for two seasons. In the end, he announced his retirement in season six. He had a beautiful turn around though and became Team Mysterious Fantasy's coach. It could be said that he flipped a new chapter in the history of Glory. Before him, pro teams didn't have a coaching position. That year, the new Team Mysterious Fantasy successfully remained in the Alliance. Others immediately took after them. The next year, the new Team Bright Green also hired a coach to help out their team.

Zhang Yiwei was responsible for at least half of Team Mysterious Fantasy's achievements. As a result, Team Mysterious Fantasy's true core member wasn't on stage, but on the side as their coach. Even when the team was relegated last season, it looked like the owner of Team Mysterious Fantasy had confidence in Zhang Yiwei and had him stay on the team.

"It seems like Team Mysterious Fantasy's situation is quite good?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu curiously. In the team competition, Team Mysterious Fantasy held a stable lead. It didn't seem like the dark horse Team Trader wouldn't be able to stay dark.

"As long as they aren't careless, Team Mysterious Fantasy shouldn't lose to Team Trader." Ye Xiu said. He glanced at Zhang Yiwei again.

"That's good." Chen Guo smiled.

"Good? What's good?" Ye Xiu asked.

"If Mysterious Fantasy wins, won't it make easier for us in the final round?" Chen Guo said.

"Look more carefully at the points please!" Ye Xiu said.

"What?" Chen Guo was startled. She started calculating the points according to the current situation.

If the outcome turned out as expected and Team Mysterious Fantasy beat Team Trader, the final score would be 7 to 3. With that, after the fourth round, Team Trader would be completely done with their four matches. They would temporarily be in first place with 28 points. Team Mysterious Fantasy would be done with three out of four matches and would be second at 26 points. Team Happy would be done with three out of four matches and would be at third at 21 points. The other two teams didn't matter.

In the final round, Team Trader would not have to play. Team Happy would be against Team Mysterious Fantasy. The other match didn't matter. The final point total made Chen Guo pale.

Team Trader's 28 points wouldn't change after this round. The point total for Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy would change though because of the final round. Team Happy was behind Team Mysterious Fantasy by 5 points and behind Team Trader by 7 points. In the final round, how many points did Team Happy need to win?

"8 points..." Ye Xiu gave the answer.

Only with 8 points would Team Happy have 29 points and make it out of the group stage. If they had one fewer point, Team Mysterious Fantasy would take first with 29 points. Team Happy and Team Trader would both have 28 points, but according to the tournament rules, if two teams had the same number of points, the match between the two tied teams would be looked at. Team Happy had lost to Team Trader 3 to 7, so Team Happy would be eliminated.

In this match, Team Mysterious Fantasy's advantage became more and more obvious. They still had all five players, but three players on Team Trader had already been killed off. Zhang Wenyi let out a satisfied smile. He turned his head and looked at Team Happy again.

Chapter 970: Desperate Times

The fourth round of the match had come an end.

Team Mysterious Fantasy ended up defeating Team Trader in the team competition, winning this round seven to three. The two teams left the stage. Team Mysterious Fantasy's players seemed in high spirits, though the players of Team Trader didn't seem too down from their defeat either. As a grassroots team made up of normal players, Team Trader had the best performance among all the grassroots teams. Despite being seen as nothing but canon fodder, they had managed to snatch 10 points in total from two strong teams. After the four matches, the were in the lead with 28 points in a group thought to be a lost cause. An average score of seven per round was already very amazing. Group A's pro team Jade Dynasty had only managed to gain a total of 29 points after four rounds.

Team Trader had already done the best they could and the audience applauded for them. After Team Trader's players accepted the liberal applause from the audience, they left the stadium with their heads held high.

Many people had already began to understand what the situation of Group B was like. Many people reveled in Happy's misfortune, jeering at them. Chen Guo couldn't spare any energy to be angry. The situation was very worrying.

"We should go too!" Ye Xiu called out and Happy's members rose to leave as well. Yet they managed to bump into Team Mysterious Fantasy on the way out through the player passageway.

Despite how this last battle would decide their respective fates, Team Mysterious Fantasy's players all seemed very relaxed, as if they had this in the bag already. The coach, Zhang Yiwei, looked over and saw three familiar faces from the past. However, these three were all top Gods back then and as for Zhang Yiwei? He might have been a core member of Team Samsara, but the Samsara back then wasn't the champion team it was now. As a core member, he couldn't compare to these top Gods.

Yet now, these big shots of the past had been tightly suppressed by him. This was a delightful feeling he had never had before. Zhang Yiwei hadn't ever though he'd be able to have such an experience in the Challenger League and he looked to be the happiest out of all the Team Mysterious Fantasy players.

"Hey there, you guys!" This guy even greeted them personally.

Happy's members looked at him, silent.

"It's the last round! Keep working hard, everyone!" Zhang Yiwei's words were directed at all of Happy's members, but his gaze was fixed on the three old Gods.

"If you accidentally get eliminated by Trader, then you would be a disappointment to all this attention you've gained!" A member of Team Mysterious Fantasy cut in from behind Zhang Yiwei. In the Challenger League, Happy was definitely the team that gained the most attention, if you didn't count Excellent Era. Meanwhile, Mysterious Fantasy hadn't gained any sort of attention ever since

they had fallen to the Challenger League, making them a bit jealous. Now, seeing how this popular team was close to being swept miserably out of the competition, the team members of Mysterious Fantasy were no less delighted than their coach, even though it was directed at something different.

"We won't be eliminated," Ye Xiu replied calmly.

"Haha, as expected of God Ye Qiu, you're so confident. Have you calculated how many points you have to get in the last round yet?" Zhang Yiwei asked, smiling nicely.

Wei Chen then took a step forwards, staring directly at Zhang Yiwei. "Brat, are you trying to play some dirty trick on us?"

Zhang Yiwei had been a core team member once, having been a part of the Alliance for several years. Wei Chen's threatening demeanor didn't scare him at all, and he instead stared right back at Wei Chen. "What on earth are you talking about, Captain Wei?" He used Wei Chen's old title when referring to him.

"Do you think I can't tell?" Wei Chen asked.

"So what if you can?" Zhang Yiwei sneered, "I'm only choosing the best result for Mysterious Fantasy. Not only for now, but in the future, too. Your strength is undeniably above that of Trader's, so it'd be in my best interests if you were squeezed out of the competition."

"Heh, don't talk as if you've already won!" Ye Xiu suddenly said.

"It's the last round, keep working hard, everyone," Ye Xiu returned what Zhang Yiwei had said before to Mysterious Fantasy verbatim. "If you accidentally get eliminated by Trader, then you would be a disappointment to your ex-pro status!

"Heh," Zhang Yiwei laughed lightly after hearing this. A veteran player like that wasn't easy to enrage, as expected. "Then let us see what happens!"

"See you at the match."

"See you at the match!"

The two teams returned to the hotel. Though Happy hadn't at all been at a disadvantage in the clash just now, it was undebatable that the last round of the competition did. Returning to the hotel, none of them could calm down enough to rest and soon enough they found themselves all gathering in the hotel Internet cafe, one by one.

Chen Guo saw their unity in this unspoken gathering, and was quietly excited.

"In the last round, we have to get eight points and wipe the floor with Mysterious Fantasy." Chen Guo didn't bother to lead in, going straight for the kill and encouraging their morale.

Yet then she heard Mo Fan, who was in the corner, say stoically without even raising his head, "We won't be able to wipe out Mysterious Fantasy with just eight points."

"What?" Chen Guo paused in shock and the others all turned their head to look. They had never thought it would be Mo Fan to respond first.

"Yes, that's right. If it's just eight points, Mysterious Fantasy would get two points and tie with Trader at 28 in total. However, they had won seven to three in their match again Trader, so then it would be Trader that's eliminated, according to the rules." Ye Xiu said before glancing over at Mo Fan. "I wouldn't have thought you cared."

Mo Fan didn't respond.

"Do you want to play this round?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I can." Mo Fan's answer wasn't "I do," but "I can."

Everyone stared at Mo Fan. They might not have interacted with him much, but they had lived together for a quite some time and everyone was used to having this emotionless, silent guy in the training room. Mo Fan wasn't exactly their friend, but he was still a part of their team, that's what everyone thought. As for Mo Fan's skill in Glory, everyone acknowledged it. Even though he might have not been able to integrate himself into the team at first, he had become part of the system after teamwork training in the new dungeons and training against the pro players. However, his

personality meant that he would never really be a team player and Ye Xiu wouldn't force him on that front.

Being a team player had nothing to do with having a place in a team. So long as their tactics were reasonable and they were able to carry them out well, a non-team player could also be a very important part of a team.

Tactics were also something that depended on people. Mature teams already had a tactical system they were used to, so finding players that suited their set of tactics was a big benefit for them. However, Happy was a new team so they didn't have their own set of tactics. This was why they needed to build up their own set of tactics according to the individuals where everyone could work efficiently.

Hearing Mo Fan's response, Ye Xiu smiled and nodded and then looked towards Luo Ji. "In the last round, we need to make sure we win by as large of a lead as possible, so I'm afraid you won't be able to play for now."

"I understand." Luo Ji nodded, though he was still a little dejected. In these critical moments, he was unable to contribute to the team. It didn't feel good.

"Continue to work hard!" Ye Xiu said. The reality of Luo Ji's skill wasn't any sort of taboo for Happy, so Ye Xiu could easily announce his arrangements at times like this without needing to make any excuses.

Then, Ye Xiu's gaze turned to Sun Zheping. "Are you alright with taking part in this round?"

"If I don't take part now, why am I even here?" Sun Zheping replied.

Ye Xiu smiled. Sun Zheping wasn't Happy's future, so Ye Xiu would usually give him less chances to take part although those matches probably wouldn't be any trouble for Sun Zheping. However, if he didn't have Sun Zheping take part in these critical moments, then there would be no point to his presence.

"Are you alright with participating in both the individual and team competitions?" Ye Xiu asked. He wasn't very clear on Sun Zheping's injury.

"I'll have no problem dealing with these characters," Sun Zheping responded.

"Ok, then you can take on the first individual competition!" Ye Xiu said. Being the first to participate would allow him to have more time to rest before the Team Competition.

"Then the second person had better prepare earlier. The match will probably end quickly," Sun Zheping said.

Ye Xiu didn't say anything about his underestimating of their opponents. This was his pride and freedom. A veteran like him wouldn't make the rookie mistake of truly underestimating their

opponents.

"Mo Fan, you'll be second," Ye Xiu decided.

Mo Fan nodded.

As for the third... Ye Xiu was a little hesitant. He had narrowed it down to two choices, Wei Chen and Wu Chen. Wei Chen had expended a lot of energy against Team Trader that day and had yet to fully recover; Ye Xiu could tell he wasn't in top form. As for Wu Chen, he had good skills. His form had been preserved quite well after coming to Happy, but the character he was using, Dawn Rifle, didn't have very good equipment. Compared to the fortifications done to the other characters, Dawn Rifle wasn't a character that Happy put importance on. After all, Wu Chen didn't come to Happy to continue being a pro player.

"The third competition is very crucial. So it seems like this is something only I can shoulder." That was when Wei Chen shamelessly recommended himself.

Ye Xiu smiled and accepted this arrangement.

"Group arena, Steamed Bun, Little Tang, me."

Steamed Bun and Tang Rou nodded, seeming to have guessed that they would be in this arrangement.

"And lastly, the team competition." Ye Xiu looked over the

gathered

"No healer? That's crazy!" Even Sun Zheping was shocked at the team competition arrangements.

"You sure this will work?" Chen Guo was even more worried now.

Ye Xiu looked towards An Wenyi. "We'll be using as fast of a pace as possible in the team competition, so the current you might not be able to keep up."

"Ok," An Wenyi nodded calmly. He could accept any arrangement, so long as there was logic behind it.

"We have two days. Let's practice this formation as much as possible!" Ye Xiu finally said.

Chapter 971: God Setting Out

The weekend passed by quickly, and the Pro League continued to attract a lot of attention. However, Challenger League's offline tournament entered its most crucial time, so in this week's Monday Esports Home, there was an additional half a page.

The suspense in Group A and D had ended after the fourth round. The two pro teams, Jade Dynasty and Excellent Era, had locked into first place in groups. The teams that had reached second place in groups stood out as well.

However, Group B and C entered into a greater state of chaos in the fourth round. In terms of suspense, Group C's matches were decent. All five teams still had a chance of making it to next round. Real suspense was when one would need to go through the matches in the last round in order to determine who would win. As for Group B? Although there was a chance for all three of the teams, Happy needed to snatch over eight points from Team Mysterious Fantasy this round. Quite a lot of people believed that Happy had no hope. On the forums, players that looked down on Happy finally found a topic to express themselves, so there were all kinds of ricidules being flung around. As for people who put their hopes in Happy, they constantly brought out the evidence that Happy had swept away Everlasting to prove the former's possibilities. However, their voice was weaker compared to the ridicule.

In the Esports Home issue on Monday, there were two complete reports that specifically analysed Group B's situation for the readers. In this round, Team Mysterious Fantasy only needed to get two points to get by safe and sound. If they got one more point,

they could kick Happy away. They had a greater psychological advantage, so the two believed Team Mysterious Fantasy had higher chances of winning. However, the Esports Home represented the country, not of a certain region, so they couldn’t show too much of their personal preferences. Contrary to this, the regional evening reports for Team Mysterious Fantasy gave a positive report on the team’s excellent situation. They didn’t even try to hide their genuine praises and expectations.

While in City H, where Happy was located, the media had previously praised Excellent Era highly. If Excellent Era had stayed in the Pro League this season, then the media would definitely give more positive compliments towards such an eye-catching team in the Challenger League coming from their city. Unfortunately, Excellent Era happened to join Challenger League this season, so the two teams became opponents who had to fight to the death. Furthermore, Happy challenged Excellent Era when it came up, so this situation was hard for the media in City H. When Happy and Excellent Era were compared, it was obvious that no one would think of them being equals. However, before the both sides even have a chance to clash, Happy was already stuck in a dangerous position of being eliminated. The media from City H could finally speak up for the local team. However, what they said was nothing new. What the media could find was the fact that Happy had beat Everlasting. With this as evidence, they hoped that Happy could perform a miracle once more.

"Miracle?" When Ye Xiu saw this word constantly pop up in the report, he laughed. "They’re using this word already! What word would they use when we beat Excellent Era. I’m pretty worried for them!"

"Hahaha..." Chen Guo laughed dryly. The past few days had been hard on her. She was anxious and worried in every way possible. Especially after seeing Ye Xiu's confident plan of not including a healer Chen Guo wouldn't be herself if she could stay calm. Although she knew that Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had a bit of skill in healing, but just having level 20 and under healer skills didn't mean he could take up the healing responsibilities of a real Cleric or Paladin. Chen Guo was worried over making such a bold strategic move at such a crucial moment. Chen Guo feared that they would slip up like when Ye Xiu decided not to join the team match in the round against Team Trader.

However, the morale within the whole team was pretty good for the past few days. Chen Guo didn't want to speak out her concerns and create an unexpected change of mood. Even though the day of competition had arrived, Ye Xiu still had the mood to mock the words in the report. Chen Guo couldn't find any way to be at ease.

"Alright, call on everyone to set off!" Ye Xiu got up and exited through the door. This was followed by the sound of a door opening and locking in the corridor. Team Happy set out.

In this last round, the stadium for this offline match was much more packed compared to the previous rounds. After going through some random interviews, it was found that many of the audiences in the stadium came to watch the match between Happy and Mysterious Fantasy.

"I'm not a fan of Mysterious Fantasy, but I'm definitely not a fan of Happy. I hope Mysterious Fantasy can get three points this round, so Happy can just f*ck off!"

This was the majority of the responses from the random interviews. However, at the same time, everyone found that a new banner appeared on site: Welcome back, Ye Xiu!

Now that Ye Xiu's Ye Qiu matter had been cleared up, nothing went out of hand under the protection of the league. It was said that Ye Qiu was a name Ye Xiu came up with when he joined the competitive scene, just like a stage name. As for now, he finally returned by using his actual name.

The final confirmation of his identity verified the hot news of "God's return". The influence of the first God on the competitive scene was obviously immense. His action of creating a team to fight to the death against Excellent Era in Challenger League attracted a lot of resentment from many Excellent Era fans. However, there were still a lot of players who liked this God, but felt nothing towards Excellent Era. Many of these fans were extremely welcome towards God's return.

There were even fans from other teams who started to try to help their team recruit Ye Xiu. Although it was wishful thinking, they called for God to join their team. There was an increase in all kinds of analysis having to do with "Reasons Ye Qiu should join XX team" online.

Among all this, there was one tragic Tyranny fan. He cried out for Ye Xiu to join Tyranny so that the most extravagant team in the history of Glory could be formed. However, he received attacks from Tyranny's diehard fans. It was evident that, as a loyal fan of Tyranny, Ye Qiu was the most hated pro player in Glory. The

diehard fans even seriously threatened Tyranny that if they recruited Ye Qiu, they would boycott all of Tyranny's future competition as a form of protest. It was as if Ye Qiu joining Team Tyranny was already a reality……

As a result, at the site of Challenger League, supporters of God Ye Qiu gradually gathered. This was the most relieving thing for Chen Guo to see for the past few days.

At the same time, Sun Zheping appearing in Team Happy also attracted a lot of attention, especially fans of Team Hundred Blossoms. There were all kinds of astonishment and awe. The journalists contacted Team Hundred Blossoms. However, the clubs expressed that they didn't know about Sun Zheping's return. They also didn't express any intentions of contacting Sun Zheping at the moment. This meant that the future of Hundred Blossoms still revolved around Yu Feng as the ace.

Surrounding news and events continued to emerge, but for Happy, their current match was what mattered most. The round between Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy would be played live on the side. This was a match in the offline tournament that had things to watch for.

The competition started at eight o'clock sharp. Since there were seven other matches going on at the same time, they couldn't put too much of their focus on one particular match. The match between Happy and Mysterious Fantasy wasn't able to get more part on screen. It was obvious that they wouldn't announce the list of the contestants' names whom were playing. After all, there were eight matches going on the same time, they wouldn't be able to

broadcast them all.

The list was shown through the electronic screen. As for Happy, first up was Sun Zheping.

This created a stir in the stadium. After all, for an old Glory fan, this name held brilliant radiance.

"Finally going on stage?" Zhang Yiwei spoke. His face was filled with confidence, and he turned his head to see the members of Happy. The seats for the two competing teams in the match were quite close, so they could interact directly with each other.

"There are still a lot of "finally" moments to come. Take it easy on that word." Ye Xiu said.

"Haha, I'll be looking forward to it." Zhang Yiwei laughed. The first player from Mysterious Fantasy was also announced at the same time: Fang Daxu. He was a Knight player who had been in Mysterious Fantasy's roster for the last two seasons. When Mysterious Fantasy was eliminated, he didn't receive invitations from any other teams. It could be seen that his skills weren't too outstanding.

The two player entered into the match, and started to load in their characters. Zhang Yiwei turned his head to look at Ye Xiu. "Is Sun Zheping's hand injury alright?"

"What do you think?" Ye Xiu said.

"I say he should use it more cautiously." Zhang Yiwei said.

Chen Guo was alarmed when she heard this. He even knew about this? Could there be traitors on the team?! However, Ye Xiu remained cool. He laughed and didn't reply. He knew that although Zhang Yiwei wasn't an outstanding player, he had been in the circle for quite some time, so was experienced and had knowledge. Sun Zheping's condition wasn't hard to guess, but he wasn't able to confirm about it. Ye Xiu wouldn't let him worm that fact out.

"This matchup is quite good." Zhang Yiwei laughed.

"Seems like you've done your research!" Ye Xiu said. Teams wouldn't normally reveal the player's playing order before hand. As a result, guessing the opponent's order, and making targeted arrangements was one branch of study in a match. Judging from Zhang Yiwei's look and expression, it seemed like he guessed that Happy would send Sun Zheping to play first.

"You guys are in a hurry to snatch the points. If Sun Zheping doesn't play, then there would be no point for him to be in your team. If there's pressure from his hand injury, it's better if he plays earlier. Then, he would be able to rest for a bit longer before he plays in the team match." Zhang Yiwei said.

Chen Guo was startled, why would the opponent know all of these? Is it really from guessing?

"So you sent a Knight on stage. It seems like you are planning to drag on the fight?" Ye Xiu said.

Zhang Yiwei laughed without speaking, and focused his gaze on the competition's screen. The two characters had finished loading. Both sides pressed ready and were about to be loaded into the map.

There were no home and away games, so they were no home and away teams. The maps in the offline tournament were all chosen by the league. All of the maps were made specifically for competitive Glory. No team would have the chance to practice with it beforehand, so it was relatively fair. The map would also be used for the other matches. This was confirmed and announced on the first day of the competition, so people could download the maps. From that moment onwards, every team would train with the map they would use.

The two loaded characters started to head towards the map's center. Since Sun Zheping was a God, the broadcast commentator would definitely emphasize mentioning and introducing him. The commentary introduced his previous glory, playstyle, and achievements, while feeling pleased. It was much easier to broadcast a match with professional players because they had stories and content to talk about. Contrastingly, he could only dully explain the match for the teams made of online players. There were no spice to it.

The two characters met before the commentator could finish introducing Sun Zheping's background. He could only stop hurriedly, and pay attention to the match.

"Oh, the two sides have met."

"Seems like Mysterious Fantasy's Fang Daxu is putting out a defensive stance, and prepared to strike back."

"Sun Zheping is fighting straight on."

"Wow! A big move! He started with a big move the moment the fight started. This confidence is worthy of a former God!"

"Combo! Oh, it's linked up beautifully. It seems that despite not fighting in competitions for so many years, Sun Zheping didn't lose any of his abilities."

"Fang Daxu is at an absolute disadvantage!"

"A wave of combo with twelve hits! Although the hits weren't heavy, the damage output is very impressive. It's concise and practical! Eh..."

"The attacks have connected, here comes another wave... the one from before was a fake combo, so the combos were disconnected according to the system's calculations. However, the attacks still connected. Fang Daxu must be having a hard time, isn't he?"

"Fang Daxu's situation is very passive!"

"Fang Daxu should hurry up and come up with an idea."

"Fang Daxu's situation is dangerous..."

"Fang Daxu..."

"Dead..."

"Uh... Let's continue to talk about player Sun Zheping's situation after the matches..." The commentator started to sweat. He didn't even have another chance to continue to talk about Sun Zheping's past because the round had ended.

Chapter 972: Extreme Contrast

It was impossible to know the reactions of those who were watching the live broadcast, but the audience present was as silent as a grave.

Most of the audience had been watching this match closely, so what they saw was the two characters meeting and then Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep attacking, attacking, attacking and then his opponent died.

Did Fang Daxu's Knight even use any skills?

Everyone's memory of it seemed almost blurred. Even if skills had been used, they didn't seem to have done anything, buried amongst Another Summer of Sleep's attacks.

One minute and seventeen seconds...

This was the amount of time the first Individual competition had taken. It wasn't until the statistics were shown that the audience went mad.

This was a pro level match right? Even though Mysterious Fantasy might not be the strongest, they had still once been a pro team, right? Even though Fang Daxu hadn't been taken in by any of the other pro teams, he still managed to stay in the pro circle a full two years, no?

One minute seventeen seconds? And a Knight as well? He just lost with seemingly no resistance like that?

Most of the audience came to see Happy humiliated, but in this moment, they couldn't help but boo Mysterious Fantasy.

They had seen fast, but nothing this fast. A tanky Knight being wiped out in one minute and seventeen seconds, did he grab the wrong equipment and go up with cloth armor?

Amidst the booing, Sun Zheping had already come down from the stage. He had immediately stood up and left as soon as the result was out.

"So fast." Ye Xiu smiled, stretching his hand out to Sun Zheping.

"I wanted to rest earlier." Sun Zheping high fived Ye Xiu before returning to his own seat, turning to glance over at Zhang Yiwei, tilting his head and saying, "A Knight, huh?"

Zhang Yiwei's face was clouded over and that was when he saw their team's Fang Daxu walk out from the stands in bewilderment, listening to the booing increase by several decibels with further bewilderment, and come down from the stage with even more bewilderment. Seeing the dumb look on his face made Zhang Yiwei irritated and he wanted to go over and kick some sense into the player. However, he knew that this was nowhere near appropriate. He had to keep calm, otherwise it could affect the morale of the entire team. Having been a coach for two years, Zhang Yiwei understood the ins and outs of properly leading a team. In his

heart, he might've been about to erupt, but after Fang Daxu came down, he only said, lightly, "You were too impatient."

"Ah?" Fang Daxu who's mind had cleared a bit was bewildered once more. Had he been impatient? However, before he could say anything, Zhang Yiwei was already continuing, "Go and take a break!"

Fang Daxu sat to one side dumbly. He had no idea that this was one of Zhang Yiwei's leadership techniques. He had been clearly and completely suppressed by the opponent, yet from Zhang Yiwei's mouth it sounded like Fang Daxu had simply underestimated his opponent. This way, he didn't let the opponent's spirits rise too much and reminded the other players to not lower their guard either.

"Luo Tian, it's your turn," Zhang Yiwei then called for the second player to go up. His tone was calm and kept his inner shock hidden well. He understood very clearly that Happy's reasons for arranging Sun Zheping to play first didn't just stop at the fact that Sun Zheping needed rest. At the same time, they were hoping that Sun Zheping would score them an overwhelming victory for the opening match and boost their morale while striking at their opponent's.

Zhang Yiwei wasn't hoping for Fang Daxu to score a point when he had arranged for Fang Daxu to be their first player, but for him to utilize the Knight's defensive capabilities to their fullest, thereby dragging the match on and forcing Sun Zheping to expend even more energy on it. At the same time, they could minimize the impact of their opponent's fierce arrangement. This was killing

two birds with one stone. Yet in the end, Fang Daxu didn't do a good job, unable to achieve any of his goals. So all Zhang Yiwei could do was use his own composure to minimize the impact this defeat brought to his team.

Zhang Yiwei's actions helped calm the players of Mysterious Fantasy quite a lot, as expected. However, Luo Tian, who was up next, didn't seem to be adhering to expectations. The effects of Sun Zheping's overwhelming performance couldn't be completely neutralized by just a few words and a calm attitude from Zhang Yiwei.

"Do your best." Zhang Yiwei didn't say too much. The more he said, the more nervous he'd seem. If he was too serious about a match where they only needed to get two points, it might have the opposite effect and make the players panic.

Luo Tian nodded and took a deep breath before heading to the stage.

As for Happy, Zhang Yiwei looked around and saw Mo Fan stand up.

"Hm, this guy hasn't seemed to have played any matches before? How come he's become restless today?" Zhang Yiwei said, trying to strike at Mo Fan emotionally. However, he got no visible response, not even a glance before Mo Fan walked away and onto the stage, making Zhang Yiwei suspect that his voice just now had been too quiet for him to notice.

"Haha, don't be offended. He's always like this. He even ignores me, usually," Ye Xiu said.

"Hahaha...." Zhang Yiwei laughed dryly, evidently not believing Ye Xiu's words. On the other hand, Happy's other members felt like Ye Xiu was sticking gold on his face. Mo Fan ignoring him? More like absolutely despising him!

The players of each side had already entered the stands, and their characters were loaded into the map.

Mysterious Fantasy's Luo Tian had played as a core member for two years, using an Elementalist character.

After the commentator gave some vague background information on Luo Tian, he couldn't be bothered with this unimportant and small character from a relegated team anymore. His interest was more on Mo Fan, enthusiastically regaling everyone with the tales of Deception in the Heavenly Domain

"Hey, hey, don't forget your impartiality!" As the commentator spoke excitedly, the program director hurriedly gave him a quick reminder. The commentator snapped out of it and hastily added, "Of course, this sort of behavior shouldn't be encouraged. We hope that everyone can play fairly and peacefully..."

"Okay, the match has begun, let us turn our attention to the match." The commentator knew that his ramble about scrip-picking hadn't been very appropriate, so he quickly stopped himself and turned to the match.

After the defeat last round, Mysterious Fantasy's player was much more careful. Compared to Luo Tian, Mo Fan had very little fame in the pro circle, but Luo Tian didn't dare to underestimate him at all. As he had his character move forth, he continuously used small skills to test out his surrounding, guarded against being closed in on.

Ninjas weren't the best at close combat, but they were very good at hiding their movements and getting close to their targets without being noticed. From this point of view, Ninjas had an advantage over classes like the Elementalist that feared being closed in on. It was because of this that Elementalists would put priority on guarding against this. The current Luo Tian was cautiously having his Elementalist move forwards, using different moves and techniques, yet he never caught even a glimpse of Mo Fan.

The audience was much more clear on Mo Fan's whereabouts. From the start, Mo Fan had chosen a roundabout path, preparing a sneak attack on his opponent as expected.

Currently, Deception was already watching Luo Tian's Elementalist from the shadows, but Luo Tian had yet to realize this. Everyone was on the edge of their seats, thinking that Deception was about to find a chance to close in, but all Deception did was patiently follow the Elementalist around, as if waiting for a chance.

Everyone had no choice but to continue waiting.

"Chance!"

"Chance!"

"Chance!"

The commentator had already yelled out "chance" thrice, but Mo Fan continued to abstain from action. The commentator didn't dare to yell it anymore. This thunder without rain put him in an awkward position with his yelling! However, even if he didn't yell aloud, he would still keep track in his heart. It wasn't just him, but the entire audience that was keeping tracking of Mo Fan's opportunities.

"He didn't strike..."

"He still hasn't struck..."

"Fuck, that was a great opportunity, but he still didn't take it?"

Slowly, more and more people began to lose their patience. This Deception seemed to be merely following Luo Tian's Elementalist, making Mysterious Fantasy's members anxious as hell. Yet this guy never struck. It was as if just continuing to stalk his opponent would give him victory.

Mysterious Fantasy started out anxious, but slowly became impatient as well. Zhang Yiwei turned his head around, smiling falsely. "I say, this player of yours sure is careful!"

Careful? This was something the commentator had also said, but now it didn't even seem appropriate to use this word anymore. If this was considered "careful", then "careful" must be feeling very pressured.

"He just has enough patience," Ye Xiu said with a smile.

"Is that so? Then why don't you tell me how long he can wait? If you don't tell me, then I'll really have no way of knowing," Zhang Yiwei said.

"Don't worry, he'll strike when the time is right. Don't think too much about it. Go and think about what to say to your team after your second consecutive defeat!" Ye Xiu replied.

"I wouldn't do something as unnecessary as that," Zhang Yiwei said, turning his head back and ignoring Ye Xiu.

On the field, Deception was still following his target. Luo Tian had carefully moved all the way until he finally arrived at where Deception had started from, but still didn't find his target. Luo Tian immediately hesitated, not knowing where to go next. He helplessly turned around, choosing another path and following it carefully like he had before.

The audience was being driven crazy.

The previous match had been extremely direct, with the

opponent being cut to pieces almost instantly. Although the result wasn't ideal, it was at least very satisfying to watch. Now the second match was an extreme contrast to the first. Last match was a swift one minute seventeen seconds, and now it had become an unending stall.

It had been three minutes since the match had started. At a pro level, this was enough time for the match to have come to a close. Yet in the current match, the two sides hadn't even clashed once.

Luo Tian's Elementalist was already wandering around aimlessly. Yet the target he was trying to find, Deception, was just following after him closely without him knowing.

The boos started again, all yelling for Mo Fan to get out. However, Mo Fan didn't adhere, continuing to follow Luo Tian.

"Patient, huh?" Zhang Yiwei turned around again, sarcasm on his tongue.

"Yup, patient." Ye Xiu nodded in affirmation.

"So he's just going to be patient like this forever?"

"Of course not. Haven't you seen how many people have already lost their patience?" Ye Xiu pointed at the jeering crowds. "Those without patience will only lose."

As Ye Xiu's words fell, Zhang Yiwei startled, turning to the

match. As expected, Luo Tian had already begun to lose his patience, his techniques became more and more mechanical.

The opportunity had finally arrived!

Chapter 973: A Scrap Picker's Talents

Luo Tian's half-hearted wariness made Zhang Yiwei feel the urge to rush onto the stage and whip that guy. You're in the middle of a match! How can you become so relaxed?

In reality, patience wasn't something that could completely disappear all of a sudden. Patience had to be gradually worn down. Luo Tian was no exception. The crowd was also no exception. Even Zhang Yiwei was no exception. If he had been patiently and calmly watching the match, he would have noticed Luo Tian's movements losing shape long ago. He wouldn't have abruptly noticed it just now.

The expression on Zhang Yiwei's face suddenly changed. Right when he was about to cry not good, Mo Fan's Deception finally moved.

Ninjutsu - Disappearing Body Technique!

During these 30 seconds, Ninjas could climb in all sorts of angles like a spider, allowing them to attack from a blind spot. In the beginning, Luo Tian had been wary of this, but his guard had already gone down. Mo Fan had thoroughly checked the surrounding terrain. His figure slowly inched closer to Luo Tian's Elementalist in a strange manner.

It was a very ordinary strategy, but the patience and concentration displayed by Mo Fan was quite frightening. It wasn't just strolling down the road towards his target. He had to ensure

that he wouldn't be noticed, so he couldn't be careless at all. Due to his long scrap picking career, Mo Fan was a master in both of these aspects. Most pro players didn't have that type of experience. As time passed, Luo Tian's movements started to become sloppy, but Mo Fan still didn't show himself. When concentration faced carelessness, the result was obvious the moment Deception made a move.

Ninjutsu - Shadow Dance!

When Deception began his assault, he immediately started off with a high-level skill. Countless shadows of Deception suddenly appeared in front of the already jittery Luo Tian. Let alone figuring out which shadow was the core, Luo Tian wasn't even able to react to the incoming attack in time. The shadows pounced on him, and the combo count skyrocketed. Mo Fan had been patiently waiting for an opportunity to the extent that everyone had started feeling annoyed, but as soon as he attacked, his agility didn't lose to Sun Zheping at all. This was also a habit acquired from scrap picking. If he wasn't so decisive, he would have turned into scrap who knew how many times throughout his scrap picking career.

But because of his habits from scrap picking, while Mo Fan acquired several strengths, he also acquired several flaws. Although Mo Fan's offensive was very fierce, he lacked the ability to consistently extend his combos. It felt a bit like Cheng Yaojin and his three axe strokes. When he scrap picked, even if he attacked to kill his opponents, he would usually only choose characters who only a sliver of health left. As a scrap picker, picking a fight with a group of full-health players was just asking for his own death.

Frequently killing these types of low-health targets led to Mo Fan being exceptional at short bursts of damage, but his attack afterwards felt rather weak.

Sun Zheping destroyed a Knight in 1 minute 17 seconds. On the other hand, after Mo Fan successfully closed in on the Elementalist, he was unable to quickly end the battle in a short period of time. In comparison to his sudden ambush with several high-level skills linked together, his following attacks made it feel like the offensive had a strong start but weak finish**.

Normal players might not be able to notice such a minute difference, but Zhang Yiwei was a former pro player with a wealth of experience. He immediately noticed it.

"It's an opportunity! Steady, steady!" Zhang Yiwei couldn't help but blurt out. He completely forgot that Luo Tian couldn't hear him at all. However, Luo Tian didn't disappoint him. After being caught off guard, he started steadying himself.

"Don't feel too delighted just yet." Zhang Yiwei turned his head to glance at the relaxed and smiling Ye Xiu.

"Hahaha." Ye Xiu laughed. Zhang Yiwei turned his head back and suddenly froze.

After Deception's three axe strokes, his offensive instantly became weak. Luo Tian steadied himself and, right when he was about to launch his counterattack, he saw that Deception was running away.

Yes, running away!

The battle wasn't over yet. Luo Tian's Elementalist hadn't started his counterattack yet, and Deception was actually running away already. Luo Tian hadn't predicted this would happen. When he started chasing after him, Deception had already disappeared without a trace. Luo Tian suddenly also froze in his seat.

"Happy's Mo Fan is really surprising." The commentator was also stunned, but he couldn't be idle, "But I have to say, this is truly a scrap picker's style of fighting."

Deception had disappeared, but that was only from Luo Tian's perspective. Everyone else could see Deception's location from the god's view on stream. He had gone into hiding again. It was just like in the beginning. He was following Luo Tian's Elementalist closely. The match once again circled back to the very beginning. It was just that this time, Luo Tian wasn't nearly as calm as before; he was searching frantically for traces of Deception. On the other hand, Mo Fan was as calm and patient as ever. His previous burst of attacks didn't seem to make him feel fired up.

This was another characteristic of a scrap picker: restraint.

Let's say there was an extremely precious piece of equipment in front of your face. How many players could restrain themselves from picking it up? Most would rush forward to give it a try even if they ended up dying, but Mo Fan would never do so. He would always wait for the right opportunity before acting, even if he

wasn't able to get it in the end as a result.

When he felt like the situation wasn't suitable for him to continue, he wouldn't continue even if the crowd's boos instantly erupted. This type of playstyle was clearly unpopular.

Unfortunately, these boos didn't help Zhang Yiwei feel any better either.

Even if Mo Fan failed to win over the crowd, he would at least win over his opponent. This 1 point was already on the verge of being lost in Zhang Yiwei's eyes. Even if Luo Tian learned from his past mistakes and didn't dare to be as careless, his mentality had already tipped the scale. In this situation, it wasn't just patience that was necessary. Calmness was needed too. However, Luo Tian wasn't calm at all. He treated every tree and blade of grass as an enemy, throwing his magic around aimlessly.

"He's lost it." Ye Xiu shook his head.

It was as if Mo Fan heard this evaluation. He suddenly made his move.

"Ah! Mo Fan didn't choose to use Disappearing Body Technique to find an opportunity to move closer. Instead, he's directly revealed himself." The commentator cried out.

Luo Tian was surprised by this sudden appearance, but he immediately followed up with a bunch of attacks delightedly. His

Elementalist staff waved. However, not even a spark flew out from it.

"What is Luo Tian doing? Is he posing?" The commentator was puzzled.

Luo Tian wanted to cry. After putting in the correct inputs, he heard a system notification: on cooldown.

Such a low-leveled mistake actually happened to a pro player. The extent of Luo Tian's instability could be seen from this. He hastily chose another skill and couldn't help but check which skills were on cooldown and which skills weren't. He had been throwing out magic spells randomly along the way. It was just like Ye Xiu said. He had completely lost it. There was no purpose or decision-making in his "cautious" choices. He didn't even remember which skills were on cooldown.

As a result, Mo Fan once again took the initiative. At the same time, this wave of attacks left Luo Tian in despair. His ability to resist fell to zero so much so that he couldn't even steady himself like before. He was like a noob, randomly throwing skills trying to escape from the predicament.

Against this type of defense, even if Mo Fan was lacking in his ability to follow up, he was more than good enough to deal with it. As a result, he didn't retreat this time.

A short moment later, Luo Tian's Elementalist fell. The second round of the match concluded.

The post-game statistics on the screen made the entire crowd boo loudly. 8 minutes 12 seconds. This match actually took 8 minutes and 12 seconds. In the individual competition, this was absolutely considered an anomaly.

In any case, Happy pocketed that 1 point.

Mo Fan quietly went off the stage.

"Not bad." Ye Xiu clapped. The others from Happy applauded his performance. Mo Fan didn't say anything and quietly returned to his seat as if nothing had happened. His eyes were fixed on the stage. Who knew what he was truly thinking.

Team Mysterious Fantasy's Luo Tian went down from the stage too. His face was pale, and he stumbled on the way over.

"You lost your calm!" Zhang Yiwei hastily covered his inner thoughts and said to Luo Tian.

"You actually found his weakness, but you didn't do a good job turning that into an advantage." Zhang Yiwei followed up. Unlike before with Fang Daxu, he didn't find an excuse like you were just too impatient. This time, Zhang Yiwei really had seen an opportunity for Luo Tian to make a comeback. Unfortunately, Mo Fan immediately chose to run away, making Luo Tian instantly feel lost.

"Next time." Zhang Yiwei patted Luo Tian, telling him that he could take a break.

For the third match, Team Happy's Wei Chen came out. A look of pride showed up on his grizzly face. He glanced at the player seats for Team Mysterious Fantasy and waved his hands: "This senior's about to go on stage. Is there even a need to play this match? Why don't you just forfeit?"

Zhan Wenyi ignored him. He nodded his head towards the player, who would be playing for this third match. That player stood up and headed over to the stage with his head held high.

"There's really no need to play this match! You guys only need 2 points. What's the point of fighting for this 1 point? My recommendation is that you just play around and save your time and energy." Wei Chen followed up.

The referee immediately ran over from the stage and threw a yellow card at Wei Chen.

"Inappropriate remark. First warning. If you violate the competitive integrity of Glory a second time, the committee will rethink your qualifications to compete." The referee said gravely.

"F*ck, I can't even make a joke?" Wei Chen defended himself. The referee didn't care though; he turned around and went back on stage.

"Their demands are so strict nowadays, ha." Wei Chen said angrily towards his teammates and then walked onto the stage.

It's used to describe someone with a limited repertoire of skills. It's the same Cheng Yaojin from the previous TLN. The saying is Cheng Yaojin and his three axe strokes, or Cheng Yaojin and his thirty six axe strokes. His weapon is a broad axe. His skills suck, but his luck is good. Three axe strokes is enough to defeat a weak opponent. But against a strong opponent, even thirty six axe strokes is not enough and he runs away instead.

Chapter 974: Forced Into Helplessness

The third round of the individual competition began. The characters on both sides loaded into the map and prepared to fight.

It was just like Wei Chen said. In theory, this round was pointless for both sides. This single point wouldn't affect the overall outcome of the match. However, competition was not as simple as adding two numbers together. This point wouldn't have any effect on the outcome of the match, but the winner of this round could affect their team's momentum in the following sections of the match.

Team Happy had won two rounds in a row in the individual competition. Their morale was undoubtedly at a high. As for Team Mysterious Fantasy? Losing two rounds in a row in such an extreme manner was a heavy blow to their morale. Zhang Yiwei pretending that it wasn't a big deal wouldn't be enough to neutralize the effects.

Neither team dared to overlook how this round would affect their morale.

The characters quickly finished loading into the map. Wei Chen's Windward Formation was without a doubt the character in the spotlight in this year's Challenger League. Although Team Excellent Era had One Autumn Leaf, Life Extinguisher, and Dancing Rain, these were all All Star characters. Players were used to seeing their greatness, but Windward Formation? This character had come out of nowhere and appeared with eight pieces of Silver equipment. In the pro scene, most subs didn't have

characters that enjoyed such beautiful equipment.

Team Mysterious Fantasy had been a bottom-tier team in the pro scene. Let alone subs, their team didn't have a single character even among their main roster that had eight pieces of Silver equipment. Facing Windward Formation, it was Team Mysterious Fantasy that looked like a grassroots team.

The commentator joked around and introduced these two players in this way.

"Okay, the match has started. In the previous two rounds, Team Happy won in surprising ways. Will they surprise us again this round? Wei Chen. I think the older folks might be familiar with him. He was Team Blue Rain's very first team captain. The number one Warlock, Swoksaar, was actually created and brought into the Alliance by him. Those who have watched his matches in the past definitely have a certain impression of him because he has a... yes, yes... very distinctive personality. Next, let's enjoy this round."

"Little demon, bring it on!"

Wei Chen typed out in the all-chat at the start of the match and then just stood there. Windward Formation didn't seem to have any intentions of advancing and simply waited for his opponent to come to him.

This Team Mysterious Fantasy player didn't know. He just treated it like an ordinary provocation and had his character charge ahead at full speed. Halfway through, he still hadn't seen

Windward Formation. He felt like something wasn't right.

Usually, at this point, both sides should have already come across each other in the middle of the map! Why was there no sign of him?

Not good!

This Team Mysterious Fantasy player was using a Sharpshooter. He turned around nimbly and raised both of his guns, cautiously pointing to the left and right.

The crowd was waiting for him to hurry over to Windward Formation's spawn location and start fighting. Who would have thought that this guy would start admiring himself and stop halfway there. At first, they were puzzled. Then, they realized what he was doing and suddenly roared with laughter.

This scene clearly illustrated why every round in a match wasn't as simple as counting points. This player had clearly been affected by the previous match. After not seeing any traces of his opponent on his way over, he thought the opponent had employed a strategy similar to Deception's and immediately began cautiously checking his surroundings.

It didn't stop there. After looking around and failing to notice anything, he extended his search radius. He didn't hurry forward and began spinning around in a circle.

The crowd roared with laughter again, but after laughing, they started feeling a bit tired of it. How long was this guy going to stay overly suspicious?

The crowd's laughter made everyone on Team Mysterious Fantasy feel very embarrassed. However, they had no way of telling the player on stage. They could only continue watching with faces flushed with embarrassment as their Sharpshooter spun around, not moving towards Windward Formation's location.

"Ha ha, little child, you think you can find this senior just spinning around like that?" A message from Wei Chen suddenly popped up in the all chat.

The crowd went into an uproar. In theory, this guy shouldn't know anything about his opponent's movements. However, he had been standing in the same place for quite a while. The other side still hadn't appeared. It wasn't hard to guess that his opponent was running around in circles, but this guy took advantage of it and put on an act. This was too much like trying to hit a snake with a stick, but seeing the snake curl around the stick.

When Team Mysterious Fantasy's player saw these words, he became even more nervous and started searching even more frantically for Windward Formation.

Where was Windward Formation? He had finally started moving, but he wasn't moving towards his opponent. Instead, he walked over to a big rock near his spawn location and quietly crouched down behind it.

Despicable! Too despicabe!

The rules didn't forbid this type of strategy, but pro players valued their images. There would be so many people watching them every round. In the eyes of the spectators, this strategy was too shameless. This wasn't just playing dirty. It was being dirty.

Even the commentator noted it. After seeing Windward Formation's move, he also felt powerless. As a professional commentator, he had done his homework beforehand. He obviously had some understanding of Wei Chen's background, but he didn't have that much time. He had only skimmed through a few articles relating to Wei Chen.

Shameless, unscrupulous……

The information that he had seen was filled with all sorts of synonyms for this words. It wasn't convenient for him to directly say these words as a commentator, so in the end, he just said that Wei Chen had a very distinct personality. Now, he finally witnessed this distinct personality. He couldn't even make any comments on it.

As a result, the entire stadium was silent. Wei Chen's Windward Formation just sat there, hiding behind a rock. Team Mysterious Fantasy's Sharpshooter continued to looked at everything suspiciously. The commentator didn't know what to say. The crowd was speechless. Was this a match or a farce? Seeing how Wei Chen would say a few words in the all chat from time to time,

everyone in Team Mysterious Fantasy felt a bit regretful. Maybe they should have listened to Wei Chen and just forfeited. Wasn't that actually a good suggestion?

The other side was calm and unruffled in the midst of chaos. He didn't seem to be embarrassed at all, hiding in a corner. On the other hand, their player was being overly suspicious. He had told himself that he would try very hard. After the initial fun and embarrassment, Team Mysterious Fantasy started to feel some sympathy and bitterness. It would be better to just lose this round, than to watch their teammate keep trying and making a fool of himself.

Zhang Yiwei could feel his team's emotions. He turned around and said a few words to a player.

"Forfeit?" Tang Xin heard his coach's decision. He was still astonished. Even though he had thought about it, he still gave up on it, but now, the coach had actually decided on it.

Tang Xin was Team Mysterious Fantasy's captain. The Pro Alliance hadn't approved of a coach position. The team captain had a lot of power. Coaches did not enjoy that same authority. For example, if the team wanted to forfeit right now, besides the player playing on stage, only the team captain had the power to make that decision. As a result, only the team captain could go and talk to the referee. If Zhang Yiwei went to the referee with his position as a coach and told him that his team would forfeit this round, the referee would simply ignore him.

"Are we really going to forfeit?" Tang Xin hesitated. Even though

the team captain had that right, it was still an individual competition. The player on stage hadn't given up yet. Making this decision would certainly hurt the player who was trying so hard.

"It's fine!" Zhang Yiwei made his decision.

What he wanted this round wasn't a victory because that one point wasn't important. Zhang Yiwei had wanted to utilize this match to win back some morale to the team, but their player was just being toyed with. The other side was happily waiting for his exhausted opponent. If this continued, their chances of losing were very high. This result would be an even greater blow to their morale. Even though winning in this situation would certainly be a huge momentum swing for their entire team, Zhang Yiwei wasn't willing to gamble because he could already tell that giving up on this match would be freeing for the entire team. This round was too sullen and depressing.

"Okay....." In Team Mysterious Fantasy, their coach was supreme. Tang Xin could only respect Zhang Yiwei's decision and walked over to the stage.

No one was allowed on stage in the middle of a match. When Tang Xin got close, the referee blocked his path. Tang Xin told him what he had come over to say. The referee was startled. He made one final confirmation with Tang Xin. After confirming it with Tang Xin, he returned to the stage and went over to Team Mysterious Fantasy's player.

Tang Xin didn't return to his seat. He had to pick up his player here. He was certain that this decision would definitely make his

player very disappointed with himself. He had to do his best to console him.

Soon afterwards, the referee told the Team Mysterious Fantasy player on stage that the team had forfeited this round. And just like that, with neither side meeting each other, Team Mysterious Fantasy's player left the stage. The referee announced Team Happy's victory.

"What?" Wei Chen was still hiding behind the rock, thinking of what else to say next, when he suddenly saw a notification that the other side had left the match. He was puzzled. In a match, there were times when you were aware that you were outclassed and admitted defeat in a stylish manner, but the two sides hadn't even seen each other yet and the other side already forfeited?

Wei Chen got up from his seat and saw Team Mysterious Fantasy's player leaving the stage. He walked down from the stage filled with bewilderment and looked at Team Mysterious Fantasy's side: "Now you forfeit? What were you doing before?"

We didn't know you'd be so shameless!

Team Mysterious Fantasy's players were all cursing in their hearts. They revealed all sorts of unfriendly looks towards Wei Chen. However, just like Zhang Yiwei predicted, this loss actually made everyone else ease up quite a bit. The player who had been forced to forfeit was sitting in a corner, staring blankly into space. No one knew what he was thinking. The team captain, Tang Xin, was sitting next to him, trying his best to console him. Then, everyone heard Wei Chen's words after he returned to Team

Happy's seats: "How was that? I played pretty well, didn't I?"

Chapter 975: Gun Fu

Cough cough cough cough……

Wei Chen's remark sent Team Happy into a fit of coughs. Everyone used this method to dodge the question. They all refused to answer it. However, Gods were still the mightiest. The look on Ye Xiu's face didn't change. He calmly replied back: "You typed pretty well."

"Hahaha, that's what I meant." Wei Chen laughed, sending Team Happy into another fit of coughs.

The individual competition was over. Team Happy won all three rounds, taking three points for themselves. Having not won any points in the individual competition, Team Mysterious Fantasy needed to win either the group arena or team competition. As for Team Happy, after winning these three points, the group arena wasn't as stressful. The deciding battle would definitely be the team competition.

But since Team Happy needed to win more than 8 points to qualify out of groups, they already knew that they needed to win the team competition, so their mentality was no different than before. Winning all three points in the individual competition made their morale soar. As for Team Mysterious Fantasy, after two losses in the individual competition, the third round made a turn for the better. When things moved to the extreme, they could only move in the opposite direction. In the third round, Wei Chen beating their player in such a manner made Team Mysterious Fantasy furious. Under the instigation from the experienced Zhang

Yiwei, their morale ignited once more. It was only a pity that this third player could only become a sacrificial pawn for Zhang Yiwei's morale boost. At this moment, Zhang Yiwei didn't have the time to console this player.

The break between the individual competition and the group arena was rather long. After both sides made their preparations, they went into battle once again. The fires of the competition grew increasingly stronger.

"Okay, Team Mysterious Fantasy versus Team Happy. The second round's group arena will soon start." On the broadcast, advertisements would be played during the break time. Just before the group arena began, the broadcast returned to the program and the commentator began his work once again. In the previous battle, the commentator practically didn't utter a word near the end. Usually, this could be considered as a broadcasting accident, but it was unprecedented this time. The commentator didn't speak when he was meant to. It seemed like Wei Chen's super shamelessness had stunned everyone. Everyone understood the commentator's reaction and forgave him.

"The players on both sides have now entered the stage. On Team Happy's side, the first player to go out is Bao Rongxing. This player is the definition of a rookie. He'll frequently make extremely low-level mistakes. Who knows what type of performance he will give in a crucial match like today's? On Team Mysterious Fantasy's side, the first player to go out is Tang Xing. This arrangement is a little unexpected! As Team Mysterious Fantasy's captain, Tang Xing could be considered their team's best player. According to the usual convention, this type of player should be the last one in the group arena. I wonder why Team Mysterious Fantasy made such

an arrangement. We all know that Team Mysterious Fantasy has their own dedicated coach to guide them. There should be a reason for this arrangement. We'll only be able to figure out what his intentions are from watching the match. Okay, the match has officially started."

The commentator had been awkwardly silent in the previous round. It was as if his words had been transferred to this one. He talked non-stop as soon as he started.

'The characters on both sides are moving forward. Neither of them are employing any tactical moves. Are they planning on directly confronting each other?"

"Oh, Tang Xing has changed his pathing. He's started to take a roundabout route. It looks like he's planning on catching his opponent off guard."

"Okay, Tang Xing has successfully circled around to the side of his opponent. Bao Rongxing hasn't noticed him yet."

"Tang Xing is moving closer step by step. He can already start attacking at this distance! But Bao Rongxing still hasn't noticed him. He's still moving forward like before. That shouldn't be happening. It's already been this long and he hasn't encountered his opponent. Shouldn't he know that the opponent isn't just charging forward?"

"Tang Xing is by Steamed Bun Invasion's side. He still hasn't attacked... Uh, at this moment, I think many people are thinking

the same thing as me. Remember the second round of the individual competition? Is Tang Xing planning on using this method to fight eye for an eye?"

"Oh, he's not doing that! Tang Xing has attacked. He's taken the initiative." As the commentator shouted, the two sides started their first exchange.

Tang Xing's character was a Sharpshooter. It was the class that their coach Zhang Yiwei once used. Zhang Yiwei also placed a lot of hope and expectations on him because of this. Under his guidance, hints of his past self appeared in Tang Xing's playstyle.

Gun Fu!

This was what Zhang Yiwei had been most proficient in. After become the coach for Team Mysterious Fantasy, he had done everything he could to help Tang Xing. He could be considered one of the rare bright spots in this weak team.

Gun Fu didn't mean that the Sharpshooter would go up close and start brawling, but it also didn't mean that the Sharpshooter would move too far away from the opponent either. The crux of this playstyle revolved around the four words "having room to maneuver". What exactly this entailed depended on every player's skill level.

Tang Xing's Gun Fu maintained about 5 units from the opponent to freely move around. It was a rather ordinary level for Sharpshooters proficient at this playstyle. He was very far away

from a top God like Zhou Zekai, who maintained about 3 units .

One unit was the length of one step taken by a character moving normally, so Gun Fu was usually divided into X Steps. How many steps was the best depended on each player's preference, but those who could use Three Steps Gun Fu could also easily do Five Steps Gun Fu. However, those who could only use Five Steps Gun Fu would find it extremely difficult to do Three Steps Gun Fu. Every step required a faster reaction time and higher technical skill.

Tang Xing had limited talent. After receiving Zhang Yiwei's guidance, he became specialized at Gun Fu. Unfortunately, he could only reach Five Steps and couldn't go past it. There was nothing Zhang Yiwei could do about that. In the past, his Gun Fu had also only reached Four Steps. He couldn't advance any further. He was fully aware of the helplessness of lacking talent, so he couldn't demand Tang Xing to breakthrough to Four Steps. He could only have him continue improving his utilization of Five Steps Gun Fu.

Five Steps Gun Fu was more than enough to deal with a rookie like Bao Rongxin.

Tang Xing's Sharpshooter rushed forward and quickly entered a five step radius. Zhang Yiwei nodded his head in satisfaction at Tang Xing's skillful Gun Fu.

Steamed Bun looked somewhat panicked after being ambushed. It looked like he had no plans on resisting. Steamed Bun Invasion stumbled about from Tang Xing's Sharpshooter. Running away seemed to be the only thing on his mind.

Zhang Yiwei laughed loudly. That was too much of a rookie's reaction. He had no idea what to do when caught unprepared. He didn't have the experience to make any subconscious decisions. The only thing he could do was run.

"I truly don't understand why you keep using a player like him again and again." Zhang Yiwei looked towards Ye Xiu.

"What's the problem?" Ye Xiu asked back.

"What the problem? Do I really need to point it out?" Zhang Yiwei saw Steamed Bun Invasion's sorry figure.

"I think the problem is with you. Isn't running away the correct way of dealing with Gun Fu?" Ye Xiu said.

The smile on Zhang Yiwei's face suddenly froze.

Ye Xiu's words were simple, but he understood his meaning. In more professional terminology, running away translated to constantly moving and altering the distance between the two sides.

The crux of Gun Fu was distance. If Tang Xing controlled the distance, Gun Fu's characteristic of freely maneuvering around would be fully utilized, but if he couldn't control the distance, Gun Fu would be disrupted, giving the opponent an opportunity to counter attack.

Steamed Bun Invasion was running and stumbling while being chased by Tang Xing's Sharpshooter. That along with him clearly being a rookie made it difficult to connect it with tactics. After listening to Ye Xiu's words, he looked more carefully. Steamed Bun Invasion was running away like a dog, but he was successfully dodging attack after attack. Because Tang Xing needed to chase his opponent, he was unable to control the distance between them.

Is he intentionally moving like that? Zhang Yiwei looked left and right. He couldn't help but think it didn't seem to be the case. If it was intentional, why did it need to look so ugly? But then again, this kind of ugliness would very likely lower Tang Xing's guard. From the individual competition, it could be seen that Team Happy's players didn't care about their images at all. They had no intentions of trying to gain the crowd's favor. They used whatever methods they could to win.

For a team like that, pretending to be a fool to make the opponent lower his guard was as easy as pie.

Tang Xing! Don't fall for it! Hurry up and see through it!!

Zhang Yiwei started to worry. He had placed Tang Xing first to establish a psychological advantage because he knew that Team Happy certainly put God Ye Qiu last in the group arena. If the two sides fought evenly in the first two rounds, God Ye Qiu would determine the winner of this group arena. Even if they had their most outstanding player Tang Xing go last, Ye Qiu wouldn't be afraid of him at all.

Thus, he might as well just put Tang Xing first and hopefully

have him beat more Team Happy players. That way, they might be able to have their remaining two players face Ye Qiu. Wouldn't a 2v1 give them a psychological advantage?

But now, Tang Xing might fall into a trap. How could he not worry?

"Not good!"

He was roaring at Tang Xing in his heart to notice, fearful of the consequences, but then, an opening appeared in Tang Xing's Gun Fu. Zhang Yiwei, who was also an expert at Gun Fu, and immediately noticed it.

And closely following it, a brick whistled by.

Chapter 976: Steamed Bun's Vanishing Step

Thwack!

The sound of a brick smashing into a skull was clear and crisp.

This brick was an expected follow-up in the eyes of Ye Xiu, Zhang Yiwei, and other skilled pro players. It was something that should have happened. However, in the eyes of normal players, it was completely unexpected. What they saw was Steamed Bun Invasion being chased all over the map like a cowardly dog. Tang Xing's rhythm had become passive, creating an opening. This was pretty high end, so it wasn't something just anyone could see.

Yet this rookie who was completely unworthy of the pro stage in Zhang Yiwei's eyes not only saw it, but managed to grasp it. It was just that this Brick was as inelegant as always, as if he had only managed to achieve it through pure coincidence.

Was it a coincidence or…

Zhang Yiwei was a little doubtful at first, but that doubt soon disappeared because the Brick was only the beginning. After that, Steamed Bun Invasion, who was originally at a disadvantage, unleashed his counterattack. Brawler skills came one after the other, instantly becoming a combo of skills. Tang Xing's Sharpshooter's health plummeted. The advantage he had obtained through Gun Fu was soon turned around by this wave of counterattacks.

Steady now! Zhang Yiwei secretly wiped away some sweat. Tang Xing wasn't Mysterious Fantasy's captain and the player Zhang Yiwei gave the highest regard to for nothing. He might not have been able to take the counterattacks, but he quickly steadied himself after that. He threw out a grenade and then jumped backwards with the help of an Aerial Fire, hoping to create some distance between them. Who would've expected his opponent to be so fast to prevent this. After avoiding the shockwave from the explosion of the grenade, he charged forth with an attack readied, swiftly tossing a fistful of sand at the other.

Tang Xing turned his view hurriedly. He could take the damage from Sand Toss, but not the blind it would induce. Yet just as his view turned, he heard another thwack of a Brick becoming intimate with his Sharpshooter's head.

So fast?!

Tang Xing was shocked. The Brick had come immediately after the Sand Toss. This was a speed that even Tang Xing could only be ashamed of not having. This seemingly noobish rookie wasn't as simple as he had initially imagined.

With the Brick smacking into the back of his head, it had the priority of an attack from behind and the Sharpshooter immediately entered a dizzy state. Steamed Bun Invasion's next attack quickly followed, an Uppercut launching the Sharpshooter up into the air.

The dizzy state wore off as soon as the attack hit. His character was already airborne, but Tang Xing didn't panic, turning his view

and hoping to continue his offense. The aerial combat skill of Gun Fu was very impressive as well, especially if you managed to combine it with Aerial Fire, you could create amazing combos and attacks. Tang Xing wasn't skilled enough for that, but he could add a little into his mechanics every now and then. Yet, turning his view all the way round, he was surprised to realize that he hadn't seen Steamed Bun Invasion at all.

Where was he?

Tang Xing was wondering in surprise, but then took another hit from Steamed Bun Invasion.

The shock he felt from this couldn't compare to his shock at getting hit by a few Bricks.

He was here, but unseen. This technique... this was the legendary Vanishing Step. Even in the pro circle, this was a skill at the cream of the crop and very few could master it. Yet now, a rookie, a rookie that often made rookie mistakes no less, was somehow able to use such a high end technique?

Tang Xing was dumbstruck. Zhang Yiwei, in the audience, was also dumbstruck.

Spectators often wouldn't be able to tell when Vanishing Step was being used. However, Zhang Yiwei had experience and judgement, and he was also very familiar with Tang Xing. Seeing Tang Xing's Sharpshooter look around, he had been silently praising the other for being so calm in such a disadvantageous

situation, but then he realized that after turning his view, Tang Xing's Sharpshooter didn't take any action and seemed to have no intentions of attacking Steamed Bun Invasion.

Zhang Yiwei immediately managed to figure out that it wasn't that Tang Xing missed the opportunity, but that he had none in the first place. After turning his view around, he never found Steamed Bun Invasion.

Then what could it be? Obviously Vanishing Step.

Alighting on this thought, Zhang Yiwei forgot to close his gaping mouth. He subconsciously glanced at Ye Xiu. Ye Xiu's smile looked very enigmatic.

So Happy really would do anything for victory, huh?

Even an expert who could accomplish the high end technique Vanishing Step was pretending to be a complete noob. What couldn't they do?

Pretending to be a swine to eat a tiger*! Zhang Yiwei's head was filled with this phrase. His mental representation of Steamed Bun Invasion became more and more towering. What was this person's true strength? His original research and understanding seemed to be completely wrong; what should he do?

Zhang Yiwei was extremely anxious, but even if he thought of something now, what could he do? He couldn't communicate with

the in-match Tang Xing. Once the match started, everything relied on the player.

Tang Xing was obviously also caught completely off guard by this Vanishing Step, getting beaten to the ground by a round of combos from Steamed Bun Invasion, even taking two sweeps. Tang Xing had even forgotten how to use the basic Quick Recover.

Zhang Yiwei's mood fell further. However, he didn't blame Tang Xing. This unimaginable strength of Bao Rongxing's was something completely out of their expectations. Going up against an expert that had mastered Vanishing Step was a bit too much for Tang Xing.

However, Tang Xing soon steadied himself.

His stupor just now was because of surprise. He was already used to being intimidated. Mysterious Fantasy was a weak team and he was a player with limited skill. In his two years with Mysterious Fantasy, he had been continuously engaging with players whose strength was beyond his. This was the story of Tang Xing's pro career.

He was very experienced with fighting stronger opponents. What this experience gave him, was mostly calm in facing such perilous situations. If he really could use this to win, then he wouldn't be such a weak player.

Seeing Tang Xing steady himself again, Zhang Yiwei sighed. He knew that this was something brought to Tang Xing by Mysterious

Fantasy's situation in the Alliance. However, after he sighed, his eyes lit up.

The calm that Tang Xing had when going up against experts allowed him to occasionally grasp some opportunities, especially those who were proud and underestimated their opponents, or the young and inexperienced.

Bao Rongxing being proud and underestimating them? Of course he hadn't. To win against them, he didn't care about how inelegant he had to be, was there any pride in that? As for inexperienced, this newbie who had barely experienced any pro matches had pretty much no experience. The experience from PKing in the arena was completely different from pro match experience.

Bao Rongxing was a player that Tang Xing could win against! Seeing Tang Xing calm down and engage the other again, Zhang Yiwei suddenly found a new hope, staring at the match intently.

An opening!

Zhang Yiwei's eyes lit up, but it seemed as if Tang Xing hadn't seen it and the opportunity passed.

Zhang Yiwei shook his head and sat up straight. Yet it hadn't been five seconds before his heart leaped again.

Another opening!

Yet Tang Xing still wasn't taking advantage of this opening. Or rather, he didn't even try.

What on earth?

Zhang Yiwei couldn't understand. The first opening came and went quickly, so it was normal that Tang Xing wouldn't be able to grasp it. However, the second opening was a big one; there was no reason that Tang Xing wouldn't be able to use it.

Could it be...

Zhang Yiwei glanced at Ye Xiu on Happy's side. This guy still had the same smile on his face as before.

Those two openings were traps!

Zhang Yiwei felt enlightened. Pro matches were always like this, full of feints and traps. Everyone was trying to find openings, but had to be careful that the opening they found wasn't actually bait. Realizing that Bao Rongxing wasn't a simple character, then what else could those mistakes be? Did this even need an explanation?

Tang Xing was doing the right thing; he had to maintain this calm. Zhang Yiwei nodded in approval.

Thus, the calm Tang Xing continued to stall with Steamed Bun, not daring to be impatient and waiting for a better chance to turn the tables.

There was a song that was appropriate for the current situation: Waiting and seeing, fading away quietly.

Tang Xing's Sharpshooter's health began to fade quietly, just like that. This was because he never managed to find "a better chance to turn the tables". The openings that his opponent gave all seemed fake to him, like there was a label "trap" pasted on it. In addition, he, who had positioned himself in the place of the weaker player in his mind, gave up on attacking directly, and instead went on the defensive, making sure he was as safe and secure as possible. Defending and counter attacking was the usual strategy of the weak.

Unfortunately, this time, his strategy wasn't very appropriate. No matter if it was him or Zhang Yiwei, they had both deeply misunderstood Steamed Bun. What sort of player was he, really? Their understanding was continuously changing.

Currently Tang Xing thought that Steamed Bun was an expert, so he went on the defensive, immediately receiving a round of vicious smacks from Steamed Bun Invasion. Steamed Bun was having so much fun smacking him that his attacks became full of openings. Yet Tang Xing, over here, shook his head telling himself no, these aren't openings. Such ridiculous openings had to be traps.

He continued to wait and see. Disregarding his slowly fading health, he himself ended up desolate and heartbroken as well.

Zhang Yiwei was much more experienced than Tang Xing,

understanding what was happening after watching for a while.

This Bao Rongxing was actually like they had originally thought!

He wasn't pretending or anything. Upon being ambushed by Gun Fu, something he couldn't deal with, he ran. While running, he found an opening, so he counterattacked. His counterattack hit, so he made a follow up combo. This was something every player of Glory should be able to do. As for that Vanishing Step, it might really have been a coincidence that he moved into Tang Xing's blindspot with a step.

Then all the openings now were real?

So seeing that Tang Xing was letting all these opportunities slip away, Zhang Yiwei was anxious to the point where he wanted to stomp his feet. He hoped that Tang Xing could quickly figure out what was happening. However, Tang Xing's mind was set this time. In the end, he never found the "opening" he wanted and was wiped out by Steamed Bun Invasion. When he came down from the stage, his was still wearing a perplexed expression. He felt exactly how he felt against the experts and gods he had faced in the past. Though he had lost, he had done all he could.

Zhang Yiwei wanted to cry. This was no expert! He really was just a rookie!

Chapter 977: Main Target

Seeing Tang Xing standing calmly in front of him, Zhang Yiwei didn't know what to say. In the end, he could only let loose a deep sigh.

"What?" Tang Xing still hadn't comprehended what had just happened.

"You worry too much." Zhang Yiwei shook his head. He didn't mention how he had been worried too. However, he soon realized it.

"That guy really is a rookie. You placed too much importance on him." Zhang Yiwei pointed to the stage.

"Ah?" Tang Xing was astonished, "But....."

Zhang Yiwei laughed bitterly and shook his head. He knew what Tang Xing wanted to say.

"Sit down and just keep watching!" Zhang Yiwei said to Tang Xing. Then, he told the second player, who would be going on stage: "Be aggressive. Punish him for his mistakes."

Tang Xing sat in a daze on the side. He saw his teammate walk onto the stage and fight with Bao Rongxing. He launched an aggressive offense at the very start and won with just a sliver of health left.

Tang Xing glanced at his coach in bewilderment. He didn't know what Zhang Yiwei wanted him to see.

Zhang Yiwei's face was ashen. If the player coming down from the stage had been his player, he would have given him a fierce scolding. You went in at full health to fight someone at half heath, yet you almost died. That performance had been too trashy. As for Team Happy's Bao Rongxing, Zhang Yiwei was also puzzled. This time, he wasn't full of holes like he had been in the previous match. When he fought against this Team Mysterious Fantasy player, he would sometimes make a sudden move, which even an experienced veteran like Zhang Yiwei couldn't comprehend at all.

Has this Bao Rongxing reached a level so high that even I can't understand it? Zhang Yiwei noticed Tang Xing's confused gaze, but he really couldn't give him an explanation at this moment either. This Bao Rongxing had completely befuddled him.

Next up for Team Happy was Tang Rou. She quickly and easily cleaned up that nearly-dead Team Mysterious Fantasy player. This player came down stage dejectedly. Zhang Yiwei wasn't able to scold him for his trash performance. Their third player stood in front of him with fear, waiting for guidance!

How could he not feel afraid?

He originally thought that they would face God Ye Qiu with a numbers advantage and build a psychological advantage, but everything was reversed right now. The other side still had God Ye

Qiu leisurely sitting there! On stage, there was still a practically full health Soft Mist. Let alone God Ye Qiu, Tang Rou wasn't a player to be taken lightly. Battle Mage and Ye Qiu's teammate. Those two phrases f*cking put together were terrifying enough. Then, there was Tang Rou herself. Her technical skill was impressive, and her fighting spirit was inextinguishable. Just these two points made her a headache to play against. And she was also super beautiful? Don't think that such a stat had no effect during a match. When facing a hot girl, players would sometimes have a mentality that they shouldn't have in a match like holding back, showing off, teasing, etc. All of these could lead to a tip of the scales.

And even if this player could beat her, he would have to face God Ye Qiu next. Towards this player, Zhang Yiwei couldn't say anything but "Good luck." Did you not hear what Tang Rou said to Team Happy when she was about to go up? She asked Ye Xiu: do you need to warm up……

Ye Xiu just laughed. He didn't reply to her question. As a result, Tang Rou didn't give him an opportunity and killed her nearly-dead opponent without fooling around. Not only was Team Mysterious Fantasy able to build any sort of psychological advantage, the confidence of these two formidable opponents caused their third player to utterly collapse.

The group arena ended shortly afterwards. Team Happy only needed two players to beat all of Team Mysterious Fantasy's players. After this round, Team Happy had won all five points. The situation had now become a you-die-or-I-die scenario. The outcome of the following team competition wouldn't only decide the winner of this match, but who would make it out of groups. At

this point, it was impossible for Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy to both make it out. The loser of this team competition would have their journey cut short.

The notion spreading around before the match of how Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy would have a tacit agreement to send Team Trader out of groups had now been completely dispelled. But then again, in this group with five teams, one team would have no opponent to play against every round, so it was easy for a hole to appear. For example, in this round, if Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy really did make a tacit agreement before, there was nothing Team Trader could do.

It didn't happen in the end. Both teams were fighting to the death, but at this point, Team Happy's psychological advantage over Team Mysterious Fantasy was quite obvious.

The team competition had been the section of the match that they needed to win from the very start. They had mentally prepared themselves for this a long time ago. However, Team Mysterious Fantasy thought that they could end this battle in the individual competition or group arena, yet the life of death match had dragged onto the team competition. It wasn't like they hadn't considered the possibility of this development, but there was no way they would be as certain as Team Happy. The pressure on them suddenly multiplied. The entire team was quiet. Even Zhang Yiwei couldn't squeeze out a smile. In the end, he also thought that their defeat was imminent.

But he knew that he was the pillar of their team. At this moment, he could not collapse no matter what. Even if he was only

pretending, he had to show his unwaverable confidence in the team.

Zhang Yiwei looked at everyone in Team Mysterious Fantasy one by one. He noted everyone's expression. He didn't immediately say anything. Encouragement needed to be done at the right time. The situation and the words mattered. Zhang Yiwei had been a coach for two years and was quite proficient at his job.

He gave the players some time. After digesting their current situation, Zhang Yiwei clapped to get everyone's attention. Then, he began admonishing them: "Did we already lose? How come I seem to remember that there's still five points waiting to be taken?"

"We didn't perform as well as expected in the individual competitions, but that doesn't mean we need to be discouraged. Next up, it's time for us to show our team's strength. Do I need to repeat what our advantages are? We are Team Mysterious Fantasy. We've always been challenging opponents far greater than ourselves, but when did we ever fear them? Everyone has been too relaxed because of the Challenger League. Have you guys forgotten about the courage that you've always had? That's perfect then. It's time to summon up that courage. Happy is very strong? What about Excellent Era? Such a powerful opponent is waiting for us in the later stages. If we get discouraged, how are we going to challenge Excellent Era? How are we going to make it back to the Alliance?

"We can lose, but no team can scare us. We came here to challenge Excellent Era. We're not even scared of Excellent Era. So

does Happy count for anything? Forget about those previous losses. The match has only just begun. Focus. Go on stage and beat Happy."

"YES!!" The players in Team Mysterious Fantasy heard Zhang Yiwei's speech and their spirits instantly surged. These players were about to go on stage. Under their captain Tang Xing's lead, they lay in wait.

"I hope you guys haven't forgotten our arrangements for the team competition." Zhang Yiwei said.

"Of course." The team competition players nodded their heads. They looked towards Happy at Happy's Cleric, An Wenyi. For Team Mysterious Fantasy, he was their target. The experienced Zhang Yiwei saw through the weaknesses in An Wenyi, so he formulated a strategy targeting their healer.

"Players on both sides, get ready to go on stage." When it was about time, the referee called out to the players.

"Go! Beat them." Zhang Yiwei and the other players, who wouldn't be going up, cheered on their six players. On Team Happy's side, Ye Xiu personally led the team onto the stage. He heard Zhang Yiwei's shout and even turned his head to smile at him.

Zhan Wenyi was thinking about some way to respond to Ye Xiu's smile, when his six players turned their heads to look at him. They were in utter disbelief.

What's wrong? Zhang Yiwei didn't know what had happened. He saw the six turn around and followed their gazes……

An Wenyi was still sitting in Team Happy's seats.

This… Zhang Yiwei was shocked. He hastily turned to look at Happy's players. One, two, three, four, five, six. Six? Yes, six. Zhang Yiwei counted again and confirmed it. Team Happy had sent out six players in this team competition, but they actually weren't bringing a healer?

The team competition hadn't even begun yet, but just looking at the players sent out, Zhang Yiwei was already dumbstruck. It was only until the players next to him called out to him did he wake up. He saw that the referee was urging the six players to hurry up and go on stage. They were currently walking slowly onto the stage stalling for time. They turned their heads every three steps, looking hopefully at him.

An Wenyi wouldn't actually be playing in the team competition. Their original plan had been completely messed up. They were hoping that their coach would hurry and give them some sort of instruction.

Zhang Yiwei understood. He wasn't allowed to say much right now though. He could only point towards Happy and say: "Steamed Bun."

The six players heard his words and nodded their heads. Steamed

Bun... that was obviously Steamed Bun Invasion.

The two sides went to their respective seats. They swiped their cards and logged into the game. When they entered the competition interface, the six players saw the other side's arrangements and suddenly wanted to cry. An Wenyi had been their main target, but An Wenyi didn't go on stage. Steamed Bun became their new target, but the other side put Steamed Bun as their sixth player. At this point, they couldn't look for their coach for any guidance anymore. For a moment, the six players didn't know what to do.

Zhang Yiwei saw the display from the stream and also froze. He could already figure out what his six players on stage were thinking, but there was nothing they could do because there were still no rules in the Alliance regarding coaches. According to the rules, his usage as a coach in a match was very limited. He could only study the opponents and make some arrangements before the match. As soon as the match started, the players could only rely on themselves. In the current Glory competitive scene, coaches changing their planned strategy right before the match wasn't a thing, so when an unexpected situation occurred, Zhang Yiwei could only feel powerless. As a result, he usually made a few backup plans, but this time, he could never have imagined that the other side would play the team competition without a healer.

Chapter 978: Flimsy Tactics

"Hello friends, let's return back to the stage. Happy versus Mysterious Fantasy. This match will determine who will be eliminated during this knockout tournament. On the screen now is a list of the players who will be going on stage from Team Happy. Looking at this list, I'm sure those who have been paying attention to Team Happy must have realized something." After the ad break, the broadcast returned to the competition stage, and the commentator incessantly started talking.

"Yes, Happy's team composition doesn't have a healer. What a bold move! To dare to make such a move in a life and death battle, we have no choice but to recognize Happy's courage. I think this arrangement is surely a huge surprise to Mysterious Fantasy. I hope that their plans won't be thrown into disorder because of this!" It wasn't good for the commentator to be biased towards one side, so after admiring Happy, he gave his blessings to Mysterious Fantasy to make up for it. Unfortunately, the commentator's remark was spot on. Team Mysterious Fantasy's plans had been completely thrown into disarray because of Team Happy's surprise move.

After the five second countdown, the battle began.

Zhang Yiwei didn't want to look at the screen. Happy's unexpected team composition had disrupted his arrangements. As a result, his value as a coach couldn't be shown in this team competition. Everything depended on the players on-stage to resolve.

And for Team Mysterious Fantasy, without the guidance from their coach, they had undoubtedly lost their main pillar of support. When the battle began, Team Happy's five leading players rushed towards Team Mysterious Fantasy's location like wolves. The players on Team Mysterious Fantasy still hadn't moved yet. They were currently discussing what to do in the team chat.

An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands wasn't there. Steamed Bun Invasion wasn't there either. Who should they target among Team Happy's five players?

Ye Xiu, Sun Zheping, Wei Chen?

Even if these three were Gods of the past, they were still towering mountains compared to them.

Qiao Yifan. He had come from Team Tiny Herb. Even though he didn't seem to have made any accomplishments in Team Tiny Herb, just being accepted into Team Tiny Herb made him appear more precious than them. Being a part of Team Mysterious Fantasy truly meant that they were the bottom rung of the pro scene. Getting noticed by a top team like Team Tiny Herb was only a dream to them.

Besides these four, there was only Tang Rou left.

She was an extremely beautiful girl. They had cast their glances on her not just a few times off stage, but right now, in this life and death battle, they placed their attitudes towards beauties aside. Even though Tang Rou wasn't someone easily provoked, compared

to those four, her background seemed the least impressive, no? If you had to pick a persimmon, pick a soft one. Tang Rou was soon recognized as their new main target.

Afterwards, the Team Mysterious Fantasy players finally shifted into formation. After confirming their target, it wasn't hard to execute their practiced tactics.

Zhang Yiwei saw his players begin to move. Every character was methodically arranged. It looked like they had a clear plan in mind.

What were they planning on doing? Zhang Yiwei could no longer remain calm. He anxiously stood up, staring at the screen.

The players on both sides began their first exchange. Team Happy was in an X formation. Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep and Tang Rou's Soft Mist stood at the front. Wei Chen's Windward Formation and Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash stood at the back. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was positioned in the middle. It was a very ordinary and unsurprising formation.

After Team Mysterious Fantasy saw Team Happy's formation, they quickly adjusted their formation. They shifted towards their main target, Soft Mist. Their captain, Tang Xin, quickly spoke in the team channel: "Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire! Heroic Leap to split them apart. Cloud Grasping Fist to grab her!"

Team Mysterious Fantasy's first five players consisted of a Sharpshooter, Elementalist, Knight, Qi Master, and Paladin.

Two long-ranged offensive classes, one mid-ranged class, one close-ranged defensive Knight, and one healer and defensive Paladin. The cautiousness of a weak team was completely revealed by their team composition. This team composition didn't have much close-combat ability. It was clearly because Team Mysterious Fantasy didn't dare to directly confront other teams. Because of this, they needed to use other methods to obtain victory.

After their captain finished giving out instructions, the five Mysterious Fantasy players rushed towards Happy. They took the initiative and launched the first attack.

"Too impatient!" Zhang Yiwei stomped his feet in worry. He had brought this team up with his own hands. As soon as he saw their formation, he could already see through their intentions. However, attacking first wasn't their Team Mysterious Fantasy's strength. What's more, their team composition didn't have powerful surprise attack capabilities.

It had to be said that the strength of Team Mysterious Fantasy's players was limited. In terms of tactics, because of the existence of their coach Zhang Yiwei, the players were used to listening to his orders. Their ability to create their own strategies became even weaker. The thinking behind their plan had some clear problems. How could such crude tactics not be cleaned up by Team Happy? Team Happy had Ye Xiu, the most senior of the Four Master Tacticians. Numerous Glory tactics had been invented by him. Zhang Yiwei himself didn't dare to say he was more capable at tactics than Ye Xiu. Right now, these Team Mysterious Fantasy players, who were used to relying on someone else's tactics, went up to battle against Ye Xiu. A dull gray once again consumed Zhang

Yiwei's heart.

But Team Mysterious Fantasy's players couldn't feel their coach's current emotions. They had already started their attacks. The Elementalist cast a Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire. The Knight used Heroic Leap, directly splitting the line between Soft Mist and Lord Grim to separate Soft Mist from the rest of her allies.

Bang!

A gunshot sounded. Mysterious Fantasy's Elementalist hadn't noticed at all. Lord Grim's attack forced him to cancel his spell cast. The Knight had already rushed forward with Heroic Leap, but while he was still in the air, he was suspended where he was.

Soft Mist's spear was raised high in the air, stabbing him and making him appear like a piece of clothing hung out to dry.

That was just the visual impression in that instant. Circle Swing didn't give any time to pose for a picture. As soon as the spear struck him, he was flung down without any delay. At this moment, Mysterious Fantasy's Qi Master had successfully executed Cloud Grasping Fist and dragged her towards their Knight. The others weren't able to protect her. This grab struck, and Soft Mist was dragged over. The Knight pierced by her spear, as well as the remaining arc of the Circle Swing, were pulled over to the Qi Master as well. The Qi Master crashed into the ground, struck by his own allied Knight, who had been smashed down by Circle Swing.

The crowd erupted with laughter. That scene was too funny! The Qi Master using Cloud Grasping Fist reaped what he had sown.

In the first exchange alone, two players from Team Mysterious Fantasy had been knocked into the ground. Their opening move was going extremely poorly. Tang Rou's Soft Mist was full of life though. She didn't panic after being pulled into the enemy ranks by Cloud Grasping First. Instead, she took the opportunity to attack. The two on the ground hadn't gotten up yet, and the Sharpshooter and Paladin were already being forced back by her. They had originally planned on grabbing Soft Mist and killing her, but after she was grabbed, they were the ones being forced into helplessness. Team Mysterious Fantasy's first wave of attacks looked very embarrassing.

Tang Xin's Sharpshooter stepped back five steps. It was the distance that he was most familiar with. Following afterwards, he was just about to unleash his Gun Fu, when a Hexagram Prison suddenly erupted from the ground. Tang Xin hastily jumped out of the way in fright. Windward Formation's Hexagram Prison had been avoided, but Lord Grim's Anti-Tank Missiles were still flying towards him. Tang Xin wanted to dodge again, but Soft Mist had already reached him.

Not only was their target Soft Mist not beaten black and blue, she became the dagger that was lodged in the chink of their armor. At this moment, Tang Xin deeply felt like his plans had been terrible. The other side took advantage of it and turned the tides in their favor.

Tang Xin's Sharpshooter was pressed on both sides and had no

path for retreat. Fortunately, he had teammates to help him. The Knight got back up and rushed over with a Shield Strike. Soft Mist had no choice but to dodge it. The Qi Master punched and sent a Dragon Wave flying over.

But then, he saw a figure descending from the sky. Another Summer of Sleep had landed with a Collapsing Mountain. His body ate the Dragon Wave, and his sword slashed fiercely towards the Knight.

The Knight raised his shield to block it, and a loud muffled sound erupted. While making his declaration, another fierce character from Team Happy had approached. Sun Zheping's experience was far richer than Tang Rou's. Compared to Tang Rou, he knew more clearly how to make things difficult for Team Mysterious Fantasy. His first strike was blocked by the shield. He didn't mind. He began ferociously slamming down on the Knight's shield, forcing the Knight to take step after step backwards. The shield could greatly reduce knockback effects. However, it couldn't completely resist Sun Zheping's frenzy. The knockback from skillfully linked attacks, forcibly broke through what the shield could take. The Knight continued to be forced back, giving Soft Mist a new path to maneuver around in. With a Dragon Breaks the Ranks, Soft Mist sent the Qi Master flying far away.

Tang Rou didn't have her Soft Mist chase after him. She turned around and began attacking the Knight, along with Sun Zheping.

That Knight was unable to get away from Sun Zheping. He could only watch helplessly as Soft Mist attacked. He could only hope that his teammates could break through and rescue him. However,

when he turned his head to look, their Elementalist was jumping like a rabbit under Lord Grim's gunfire, and their team's Sharpshooter was being suppressed by Windward Formation's long-ranged curses. Their Sharpshooter wouldn't be able to escape for awhile. Warlock attacks weren't as simple as just damage. Many of their skills were catered towards control. As for their Qi Master, he was still trying to get up after being sent flying away by Soft Mist's Dragon Break the Ranks! As for their Paladin? Oh, their Paladin was still there. Furthermore, Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist were pushing him towards his own Paladin! This... they wanted to get rid of both him and the Paladin all at once!

Chapter 979: The Greatest Weakness

Happy's playstyle surprised even the coach, Zhang Yiwei, let alone the Mysterious Fantasy players on stage. They dared to fight openly like this without even bringing a healer? What kind of arrogance and confidence was this?

However, when they saw characters Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist push their Knight towards their Paladin, Zhang Yiwei reacted at once. Happy still had a strategic target; their first target was still the healer. This was a very traditional, standard, and unsurprising fighting style. However, by spreading out, scattering Mysterious Fantasy's formation, and then switching targets, the thought process behind their tactics were much more elaborate and ambiguous. In comparison, the way that Team Mysterious Fantasy's characters started to cut in by throwing three skills at Soft Mist was straightforward, rough, and crude.

Happy's fighting style was rich in variation, so when their true intentions were revealed, it was very likely that it was already too late for the opponent to stop them. This match was exactly like that. Mysterious Fantasy's Knight served as Happy's tactical cover. After pushing him for some distance, Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist immediately ditched him. They rushed towards the Paladin, who was not far from the Knight, in unison.

Mysterious Fantasy's Paladin had been actively healing the entire team. The Knight became his main target, after being pincered between two people. However, the two characters that had been pincer-attacking the Knight in the previous second had now turned the points of their weapons towards him.

The Paladin obviously wouldn't stand still to fight back and resist head-on. However, when he turned around, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had managed to sneak behind him. He didn't know when that had happened. An Ice Boundary was cast and it trapped the Paladin within it. Smaller boundaries were connected by larger boundaries. While the Paladin was suppressed, Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist arrived and started their wave of attacks.

The Paladin had nowhere to go, so he could only use his skills head-on. First, he used a Holy Shield Technique to protect him from the front, then a Life Activation to immediately recover some of his health. This was followed by Angel's Might, which put the Paladin at the center as a ray of light stretched out in 360 degrees, so it not only delivered damage to targets within the lit area, but it would also create a strong knockback effect, which allowed him to be immune to knock downs.

Neither Sun Zheping nor Tang Rou's classes had no way of negating Angel's Might's knockback effect, but both of them did their best. Although Angel's Might had a knock back effect, but as an interrupt skill, it would only be effective towards skills that required the user to be immobile while casting. In comparison to other interrupt skills, it was fairly inferior when compared to the types of grabs.

Another Summer of Sleep wasn't able to stop himself from sliding back. He carried his Greatsword on his back, and his surroundings turned red. The Greatsword boiled like blood, as it continued to swell and get bigger. When his sword was drawn down, the blood erupted and cloud of bloody mist immediately spread out. This was the big, Level 70 skill of the Berserker:

Crimson Storm.

As for Soft Mist, her spear transformed into a dragon when she swung it. Although she was retreating, her transformed spear's magical battle aura surged ahead. Its blast managed to strike the Paladin.

Although Angel's Might managed to force Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist back, it couldn't avoid either of the two's big moves. The summoned Holy Shield Technique couldn't resist the two skills at all. The shield was blasted to bits, and the erupting, boiling red color of the magical battle aura completely swallowed up the poor Paladin in an instant.

After Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash was finished with his support as a Phantom Demon, he didn't stand around and do nothing. He attacked with his katana to help dish out damage.

"Too fierce. Happy's response is truly fierce. We need to remember that they didn't bring a healer. When faced with the Paladin's Angel's Might, they continued to deal damage despite having to bear the damage taken." The broadcast commentator exclaimed unstoppingly.

"This Mysterious Fantasy player is in danger. He's in between Happy's pincer attacks, so he can only pray for his teammates to arrive quickly to save him. Now, where are his teammates?"

The broadcast screen switched to the other members of Mysterious Fantasy. The Knight had been heavily targeted by

Another Summer of Sleep and Soft Mist, but now it was his turn to proactively intercept the two. The Qi Master, who had been blasted away, was now rushing forward. Since he had mid-ranged attacks, he punched out a Sky Piercing Strike towards Soft Mist and Another Summer of Sleep.

However, with a flicker, Another Summer of Sleep circled around to Soft Mist's front. He used his body to take on Qi Master's Sky Piercing Strike. Soft Mist wasn't interrupted by the attack, so she continued to attack the Paladin furiously.

The Paladin's Angel's Might wasn't able to turn the tides. After giving himself two instant and strong heals , he used Firm Will to boost his defence. He then spun his view around in an attempt to see if any of his teammates could quickly come to his rescue.

Unfortunately, before he could wait for his teammate's attacks to arrive, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim and Wei Chen's Windward Formation had found some openings to throw some skills his way. The Paladin could only rely on his class' powerful defense to stay alive. Finally, the Knight from his team rushed to his side and activated Holy Punishment. Tang Rou's Soft Mist had to avoid it. The moment she moved aside, Sun Zheping appeared with his greatsword and parried the Holy Punishment head on.

"Using an attack to parry Holy Punishment!!!" The broadcast commentator uttered in disbelief. Luckily, the audience could only hear his voice, and not see his face. Holy Punishment's attacking rhythm was controlled by the controller, so it didn't have a set rhythm. In addition, its damage could layer on top of another and increase. The commentator didn't know whether using an attack

to parry such a skill was courageous or insane.

The clanging of weapons between the two characters rang incessantly. Mysterious Fantasy's Knight couldn't really believe what was happening. Someone actually dared to use pure technical skill to take on Holy Punishment. Was he... being looked down on?

Even a clay person had a bit of temper*. Such an abnormal scene was happening to him. His self-esteem took a lot of damage. He started to focus on Holy Punishment while disregarding everything else. All in all, it was difficult to hold back Holy Punishment with just technical skill in the first place. After Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep had parried for a bit, he couldn't keep it up after the opponent increased his speed. Normal attacks couldn't parry Holy Punishment, so he had to counter it with skills. However, all skills would have a cooldown time, so while Holy Punishment wouldn't have this problem, Another Summer of Sleep eventually used up all of his skills. When he could only use normal attacks to counter it, Mysterious Fantasy's Knight felt really at ease, and attacked again and again. The numerous consecutive attacks pushed Another Summer of Sleep to the point that Another Summer of Sleep couldn't hold on any longer.

"You idiot! Watch where you are going!!!" However, the Knight's oppressive attacks towards Sun Zheping angered Zhang Yiwei to the point that he cursed out loud. The Knight furiously pursued Another Summer of Sleep with attacks, and gave up the chance to protect the Paladin, who was left there by himself. What other possibilities were there, for an exposed healer, except to get beaten up?

The broadcast followed the Knight's crazy Holy Punishment, but the position he had left was even more exciting. Soft Mist's battle spear turned and stabbed fiercely towards the Paladin. Although Mysterious Fantasy's Qi Master picked out a chance to do something, it wasn't a class that specialized in fighting at close distances. The advantage in mid-range attacks and support couldn't save the Paladin. In Mysterious Fantasy, the one that had the best chance in saving the healer was the Knight, but this guy had been led away by Sun Zheping's forceful response.

When the broadcast switched back to this scene, the commentator suddenly came to realise the truth. Amid the courageousness in Sun Zheping's attacks, there was also a devious trick!

The Knight player only managed to realize what happened after the Holy Punishment had finished. He hurriedly tried to turn back to save the healer, but how could Sun Zheping let him off the hook so easily? He pursued the Knight with a chain of wild slashes. All the advantages he gained from the Holy Punishment was taken away after a few attacks. They had a healer with them, so theoretically, exchanging blood shouldn't be a disadvantage. However, the problem was that they were about to lose their healer.

Lord Grim and Windward Formation on the other side exchanged positions. Under the coverage of Lord Grim, Windward Formation managed to summon Death's Door.

Players who wanted to step ahead had to consider again. Being captured by Death's Door couldn't be countered by mere controls.

At least, low-ranked pro players in the league like the ones in Mysterious Fantasy didn't have this confidence. The crucial issue of saving the healer was changed into breaking Death's Door. Since Death's Door's caster was under the coverage of Lord Grim, members of Mysterious Fantasy all switched their firepower that way.

Zhang Yiwei once again sighed. He couldn't even curse. It could clearly be seen just how little hope he had left. Happy was leading his team by the nose. The disparity between the two teams in terms of tactics already put in Zhang Yiwei in despair. In his heart, he faintly felt like even if Happy hadn't come out with something unexpected leading to his plans being ruined, even if his tactical arrangement had been in place, the other side had Ye Xiu leading Team Happy, while he himself was off stage unable to do anything. Team Mysterious Fantasy would have fallen either way.

He continued to look for holes in Team Happy. Sometimes it was because the healing wasn't enough. Sometimes it was because Steamed Bun was a novice. However, Team Mysterious Fantasy's biggest weakness had been grasped by the other side.

Coach……

For Team Mysterious Fantasy, their wins were because of the coach; their losses were also because of the coach. Because of the difficulty in coordinating with the team, the effectiveness in coaching was limited. Mid-match, the coach's plans might fail. It was also possible that unexpected things could lead to changes in the situation. In a normal team, the team captain would make immediately adjustments. However, Team Mysterious Fantasy

depended on their coach. Their tactics would immediately crash down. Their defeat was simply logical.

Zhang Yiwei, who had been uneasy and nervous the entire time, calmed down at this moment. He already knew what the results would be. No matter if the outcome was good or bad, it at least gave him a peace of mind. Team Mysterious Fantasy's journey stopped here.

Zhang Yiwei was upset. If he hadn't overthought things, if they had won one more point than Team Trader, if they had maintained a qualifying spot the entire time. Unfortunately, it was all too late. Team Mysterious Fantasy would be eliminated.

Chapter 980: New Competitive Format

Glory!

When the team competition was replaced by this massive word, Zhang Yiwei had completely collapsed on his seat.

Although he had seen the lack of initiative Mysterious Fantasy had during the team competition and guessed the results, with the match still ongoing, he still bore hope for a miracle in his heart. It was only until now that Zhang Yiwei's hopes finally turned to ashes.

Excellent Era was in this season's Challenger League, which was quite the blow for those who wanted to return to the Pro League. In truth, Mysterious Fantasy had long since been prepared for an extra year in the Challenger League. Now, however, they had been eliminated without even meeting Excellent Era. That was inexcusable. Zhang Yiwei was the true core of Team Mysterious Fantasy. In successes, he contributed the most; in failures, he couldn't escape the responsibility; and this match had completely revealed to him how little control coaches like him had over the situation under the current rules. Zhang Yiwei felt that his future was even bleaker than Mysterious Fantasy's.

The players of both teams came down from the stage one by one. Mysterious Fantasy's players gathered around of their own volition, yet their coach didn't say a word sitting there so silently, it was scary. They didn't dare make any noise either, just standing there with their heads bowed, quietly waiting. Yet, next to them, laughter and celebration filled Happy's player stands.

At the same time, in the audience, the few Happy fans as well as the Ye Qiu fans were cheering in excitement. In the media seating area, Chang Xian was almost jumping in joy.

"They won! Happy won, Brother Cao!!" There were quite a few reporters around them so Chang Xian stayed discrete, simply pulling on Cao Guangcheng, who sat next to him, and sharing his joy.

"Heh, not bad." Cao Guangcheng squeezed out a smile. He was surprised that Happy had really managed to obtain such a one-sided victory and guarantee Mysterious Fantasy's elimination. Could this Happy really pose a threat to Excellent Era?

Cao Guangcheng couldn't help the anxiety in his heart. However, looking at his fellow reporters, he found that they were rather happy that Happy was advancing to the next round. It was just that they were happy for a different reason. Chang Xian was happy because he had feelings for Happy and hoped that this team could do better and walk further. As for the other reporters, they were hoping for a drama-filled clash between Ye Qiu and Excellent Era so none of them wanted Happy to be eliminated too early.

"10 to 0, Happy eventually defeated Mysterious Fantasy with such a huge lead. This result was probably very unexpected to most people, right? However, you have to admit that this is an appropriate conclusion to this round. Team Happy is the biggest surprise of the season for the Challenger League, and two ex-pro teams have already fell to them. Who knows what other surprises they'll bring us in the following events? Let us wait and see!" The

commentator for the broadcast was finishing up on his commentary for the match. The other seven matches had either already finished or were nearing their end.

The final rankings of each group would be decided today and on the electronic screen, facing four different directions, the rankings for each group was show on each on. Those groups that still had a chance were at their most nervous, but this had nothing to do with Mysterious Fantasy anymore. After standing around and staring at their coach for a while, they finally heard their coach speak.

"Let's go!"

Zhang Yiwei stood, calmly calling his team over.

Admonishment? That would do nothing now. Encouragement? That could wait until after he secured his own future! They hadn't even advanced past the group matches. Zhang Yiwei was very clear that this wouldn't satisfy their boss. Especially since this match had exposed a lot of problems. There was a big question mark on if he could still stand with these team members in Team Mysterious Fantasy.

Team Mysterious Fantasy left silently like that and not many people noticed the departure of these failures. The audience was all watching the remaining matches while keeping an eye on the rankings. Group B was the first group to settle on its advancing teams. Happy was first and Trader was second.

The second group was Group D. Excellent Era's first place in this

group had been set in stone from the beginning and ended up with a full 40 points, showing off Excellent Era's absolute advantage in the Challenger League. Everyone in this group could only hope for second. As the last two matches ended, Group D's second advancing team was decided, a team called The Limit of Heat.

The third group that had its advancing teams decided was Group A. Jade Dynasty obtained first with a small lead and the second team was one called Scorching Fields.

And this team, according to the rules of the Challenger League, would be Happy's next opponent.

Group C's matches still hadn't finished, but not many people cared. Their half had Excellent Era and no one believed anything that happened in this group would affect Excellent Era's dominance.

The eight quarter finalists were all decided on this night, and the next round's match arrangement would be automatically generated.

The following matches for the Challenger League would continue in a knockout-style best of one game with no difference in home or away. The map would be decided by the hosting party, all made by the Glory game company specially for the following games. With a match every week, the champions would be decided in three weeks. As for the competitive format, it would go by an entirely new format which would be used for the first time ever in the Challenger League offline tournament.

The new format decreased the three parts of the game to two. The individual matches would be removed, leaving only the group arena and team competition. However, the group arena would be changed from three on three to five on five.

The scoring system would be the all new headcount scoring system.

For example, if, in the group arena, someone was overwhelming enough to wipe out all five members of the other team, they would get five points. If two people managed to destroy all five, they would get four points; three people and they'd obtain three points; four people and they'd get two; five people and they'd get one. If all five people went up and weren't able to defeat the other team, they would lose and would get no points.

The team competition would be the same. The points depended on how many people were left on your side, a point per person.

The final score would be the total of the two.

Because of the change in the scoring system, the format was all too new. After the Alliance leaked this, experts immediately began pointing out that this would lead to a revolution in Glory tactics. As opposed to simply pursuing the final victory, players needed to consider a lot more under this format. The game would become a lot more complicated and there would be much more to it. For the analysts who wouldn't be hurting their waist when they stood and talked, they admired the new rules. However, for the actual

participants, the pros, changing their habits would be something extremely annoying. So it didn't matter if the change made things better or worse; they wouldn't welcome it no matter what. It was just that when it made things worse, they could reasonably complain about it, but this sort of format where they couldn't pick out any major flaws, they could only go and get used to it.

The Alliance planned to first test it out in the Challenger League to see how things went. If it was alright, they'd implement it in the Pro League playoffs. As for if the regular season needed changing or not, they'd have to do some more research.

The new competitive format wasn't some sort of big reveal for everyone. When they started looking into it, the Alliance had gone to the clubs to see their opinions on it, as to avoid making some absurd rules and causing a riot. Being able to share this plan of theirs meant that the clubs wouldn't have anything to say against it. As for the participants of the Challenger League, they were insignificant and powerless and could only go along with it.

Because of the addition of the headcount scoring system, the new format would be more complicated as experts had analyzed. But no matter how complicated the competition was, they could still make certain of their victory. If you won both the group arena and the team competition, then there was no need to take the headcount into account when deciding a victor.

The headcount would only be necessary if the victors of the group arena and team competition were different. Those who thought the headcount scoring system was only for deciding a victor under these circumstances were too naive. If a victor

couldn't be decided, they could add another match. The Alliance welcomed more matches for more spectators. Otherwise, why would they have two rounds? They'd just have each match be a team competition and leave it at that, simple.

Not doing that was naturally because one on one duels were an irreplaceable format that the audience loved. However, this sort of amalgamation of different match styles of the past had caused matches to end early. Especially with the appearance of such a situation in the finals of the last season, the Alliance was resolute in wanting to change this.

In theory, the same thing could happen with the new format. For example, if one team got five points in the group arena and then killed two of their opponents in the team competition, then the match would end early.

However, the probability of this happening was extremely low. In the Pro League, one versus three was already a very rare event, so while one versus five might not be impossible, the probability of something that happening couldn't be lower. Anyways, five points, four points, even three points would be highly unlikely in the group arena. After all, the group arena was a fair, one on one sort of fight. Getting one or two points in the end should be the most common conclusion.

However, the team competition would be different. It would be easier to gain points in the team competition than the group arena because the team competition was only fair at the very beginning. When the disadvantaged side began to lose players, the gap would grow. The advantaged side keeping two or even three points would

be common. Only one point would be less common in this circumstance.

Considering all these factors, the team competition wouldn't be affected much if one team could only get one or two points in the Group Arena. That meant, with the new rules, the team competition was a heavy deciding factor. However, this was under the assumption that you didn't let down your guard during the group arena. With each part tying to the other, the game's competitiveness and viewership were assured, while reducing the chances of an early finish to the minimum. The Alliance was full of confidence to this new format. The eight quarter finalists of the Challenger League would be graced with the chance to be the very first to try the new format out.

Chapter 981: New Stage and Final Stage

There would be ten days of rest after the completion of the group stage. The next stage of the tournament would begin on 5/16, a Friday night. There would be three rounds over the next three weeks until the Challenger League champion was crowned.

The teams eliminated in the group stage returned home one after the other over the next few days. Many player teams felt very satisfied because they had managed to reach this step. They received quite a chunk of prize money from the Alliance. Their trip could be considered worthwhile. The team most unwilling to leave was Team Mysterious Fantasy. After the end of the second day of the group stage, the press released news that Mysterious Fantasy's coach, Zhang Yiwei, had stepped down from his position. Reporters tried to contact him, but all of their requests were declined. The official statement from Mysterious Fantasy said that from their three seasons of experience, they felt like coaching wasn't suitable for the current Glory competitive scene.

The following 5/9 issue of the Esports Home also published this piece of news. However, most of the news was focused on Team Happy, the team that had eliminated Team Mysterious Fantasy from the tournament.

Chang Xian prepared a detailed introduction on Team Happy long ago. What's more, he had revised it multiple times after consulting Team Happy. Now that Team Happy had attracted so much attention, Chang Xian finally had the opportunity to bring out the article that he had been holding onto for so long. Team Happy had finally been introduced on the front page. Apart from that, how could they not want to know the team's thoughts? In the

same issue, Chang Xian also did an interview on Team Happy. Chang Xian had finally made it into the spotlight this week. Through his relationship with Happy, he alone took up half of the space given for the Challenger League. The other two reporters, that had come specifically for the Challenger League, were filled with envy.

They had also grabbed onto Team Happy. They had looked to do interviews for Happy and had written also introductions for them, but how could they know as much as a team reporter like Chang Xian? The final articles chosen to be published were all Chang Xian's.

Becoming a team reporter for an Internet cafe grassroots team? In the beginning, the two had laughed at Chang Xian's decision, but now they couldn't even force a smile. "Let's see how long his pride will last!" The two thought venomously, and began cursing for Team Happy to hurry and get eliminated. If they couldn't profit from it, then the material was worthless in their eyes.

As for Cao Guangcheng, he deserved to be an experienced reporter. He didn't even try and fight with Chang Xian for Team Happy. He continued to insipidly write about his specific topic. This week, he analyzed Team Excellent Era's situation with the new tournament format.

The Challenger League entered the next stage, while this season's Pro League had entered the final stage.

5/10. The 34th round of season nine of the Glory Alliance. Team Tyranny and their four heavenly kings had steadily held the lead

since the start. Even now, their position at the top of the regular season standings remained unshakeable. In addition, with their efficiency at earning points, breaking the record for total number of points won in a season was no problem for them. However, trying to beat Team Excellent Era's season two record would be practically impossible. That season, Team Excellent Era won a total of 276 points. It didn't seem like a very high number from a total points perspective, but that was because the Alliance only had 16 teams at the time. Back then, there had only been 30 matches in a season. Thus, comparing their total points would not be a good comparison, so comparing the average number of points won per match would be more fair. In that case, Team Excellent Era won 9.2 points per match on average during the second season. This record was ridiculous to the point of being untouchable. With only four rounds left the season, it was already hopeless for Team Tyranny to challenge it.

However, just being able to vie for the record already showed Team Tyranny's unquestionable dominance this season.

In second place was last season's champions, Team Samsara. This season, they strived to defend their title. Even though they had been suppressed by Team Tyranny in the regular season, the playoffs and the regular season were unrelated. Team Blue Rain pushed them down last year too, but who won the playoffs in the end? The regular season had more matches over a longer period of time. It tested a team's consistency, but the playoffs was an elimination tournament. Two matches would determine the winner. It tested a team's explosiveness.

Third, fourth, fifth place was Team Blue Rain, Team Wind Howl, and Team Tiny Herb respectively. The number of points between

the three teams was very close, so it was not possible to distinguish which team was better than the other through placings. However, Team Wind Howl failed to even make it to the playoffs last season, yet now they had turned a new leaf this season, becoming a powerhouse no weaker than Team Blue Rain and Team Tiny Herb. Tang Hao's transfer had already been considered last summer's most successful transfer .

The fight for the last three playoff spots for the sixth, seventh, and eighth place team were very extremely intense. Team Misty Rain was in sixth place. They had no strong teams in the next four rounds, so their situation was looking up. Team Hundred Blossoms was in seventh place. They had lost too many points during the start of the season. They only started catching up after they managed to recover. Their situation was somewhat grave. Team Void was in eighth place. The ghost duo had lasted for so many years. They had always placed neither low nor high as if they were stuck at a bottleneck. Their performance this season had its ups and downs. Even though they still held onto their playoff spot for now, many people considered them as the team most likely to disappoint. If they lost their playoff spot, they might just keep falling from there.

What were the chances of Team Void losing their playoff spot? It was actually quite likely. Team 301 was biting at their heels. Team 301 was the model example of an average team. Their players weren't the best and their characters weren't the most powerful, but the team operated extremely well. Their team's performance was very consistent, and they frequently made it to playoffs. Their performance this season had been affected by Xu Bin's departure. If not, they might have forced the inconsistent Team Void out long ago.

The teams closely behind Team 301 were some of the great mysteries of the season.

Radiant, Conquering Clouds, Heavenly Swords, Parade. These four teams moved up and down the rankings together. They were neatly in order from 10th to 13th place. It was truly surprising. In the beginning, their initial impression was that they should be pacing back and forth between the relegation zone. Instead, they had actually run past it into the middle zone. It was even possible for them to make it into playoffs. Teams with All Stars like Royal Style and Seaside had been forced behind them. The original tenth place team, Team Thunderclap, also surprised many. Now, they had been pushed aside too.

These four teams benefited the most from the new game update. However, only the club guild elites competing for wild bosses in the game knew the real reason why they were performing so well. However, as the season proceeded towards the final stage, the focus of the teams shifted again. Many pro players withdrew from the game and began focusing more on their matches, especially the teams bordering on the edge like Hundred Blossoms, Void, and 301. How could they dare to be careless now?

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As soon as these teams started focusing on the matches, those four teams obviously met with trouble. From a points perspective, they could still make it to playoffs, but in reality, these four teams knew in their hearts that they had only been profiting at the other's expense. Taking advantage of them was just a one-time thing. They still didn't have the strength to rival them on equal

footing.

The Pro League and Challenger League had reached their most exciting stages. However, because there was quite a wide skill gap between different teams in the Challenger League compared to the teams in the Pro League, everyone's attention was more focused. Thus, apart from a few teams, the majority of the teams weren't under much pressure. Team Excellent Era's opponents wouldn't go so far as to not sleeping, trying to figure out a strategy on how to beat Excellent Era. Everyone would laugh at them, treating them as silly people with their panties in a bunch.

Ten days passed by quickly. It was finally match day. Among the eight teams, the highlight match would be between Team Jade Dynasty and Team Trader. Group B's Team Trader made it past a former pro team. They were clearly the biggest dark horse in this offline tournament. They had spectacular performances against Group B's Team Happy and Team Mysterious Fantasy. In this match between Team Jade Dynasty, no one could be certain that Team Jade Dynasty would win just because they had once been a pro team.

The dark horse's journey ended here though. The highlight match ended dully. From the group arena to the team competition, Team Jade Dynasty seemed to be following a routine. They kept advancing step by step until Team Trader finally fell.

The matches for Team Happy and Team Excellent Era were without any suspense. Player teams were easily beaten by them, so the most interesting match was the one between Group C's first seed and Group D's second seed. The strength between the two

teams was quite close. Even though the quality of match wasn't that high, it was at least exciting to watch. Unfortunately, if this type of excitement was enough to satisfy the crowd, why would pro teams need to exist?

The quarter finals ended just like that. None of the matches made anyone's blood race. Even the media reports towards the matches felt dispirited. However, thinking of the next confrontations, everyone's spirits rose. In the top half, Happy and Jade Dynasty would clash. This should be a fairly high-quality match. As for the second half, players who supported Excellent Era and had yet to tire from them winning would continue to be in admiration as their Gods crushed enemy weaklings.

"Two more matches!"

On the morning of the second day, Chen Guo woke up from her dream with a smile. Sunlight had already filled her room. The joy from her dream had yet to recede. She looked to the side and noticed that her roommate Tang Rou was nowhere to be seen.

She woke up so early?

Chen Guo muttered to herself. She got out of bed, washed up, tidied everything, and then left the room. The corridor was extremely quiet. Chen Guo reckoned that the others were still sleeping, so she didn't go to bother them. She went downstairs, ate breakfast, and then headed over to the Internet cafe practice room.

Excellent Era had booked their own hotel, while the liveliness at

the start of the offline tournament was no longer as crazy. Of the nineteen teams at this hotel, only three remained. Everyone was together in the same place during this period of time, and everyone shared Glory as their passion. The players all loved to play the game, so even though they were here to compete against each other, they still became good friends off stage. Those who could make it to this stage of the Challenger League were outstanding players. As a result, Chen Guo was quite enthusiastic about recruiting these people for Happy.

But even if they were outstanding, many of them had their own foundations in the game. Most of them shrugged off her attempts to recruit them. Chen Guo had lots of experience with the game. She understood all of that, so she wasn't impatient. Her Chasing Haze added many friends in the game during this period of time. They could meet again in the Heavenly Domain!

In comparison, more people were more interested in Ye Xiu. What was surprising to Chen Guo was that Ye Xiu didn't seem to avoid many topics, even though he had always acted mysterious in the past.

"What's going on?" Chen Guo was puzzled.

"What do you mean? I was using someone else's name before. How could I not try to keep a low profile?" Ye Xiu said half jokingly.

Chapter 982: Team Jade Dynasty's Consistency

Was the fake identity the reason why Ye Xiu had been hiding the whole time? Ye Xiu didn't seem to be serious when he said that was the reason, so Chen Guo wasn't certain. Before Chen Guo met Ye Xiu, if it was said that God Ye Qiu didn't accept interviews or do endorsements in order to focus on competing, Chen Guo would have believed it. She knew him better now though. Chen Guo always felt like even though Ye Xiu's dedication towards Glory wasn't false, he wasn't so dedicated that he would refuse to do anything else.

After knowing him for so long, Chen Guo felt like Ye Xiu must have many reasons for hiding his identity. For example, in the beginning, he didn't want his family to find him after running away from home. Keeping a low-profile because he was using a fake identity was a very understandable reason too. Ye Xiu was probably too lazy to deal with that stuff anyways. These may all have been reasons for why he had molded his image as this mysterious God, but now, his family problems weren't as serious as back then. His fake identity problem had also been resolved. Thus, of those three reasons, two were no longer issues. It made sense that Ye Xiu would push the boat along the current and stop hiding.

Chen Guo continued thinking about it as she walked towards Happy's practice area. It wasn't empty at all. Everyone in Team Happy, including Mo Fan, had gotten up even earlier than her. All of them were busy in front of their computers.

"Why didn't anyone wake me up!" Seeing how enthusiastic

everyone was, Chen Guo felt very ashamed and grumbled to Tang Rou.

"I didn't think everyone would be up so early either!" Tang Rou said.

"Was this all a coincidence?" Chen Guo said.

"Yup." Tang Rou nodded her head, "When I got here, Ye Xiu and Old Wei were already here."

"What's everyone up to then?" Chen Guo looked around in a circle. The majority of them were practicing. Only Ye Xiu, Wei Chen, and Sun Zheping were gathered around a single computer. All three of them had their hands crossed over their chests. Their expressions were grave as they stared at the screen.

There was a Glory match recording being played on the screen. After Chen Guo went closer to take a look, she could see that it was one of Team Jade Dynasty's matches. The offline tournament had been going on for a month now. Not only did she recognize every player on the remaining teams, she also recognized the characters on each team too. The screen was currently displaying one of Team Jade Dynasty's matches in the group stage.

Chen Guo watched for a bit, but she didn't see any problems. Team Jade Dynasty was heralded as a pro team, but their performance was always very mediocre. In their next match, more people actually favored Team Happy. After eliminating Team Everlasting and beating Team Mysterious Fantasy 10-0, no one

doubted that Team Happy was the real deal. However, beating Team Excellent Era..... very few people believed that it could happen. However, in many people's eyes, Team Jade Dynasty wasn't even as good as Team Everlasting or Team Mysterious Fantasy. When they fought against Team Happy, wouldn't they lose even more miserably than the other two??

However, Chen Guo saw how solemn the three Gods looked as they watched Jade Dynasty's match. She felt like there should be a reason, so she was too afraid to rashly come out with her wise opinion on the matter. She watched along with them for awhile longer. This match ended with Jade Dynasty winning the team competition.

"What do you think?" Ye Xiu spoke.

"Your analysis is reasonable." Sun Zheping nodded his head.

"What's going on?" In the end, Chen Guo couldn't help but interrupt them.

"Oh, we're studying Jade Dynasty." Ye Xiu turned his head and saw Chen Guo. He gave her a quick explanation.

"Is there a problem with Jade Dynasty?" Chen Guo asked.

"Jade Dynasty's performance has always been quite mediocre, but being able to maintain that mediocre performance the entire time shows how terrifyingly consistent they are." Ye Xiu said.

"What does that mean?" Chen Guo didn't understand.

"It means that they've always been more than up to the task*. They have the ability to win their matches in a more dominant manner, yet they only play at this level." Ye Xiu said.

"Why is that?"

"I don't know." Ye Xiu shook his head, "Maybe it's because they're intentionally showing that they're weak, or maybe it's because it's a way to practice their control over their rhythm."

"In short, this isn't Team Jade Dynasty's true strength?" Chen Guo said.

"It's just a guess. For now, all three of us acknowledge that it's a possibility." Ye Xiu said, while pulling out his QQ. He clicked on a profile picture in his friends list. His QQ trembled and then he sent a "Hello hello hello?"

Then, the QQ interface showed that the other side was typing, but no reply came after a long time. Ye Xiu waited patiently and typed again: "Is it that bad? Even your typing is so slow?"

Chen Guo moved closer to take a look. Her jaw dropped. The other side's name was "Yu Wenzhou".

Why did Ye Xiu look for Team Blue Rain's captain?

Chen Guo was puzzled. Then, she saw the other side's reply: "They should be suppressing their rhythm deliberately! But I don't think that it's because they're forcefully pretending to be weaker than they actually are. They should be playing slower and more patiently in order to play consistently. Their playing looks as if they're out of practice. It's as if they're still familiarizing themselves with new characters."

"As I thought!" Ye Xiu replied.

"That's just my own opinion." Yu Wenzhou expressed.

"Okay, I've got it. Sorry! If you're sleepy, then you should go back to bed." Ye Xiu said.

"..."

Ye Xiu closed the chat window and then looked at Wei Chen and Sun Zheping: "His opinion is the same as ours. It looks like that really is the case."

Chen Guo figured out what had just happened. She stood on the side, dumbstruck. These guys analyzing it was fine, but even pulling Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou in and having this top master help them analyze it too?

"This this this... this is breaking the rules!" Chen Guo said.

'Breaking the rules?" Ye Xiu turned his head and looked at Chen Guo, "What rule did we break?"

"This this this...." Chen Guo didn't know what to say. There was no clause in the rules that talked about this, but Chen Guo felt like it was the big bullying the small. If Jade Dynasty knew about this little exchange, they'd probably be crying out of grievance.

Those three weren't even done yet!

"Should we go ask Zhang Xinjie and see what he thinks too?" Wei Chen said.

"Him?" Ye Xiu checked the time. "He gets up from bed, washes, eats breakfast, exercises on a punctual schedule. You can't take away a second from his daily routine. Let alone when he replies, we can't even count on him replying!"

"Isn't there another Master Tactician?" Sun Zheping said.

"Xiao Shiqin?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I think that's his name." Sun Zheping nodded his head.

"Can't you pay more attention to the younger generation? You can't even remember their names!" Ye Xiu looked at him disdainfully.

"Yeah....."

"What does 'yeah' even mean?"

"Stop wasting time. Just go ask him!" Sun Zheping said.

"Do you not understand what type of situation we're in! Do you know which team he's on?" Ye Xiu said.

"Which team!?"

"Excellent Era!" Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?"

"Oh? Do you not read news about transfers?" Ye Xiu said.

"Never." Sun Zheping said.

Ye Xiu actually already knew that. The person in front of him never cared about that sort of stuff. For him, who cares if there are any changes in a team? Just chop them to pieces. What's the difference?

"Asking him probably wouldn't be too convenient." Ye Xiu said.

"Yeah." Wei Chen nodded his head, "Who knows, he might just intentionally try to confuse us with his analysis." Wei Chen thought about Xiao Shiqin from a shameless perspective.

"Right." Sun Zheping nodded his head, "That's also possible. People who play with tactics have dirty hearts."

"Yes yes, all of them are shameless." Wei Chen immediately expressed his approval. Sun Zheping's evaluation of tacticians clearly included Ye Xiu. After all, he was one of the four Master Tacticians!

"Haha." Ye Xiu laughed dryly.

"You're not even ashamed." Wei Chen shook his head and sighed.

"And you even think of it as something glorious." Sun Zheping also sighed. He looked at Ye Xiu like he couldn't be saved.

"Haha." Ye Xiu laughed again. "Says the two who were both beaten by me."

"It looks like Team Jade Dynasty won't be easy to deal with!" As expected, Wei Chen switched subjects. The switch was choppy, showing his shamelessness.

"Yeah, from our analysis, Team Jade Dynasty might not be hiding anything in terms of their playstyle. What they've hidden is the strength of their characters." Ye Xiu obviously wasn't going to

waste time arguing. He followed along and started talking business.

"The strength of their characters can't be considered weak though." Wei Chen looked through the information he had. It was all the detailed information that could be found on the current Team Jade Dynasty. Chang Xian had organized it for them and handed it over.

There were already plenty of Level 75 players after five months. Level 75 Orange equipment naturally weren't as rare as before. For a former pro team like Team Jade Dynasty, even if they couldn't get it themselves, they could still use money to buy it. Orange equipment had a drop rate, after all. Their value couldn't be compared to Silver equipment. If a team set their sights on going pro, if they didn't even have the heart to spend money on Orange equipment, then it was best if they disbanded.

Team Jade Dynasty hadn't given up after so many years. They could still invest some money into equipping everyone with Level 75 Orange equipment. If these characters were still hiding strength, then only Silver equipment could improve them.

"Does Team Jade Dynasty have such backing?" Wei Chen wondered.

"I don't know....." Ye Xiu was also at a loss. If they weren't in the Challenger League, those in the competitive scene would probably have forgotten about them already.

"Maybe... they got some sort of sponsor, so they have money to spend now?" Chen Guo interrupted at this moment. Her opinion was very reasonable. This came from her personal experience. Team Happy's outstanding performance in the offline tournament had already attracted several different organizations, who wanted to discuss a partnership with Team Happy. Of course, no one had signed anything yet because all of the organizations still needed to wait and see how well they did. Just their current performance wasn't enough for them to want a long term partnership. However, if Team Happy actually beat Team Excellent Era, their talks for a partnership would intensify.

The current Team Jade Dynasty seemed to be hiding their strength. Chen Guo suddenly thought: could this team also have received this type of support?

Chapter 983: Happy's Fanclub

Sponsorship?

Ye Xiu shook his head. A sponsorship was a business move. The sponsor needed to benefit from the sponsorship, so organizations usually looked for strong teams, teams with lots to talk about, or teams that would receive a lot of attention. The Challenger League viewership was very small. Few sponsors would gain any benefit from sponsoring Challenger League teams.

Happy receiving sponsorship talks was an exception. Even though Happy wasn't a strong team in many people's eyes, Happy also never lacked topics to talk about. Happy was receiving more and more attention too. Even so, no one had reached out for sponsorship yet. It was clearly because they felt like Happy still hadn't reached the level they wanted.

The business didn't want a short-lived night-blooming cactus, but a long-lasting partner. In the Challenger League, there was only way to achieve this: getting the final victory.

This time's Challenger League had Excellent Era. If Happy actually won, the attention that Happy received wouldn't be on the same level as the past Challenger League winners. The current interest towards Happy had much to do with Excellent Era. It was the existence of Excellent Era that gave them such value in this year's Challenger League.

Jade Dynasty's performance in the Challenger League had been

very mediocre too. Even though they had Excellent Era as a touchstone, they should be in the same boat as Happy. They had to at least beat Excellent Era first before getting any sponsorship offers. Chen Guo's deduction wasn't logical.

But from this perspective, Ye Xiu thought of another possibility.

Jade Dynasty had switched owners.

Teams and clubs were similar to companies. They could be bought and sold too. If Jade Dynasty had been purchased and the buyer had a lot of money, having a strong backing all of a sudden was an extremely likely possibility.

"Why bother thinking about it so much?" Sun Zheping said, "Even if we can't see through them, we just have to prepare for them well. When the time comes, we just have to beat them."

"There's no other way." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Since they couldn't get a read on Team Jade Dynasty's true strength, they had no way of preparing for them in a targeted manner. If they rashly came up with strategies, it was very possible that it would come back to bite them. As a result, this week's practice was just to work hard and improve without any big changes.

Jade Dynasty's players continued to go to the Internet cafe in the hotel to practice. When they saw Happy, they would smile and

greet them. Everything seemed warm and friendly. At this moment, only these two teams were going in and out of the Internet cafe. The other team was up against Excellent Era next and had already given up. They might as well take the week off and have fun, so they had gone off to tour City B. They hadn't come to the Internet cafe a single time this week.

In the blink of an eye, it was match day. The Esports Home published biweekly. The Monday issue was after match day, so it introduced the contents of the match and commented on the predicted results. The Friday issue was before the next match day, so it was mostly trivial news, as well as predictions and preparations done by the teams. The Challenger League may be a small steamed bun, but it had juicy meat. There was no lack of things that needed to be written.

8 PM. Offline tournament stadium. The number of matches every week became fewer and fewer, but the number of viewers only increased. After Team Happy entered the stadium through the player passageway, they headed over to their seats. Suddenly, they heard a crash. A distance away, in the audience behind their player seats, was a huge banner: Team Happy! Certain Victory!!! Then, they saw a bunch of people sitting there and cheering loudly.

"Huh?" Chen Guo was surprised. Even though there had been a few Team Happy fans before, she had never seen this kind of support. Ye Xiu's personal fanclub had once gathered together and cheered them on, but who would have thought Team Happy would finally have a fanclub too!

Chen Guo felt delighted in her heart. But in the next moment,

she heard a crash from nearby. Another banner had dropped saying: Team Jade Dynasty! Certain Victory!!!

It didn't matter whose banner was bigger. The typeface for Team Jade Dynasty was superior to Team Happy's. The fanclub over there looked at Team Happy's fanclub in delight. They started cheering loudly too. All of a sudden, Team Happy's fanclub had been drowned out.

But Happy's fanclub weren't afraid of this kind of challenge. They started shouting loudly too. There were even a few curses mixed in. Soon enough, just cursing out loud wasn't enough. They started throwing whatever they had in their hands like water bottles at Jade Dynasty's side.

This time, Jade Dynasty's fanclub looked as if they couldn't hold on. They didn't counterattack with weapons of their own. Even when Happy's fanclub had been cursing at them, not many of them cursed back. Right when Happy's fanclub were immensely proud of their victory, the stadium's security guards rushed over and surrounded them.

Chen Guo was very worried for them. She hastily ran over to talk to the security guards. Then, she saw the security guards give a harsh warning and picked out the guy who arranged the long-range attacks, preparing to escort him out of the stadium. This time, Happy's fanclub refused to cooperate. After another loud commotion, the security guards said something again and the commotion gradually died down. The lead instigator left, but he wasn't escorted out. He was simply placed in another seat. The turnout for the semifinals wasn't bad, but the Challenger League's

popularity was limited, so the majority of the stadium was still empty. This lead instigator was thrown into a lonely and desolate section filled with empty seats.

As for Jade Dynasty's fanclub? They had victorious smirks on their faces as if they knew this would happen. Chen Guo saw this and was extremely unhappy, but Ye Xiu knew with just a single glance that Jade Dynasty's fanclub was experienced and organized. They had experience watching these sorts of matches and knew their limits. On the other hand, Happy's fanclub were much more wild. Creating such a commotion would obviously force the security guards to come out and stop them.

Team Jade Dynasty arrived too. They saw how the previous scene unfolded and couldn't help but look towards Team Happy and chuckle. The player seats for the two competing sides were located near each other. This time, the fanclubs on both sides had gathered behind them. They hadn't even started fighting yet, and a dispute had already arisen. Happy and Jade Dynasty was just an ordinary match with nothing to celebrate about. It was easy to imagine just how intense the struggle would be between two teams with a deep rivalry.

The players sat down in their seats. Someone from Jade Dynasty said something to the fanclub behind them as if to appease them. Chen Guo noticed this. She couldn't fall behind. She also stood up and turned around. Then, she saw the faces of the fanclub filled with expectations and suddenly didn't know what to say. A person suddenly jumped out from among the crowd, waved his hands wildly at her, and shouted: "Boss, boss, it's me! It's me!"

Before anything else happened, security guards immediately rushed over. That person immediately shrunk back, but he was still pointing fiercely at himself: "It's me!! Seven Fields! Seven Fields!"

"Ah?" Chen Guo was dumbfounded. For a moment, she couldn't remember who that was. The others already learned from Seven Fields and started introducing themselves.

"Guild leader, it's me, Cruel Shadows."

"It's me, Flying Ghost."

"Little Lobster."

"Banner Wastrel"

"Frozen Mast."

"..."

"It's you guys!!" Chen Guo blurted out. She had seen these names many times before, but they were a bit unfamiliar to her. All of them were members of the tenth server's Guild Happy. They were the first few to join the guild and helped build the guild up from scratch. A few of those guild members had reached the Heavenly Domain. A few continued to stay in Happy. Others started their journey anew after arriving in the Heavenly Domain, but there were also a few who stayed in the normal server and continued to

play there. For example, the ones who had come from Full Moon Guild like Seven Field's and Sleeping Moon's group. They had originally been veterans from the Heavenly Domain, but had come to the new server after the tenth server opened. For normal servers, the end goal was to reach the Heavenly Domain.

Thus, it could be said that, in Glory, those who switched to the new server to restart their journey were dedicated to staying in the new server; they wouldn't go to the Heavenly Domain. Otherwise, it was all meaningless for them. Seven Fields and the others hadn't been from a club guild. They didn't come to the normal server to build and grow a certain guild. The reason that they came to the normal server was because they didn't want to play in the Heavenly Domain anymore and only wanted to enjoy the normal servers.

As veterans, their skill level was higher than all of the noobs in the new server, so they became Happy's backbone. The backbones of the guild always carried a certain amount of influence. The four had long since abandoned the Heavenly Domain, so they obviously didn't have any favorable impressions of the Heavenly Domain. Due to their influence, quite a few members of the tenth server's Guild Happy stayed in the normal server instead of leaving for the Heavenly Domain.

And now, they had come over to the stadium to support their team. Chen Guo didn't know where these guys were from, but all of them had gathered behind Team Happy, becoming a solid support group for them.

"You guys..." Chen Guo started to get emotional. She was

someone who could easily make friends with others, but she didn't know what to say towards these "familiar" faces.

Ye Xiu quietly stood by her side. The players immediately became excited: "Ah! God Ye! Look!"

Ye Xiu had left the normal server too early, so a lot of them weren't very familiar with him. Seven Fields knew him though. They had met quite early on, even before Steamed Bun.

"Where's Little Moon Moon and the others?" Ye Xiu asked Seven Fields with a smile.

"Haha, Sunset Clouds and Drifting Water live too far away. It wasn't convenient for them to come visit. Isn't Little Moon Moon sitting over there?" Seven Fields pointed. The lead instigator, who had taken the lead in throwing a water bottle at the opposing fanclub and had been put under house arrest in an empty area, was Sleeping Moon.

"Hahahaha, it's actually you guys!" A person suddenly got up from Chen Guo's side. Steamed Bun had stood up on his seat and waved excitedly towards Happy's fanclub.

"Oh oh, it's Steamed Bun! That fool!" Everyone roared. Ye Xiu was a God. When they faced him, they always felt pressured and didn't know what to say. However, when they faced Steamed Bun, they immediately became close. Steamed Bun had come from Guild Happy, so they knew all him very well.

"Hahahaha, watch me f*ck these guys up." Steamed Bun pointed towards Team Jade Dynasty.

"1v5! Do you dare!!" Happy's fanclub shouted.

Chapter 984: Jade Dynasty's Boss

The fanclubs for both teams had come, so the teams had to interact with them, of course. For Jade Dynasty, the team and fan interactions were peaceful and harmonious. The team thanked their fans for their support and the fans didn't stop shouting encouragements toward the team. For Happy, their team and fan interactions were rambunctious and like a riot. Nothing needed to be said about Steamed Bun and his pals, but they weren't unfamiliar with Tang Rou either! It was just that Tang Rou was extremely headstrong and fierce in game, so while she might've had a lady's voice, many people suspected. Now that they saw the player behind the character, they found that, not only was she really a girl, but she was also immensely beautiful. Everyone was rather embarrassed to speak for a moment.

Apart from those two, there was also Luo Ji, who had been a part of Guild Happy for a long time, becoming close with the other guild members and even provided them with many walkthroughs and the such. In the eyes of rookies and noobs, Luo Ji was also an expert among experts. Now, seeing that he was even part of the team, who wouldn't nod and say: an expert as expected.

Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash was usually being power leveled by a different person, so he hadn't had much interaction with Guild Happy's members. However, since his name was a part of the guild, he was one of them, so there would naturally be this sort of closeness.

Over on Happy's side, there was a rowdy atmosphere, often catching the attention of the security guards. So Happy's players didn't dare to make any sudden movements. There was a gap

between the audience seating and the players seating, and this was for the safety of the players. According to the rules, the audience couldn't enter the surrounding areas. However, sometimes fans would want autographs and after getting the permission of the players, the guards would let it slip occasionally. However, one of Happy's fans had already been dragged out today for overstepping their bounds, so they became the target of the security guards' watchful stare. Because of this, they obviously couldn't be as casual as they wanted to be. They were all chatting happily, but they could only yell across the gap at each other.

Jade Dynasty's polite interactions were done in a few moments. That was when they saw Happy's rowdy and laughter filled area, which didn't seem to be ending. They felt conflicted. They kind of envied Happy's closeness with their fans, but at the same time they were disdainful of their grassroots demeanor. However, their thoughts then changed. Even if they didn't consider anything else, with just God Ye Qiu's identity alone, Happy was far above their entire team. What sort of right did they have to be disdainful of the other's grassroots demeanor?

Jade Dynasty's players all felt a little down, dully sitting there and waiting for the match to start. Their fanclub had also gone quiet, sitting there and watching Happy's side. Talking about envious, it was the fans who were truly envious. The pro teams of today sat high above everyone, and their players were all celebrities, becoming more and more distant from their supporters. This sort of close and familiar interaction was something they could only dream of.

Seeing the cheers coming from Happy's side and comparing it to their own rather cool airs, one person sitting in Jade Dynasty's

player stands turned and smiled at another, saying a few words to him. After that person nodded, the two stood up together and walked towards Team Happy with a smile.

Ye Xiu had long since noticed these two. These two had never appeared in Jade Dynasty's lineup before and today was the first time they had shown their faces. However, they couldn't be players either. The offline matches didn't allow the changing of your lineup mid tournament.

In addition, the person on the right seemed older, probably around thirty years old, while the one on the left was relatively younger, about twenty five or twenty six years old.

Seeing the two approach, Ye Xiu stepped forward to meet them. After the others noticed, they all stopped their conversations and turned to place their gaze on the two.

"Hello, God Ye." The two initiated greeting upon coming forth.

"You are...?"

"Zhang Jian." The relatively older one on the right introduced himself.

Ye Xiu paused for a moment after hearing this before giving Zhang Jian a closer look. Soon he remembered. "It's you? It's been quite a while, I didn't even recognize you."

"For insignificant people like us, it's already enough of an honor if God Ye has heard of our names before," Zhang Jian said with a smile.

"What are you saying?" Ye Xiu smiled as well.

Zhang Jian was also a first generation pro player and was Jade Dynasty's captain back then. For the first two years, he led Team Jade Dynasty from the very bottom of the Alliance. Compared to the captain that had led his team to gain two consecutive championships in both years, he was as opposite as could be from Ye Qiu in the Alliance. From this point of view, saying he was an insignificant person wasn't being modest for Zhang Jian.

However, considering his individual strength, Zhang Jian wasn't as insignificant as his team who always placed last. Yet in the pro league, strength didn't always mean a good record, and a good record was what truly proved your strength to people. With Jade Dynasty coming in last place for two years in a row, a record that couldn't be worse, he, as the captain and ace, took the blame for it.

In the second season, the Alliance began to relegate teams and Team Jade Dynasty, at the bottom of the ranks, was relegated. However, Zhang Jian received some invitations from other teams. Just when everyone thought he was going to take the chance to escape the sinking ship, he stayed and pulled Team Jade Dynasty back into the Alliance against all of the pressure and friction against them. After that, he retired.

Then after that, there was no more news from this player. Back then, Glory wasn't so grand as it was now and pro players wouldn't

make enough money. Retired pros lived normal and simple lives. As for a player like him, from a shitty team, there would be little effort made to seek out his circumstances and whereabouts.

Ye Xiu had never thought that, after all these years, he would meet this person again in the Glory circle. And he was even standing with Team Jade Dynasty which he had once fought alongside with. Could it be that he had gotten rich over these years and bought the team?

As Ye Xiu was wondering to himself, Zhang Jian introduced the young man beside him to Ye Xiu. "This is the boss of Team Jade Dynasty, Xiao Jie."

"Oh?" Ye Xiu was guessing if Zhang Jian was the boss, yet in the next moment, the boss had been introduced to him. Speaking of which, Ye Xiu really had no clue who Jade Dynasty's boss was. The information Chang Xian had given them didn't say much either. However, this man who was only around twenty-five or twenty-six, obviously couldn't have always been Jade Dynasty's boss. How old would he have been back then? Probably only sixteen or seventeen!

Yet after this introduction, An Wenyi made a surprising move by coming forwards to ask, "Xiao Jie? Is it that Xiao Jie?"

That was when the young boss nodded with a smile. "Yes, I'm that Xiao Jie."

"Who is this?" Ye Xiu and the others all looked to An Wenyi.

"He's a bestselling author," An Wenyi explained.

"Author?" Ye Xiu scratched his head. This identity seemed very distant and alien to him. Wei Chen was even more exaggerated, and took several big steps over in a rush upon hearing what they were saying. "Author? Where is he? Let me see! I haven't seen a live specimen before!"

As for Chen Guo, she was quite curious as well, but she wasn't as exaggerated as Wei Chen. This was because she saw a thick air of ignorance for everything non-Glory related coming from Wei Chen.

"Greetings, author! It's an honor, an honor." Wei Chen came up and grabbed the man's hand, shaking it with vigor.

"Big Boss Wei. I watched a lot of your matches as a kid," Xiao Jie said with a smile.

"Oh oh, really! Do you want my autograph then? Hahahaha," Wei Chen said without any embarrassment whatsoever.

Xiao Jie smiled without saying anything in response. It was clear that he wasn't Wei Chen's fan. However, his words had already revealed some information; he was someone who had remained a fan of Glory for a long time.

"It seems like Boss Xiao is a fan of Jade Dynasty!" Ye Xiu said.

"Yes, I've always been one," Xiao Jie replied.

"You must not have had it easy then," Ye Xiu commented.

On that side, Zhang Jian rolled his eyes. These words were a little mocking, and yet it was the truth. Jade Dynasty wasn't anything impressive, yet they could still gain a fan that was so loyal to them throughout all these years. This was indeed not easy.

"Heh, that's true." Even Xiao Jie himself agreed. "Jade Dynasty's battle records have never been that good. It makes people rather worried. However, in the past, I could only be anxious about it and do nothing else. Now things are better. I have the power to help the team I support and I'm quite relieved with that."

"Jade Dynasty should be rather relieved, too, having a fan like yourself," Ye Xiu said.

"Haha," Xiao Jie laughed a little. He had wanted to say more, but saw the referee walking over. Seeing both sides look over, the referee waved his hand. "Go and prepare. The match is about to begin."

"Then let's talk after the match, yeah?" Ye Xiu suggested.

"We could also talk as the match goes on. I want to listen to what a god thinks and sees about the match," Xiao Jie said.

"No problem. We're sitting pretty near each other, after all," Ye Xiu agreed.

"Then please."

"Please."

They might've said please, but they didn't sit together immediately, but returned to the player stands to prepare for their upcoming match. As for words like "I wish you the best" they wouldn't say it. They were opponents after all. Wishing the other the best would be equal to wishing for your own failure. This sort of cliche words couldn't be more empty if said here.

Happy returned to their players' stands, but their hearts were in turmoil. They could tell what the situation was between Xiao Jie and Team Jade Dynasty through these few words.

Xiao Jie was a fan of Jade Dynasty from long ago and continued to support this team throughout the years. It was unfortunate that this team never lived up to his expectations. Yet this young man grew day by day and became a bestselling author, a successful person, so he bought the team that he supported. Such support from a fan was probably the first of its kind in Glory history. The only people who could be put on the same level were the people who played Glory and ended up making their own club and pro team to enter the Alliance like Heavenly Sword's five young masters.

This explained Jade Dynasty's miraculous history. However, this

would be no help to the victory of the match. It was better to not get distracted by such trivial things.

Seeing that the match was about to start, Seven Fields stopped the others from bothering the members of Happy any longer and took command, telling the people who were meant to hold banners to hold banners, the people who were meant to be cheering to cheer, immediately beginning their support parade. Jade Dynasty's fans obviously refused to be beaten, immediately doing their own thing in order to compete with Happy's fanclub.

On Team Jade Dynasty's side, Xiao Jie sat in the seat closest to Happy, as expected. After glancing over with a smile, their team's first member stood to go up.

Chapter 985: Hidden Strength

With this new tournament format, how should the teams choose their pick order? The teams worried, and the players were also concerned as well. Everyone was vigorously researching and discussing such topics. Using the previous group arena strategy of placing the ace players at the end to hold the bottom line was too conservative and quite undesirable with the new rules.

However, directly placing these ace players at the front of the lineup also seemed excessive. In the competitive scene, 1v3 sweeps happened too rarely. The remarkable displays often seen in the group arena matches usually consisted of a two-player up-and-down.

This so called two-player up-and-down was a situation in which one player, after defeating their first opponent, also took their second opponent to half health; or possibly, after defeating their second opponent, they had little health left while facing the third and fell quickly. Even this was already considered a rarely seen success in the group arena. Thus, even if an ace player appeared first, they wouldn't necessarily bring their team a huge advantage.

The good steel still had to be used on the blade of the knife. While previously, the ace players had fought towards the end to guard the mountain pass, now they had to do their best to gain an advantage when there was an opportunity, in order to achieve victory. In this way, appearing on stage at the most optimal time was key. For example, if an opponent only had half a person remaining, sending out the ace player at that time would maximize the chances of victory.

After going through a lot of analysis, the current consensus was that, in this five person group arena, ace players should be placed in either the third or fourth position.

Except, even in this way, the group arena scoring was far more complicated than the team competition. The future development of the group arena should be stable. Teams should focus on not losing too many points in the group arena, and using the team competition as a tiebreaker. At present, the forecast predicted that the future competitions would head in this direction.

Except today, when Jade Dynasty went on stage, their first player was actually their captain, the Blade Master, Lin Yi.

Looking at the previous matches, wasn't Lin Yi Jade Dynasty's most outstanding player? Now, astonishingly, he was the first to step onstage. Did he have that much confidence, or was there another reason for such an arrangement?

Jade Dynasty's Boss, Xiao Jie, hid his smile the entire time. He turned towards Happy, making an inviting gesture towards Happy. Ye Xiu smiled, immediately patting the people next to him. "Forward!"

"Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh!!!" Immediately, Happy's fan club surged because of the person that stood up.

"Steamed Bun, 1v5!!!" Obviously the fans didn't care whether or not this was realistic. Either way, this was a cheer. If it wasn't

grandiose, then how could it be called a cheer?

"Ha ha ha." Steamed Bun laughed. With his personality, he didn't care at all about what order his opponents sent out their troops. He waved his hand, turning to his group of in-game friends and pumping his fist in the air.

"1v5!" Steamed Bun yelled out. From the bystanders' point of view, this really was an arrogant and shameless guy. Jade Dynasty's fans had long started booing. After this was said, Happy's fans really felt too embarrassed to earnestly respond. Them shouting was just shouting, they obviously also knew that there was no way a 1v5 would happen. Using this to challenge other people, wasn't this just asking for their faces to be slapped?

Both sides' players immediately went onstage, swiping their account cards to enter the game. Happy's players all looked at each other. All of their screens were stopped on the character loading image. After the characters had finished loading, the screen would display the characters' equipment for the entire audience to see.

"Sure enough!"

Lin Yi's character, Blader Master Ten Thousand Swords, struck a pose. Just from the character's attire, everyone could see what was different from before. As soon as the equipment viewer was opened, a line of glittery silver names jumped out. From head to toe, Ten Thousand Swords had seven pieces of Silver equipment. Although this was one less piece than Windward Formation. In reality, Happy's Silver equipment wasn't evenly distributed. Wei Chen's Windward Formation had eight pieces, but the rest of

Happy had far less than that. Furthermore, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim only had a single Silver weapon, Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. When it came to Silver equipment, Ye Xiu mainly prioritized his teammates.

Yet, most pro teams wouldn't be this ridiculous and heavily favor one character over another. Although the core characters would definitely consume more resources, they wouldn't go so far as to give one character eight pieces of Silver equipment while leaving another with only one. Adding onto Jade Dynasty's shaky foundation, Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords' Equipment level likely represented the average of the team. An average of seven pieces of Silver equipment... this armor surpassed the Alliance's average level. Sure enough, Jade Dynasty possessed a lot of hidden strength.

However, of Ten Thousand Swords' 7 pieces of Silver equipment, not a single piece was level 75. After all, level 75 materials were very limited. Right now, in the Alliance, level 70 equipment were widespread. All of this was accumulated over the years while the level cap had remained at 70. If any team really wanted to upgrade their equipment over the course of a year, they would have to monopolize the Heavenly Domain's uncommon materials. Trying to do this would make any team go insane.

Jade Dynasty's circumstances were well understood. Thus, Happy's players maintained calm expressions. Jade Dynasty being able to acquire this many pieces of Silver Equipment so quickly probably wasn't due to financial resources alone. After all, Xiao Jie

was only a young writer. No matter how well his books sold, there was no way he could compete financially with people like Luo Guanning. Moreover, Luo Guanning had a five man crew. Even with that, they had only managed to obtain a total of 20 pieces of Silver equipment when they had entered the alliance.

Although Jade Dynasty was in dire straits, when all was said and done, they had started off as a member of the pro circle. After so many years, they still hadn't given up. No matter what, they still had to have accumulated resources. Xiao Jie's investment this time had probably come at an optimal time, exploding forth all of Jade Dynasty's accumulated resources. Additionally, that guy Zhang Jian perhaps was also a crucial figure in breaking out Jade Dynasty's potential. Back in that era, he was a pro level player. If he still hadn't given up after all these years, then his achievements in Glory wouldn't be a small matter either.

As Ye Xiu waited for the people to realize Jade Dynasty's circumstances, onstage the first round of the group arena had finally begun. After the countdown finished, both sides' characters entered the map, and the competition officially began. Jade Dynasty's boss, Xiao Jie, had indeed done as he promised. As soon as the competition began, he gathered together with Ye Xiu to chat.

"I think your team's current player is really interesting," Xiao Jie said, his voice giving off a kind of pompous tone of seniority, but to tell the truth, Ye Xiu wasn't really at an age where he could be looked down upon. Twenty-five, twenty-six, there was basically no difference in age between the two.

"Your team's player also seems quite steady," Ye Xiu replied.

"A team captain needs to be like this," Xiao Jie sighed.

"It looks as if he still isn't the ace player of Jade Dynasty," Ye Xiu said.

Xiao Jie smiled, immediately asking, "From God Ye's perspective, which of our Jade Dynasty's players do you think is our ace?"

Ye Xiu also smiled, turning to look towards one of the players on Jade Dynasty. "Your ace player would find it difficult to guide your troops into battle as the core. He's instead acting as your final line of defence."

"God Ye indeed has a good eye!" Xiao Jie gave a thumbs up out of praise, also turning to look at this player within Team Jade Dynasty, the Cleric Lu Shilin.

"However, God Ye's statement that a Cleric isn't able to guide troops as the core, I think that's a bit old-fashioned." Xiao Jie said.

"Eh. Actually what I wanted to say was leading, not guiding. I used the wrong word. Sorry about that. I'm sure you know that I'm no writer." Ye Xiu said.

Xiao Jie stared blankly, suddenly not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Leading, guiding, these two phrases only differed by three letters. The meanings were indeed a bit different. He had thought

about picking a fight with Ye Xiu to prove he was superior. He didn't expect the other party to immediately use a wording error to cover this up, conveniently mocking his own identity as a writer at the same time.

"It seems that God Ye also has a card up his sleeve when it comes to responding to this threat?" Xiao Jie composed himself and continued to ask.

"In reality, as long as he's not the core player leading the team, there's really no need to specially respond," Ye Xiu replied.

"Really?" Xiao Jie smiled again, not saying anymore. He went back to his seat to continue watching the competition.

This guy really liked to smile, the dim, faint kind. At first, looking at these smiles easily created good feelings in people, thinking that there was a good reason for his modesty. However, after these kinds of smiles came time and again, they no longer conveyed that same meaning. Instead, there was pride and conceit. He used this kind superiority-filled expression to express his disapproval of the other party. From Chen Guo's perspective, it would be better if he directly said, "You truly are an idiot," to his heart's content.

"This guy's smile is truly annoying," Chen Guo said to Ye Xiu.

"He's annoying even when he doesn't smile, making this team to cause trouble for us. It's truly troublesome!" Ye Xiu said.

"..."

Offstage, the exchange stopped at this point. Onstage, Steamed Bun's Steamed Bun Invasion and Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords had already exchanged blows for quite a while. Neither side had specific tactics for this round, directly heading for the middle of the map. As soon as they met, they began to fight.

Mechanics, awareness, judgment, a battle without much scheming. With more experience, more solid tech skill, and better equipment, Lin Yi very quickly gained the upper hand. He didn't have the strength to completely suppress Steamed Bun, but his steady and unaffected state of mind nevertheless partially restrained Steamed Bun's derailment. Although from time to Steamed Bun would jump out with an ingenious move, it didn't have any psychological impact on Lin Yi. Though this kind of randomness couldn't possibly follow any rules, Lin Yi actually managed to use his steady mind to remain completely unaffected.

Ye Xiu glanced over at Jade Dynasty. Coincidentally, at that same moment Xiao Jie also happened to look over towards him with that same smile again. His superiority seemed to say: Look, I know.

The opponent's first player had been chosen as a tactical move with purpose. It seemed as if they had guessed Happy's intent. Although no one knew how skilled Xiao Jie was at Glory, as a fan of Jade Dynasty from the early days until now, he was clearly a Glory fanatic. It appeared that when it came to Glory, this guy also had some skill.

Seven Fields and the others had been wildly cheering for

Steamed Bun in the beginning. At this point, they were feeling a bit depressed because they could all see that the present circumstances were quite unfavorable towards him.

If even the audience members could tell, then the circumstances were quite obvious. The commentators nearly announced the results.

"Haha, it looks like the outcome of this match is already clear." Xiao Jie moved closer to say.

"Everyone can already see the obvious, but there's still one more person who isn't so sure!" Ye Xiu said.

"Who?" Xiao Jie didn't understand. It was so obvious. Who couldn't tell?

"Look," Ye Xiu held out his hand, pointing towards the screen. "Our Steamed Bun is still fighting energetically."

Ye Xiu used 引导 the first time and later corrected it to 主导. While both can mean lead, 引导 usually refers to guiding through tactics and strategy (i.e. Zhang Xinjie), while 主导 has the more aggressive and dominant connotation of directly leading troops into battle (i.e. Han Wenqing). --Veriquity

Chapter 986: Crucial Point

On screen, Steamed Bun Invasion looked like he had just gone on stage. He was filled with energy as he continued to clash with Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords. From time to time, he would make a weird move that would be calmly received by Lin Yi. However, that was all. The situation stayed the same as before. Lin Yi firmly grasped the pace of the match. If not, how could even the normal audience members already be certain of who the winner of this fight would be?

Xiao Jie saw this scene and smiled.

"He's quite tenacious." He said.

"Tenacious? You're mistaken. That's not tenacity. He hasn't even started considering giving up or persevering. He's just continuing to keep his own pace. I won't deny that Lin Yi has the fight under control at the moment, but it's still too early to say who will win and who will lose."

"Haha." Xiao Jie laughed. He found it beneath him to argue. In his eyes, Ye Xiu was just believing in his own lies. Just look at the situation. You're saying it's still too early?

Xiao Jie's gaze turned back to the stage. Steamed Bun Invasion had once again done an incomprehensible move. When his Powerful Knee Strike smashed towards Ten Thousand Swords, Lin Yi had his Ten Thousand Swords calmly step to the side and prepare to counter attack. Who would have thought that Steamed

Bun Invasion, who had whistled past him, would suddenly turn his head and shout at Ten Thousand Swords.

Brawler skill: Threaten.

Threaten didn't deal direct damage. It was classified as a spirit attack, and it reduced the target's attack power. Spirit attacks could not be avoided. It could only be defended by the appropriate resistance skills, or lowered or canceled by the Spirit stat.

Looking at it from the effects from this skill, Steamed Bun's abrupt Threaten didn't make much sense. Maybe he planned on trading blows with his opponent. He had caught his opponent off guard and lowered the opponent's attack power. His Powerful Knee Strike may have been dodged, but his target had been successfully Threatened. However, because of the momentum from his Powerful Knee Strike, he continued to fly past his opponent. Ten Thousand Sword's attack power might be reduced, but it wasn't like he was rooted or stunned. He continued to ready a counter attack and chased after Steamed Bun Invasion with a Downwind Sword Slash.

Steamed Bun's reaction speed was fast, but this Downwind Sword Slash had been timed perfectly and struck him.

Steamed Bun Invasion was hit and slid to the side. Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords immediately followed up with a Triple Slash, pursuing while also attacking at the same time, but who would have that thought as soon as Steamed Bun Invasion steadied himself, he would ricochet towards Ten Thousand Swords. Lin Yi was caught by surprise. He saw a sword light flash towards him. It

was actually another Downwind Sword Slash that had come from Steamed Bun Invasion's Brawler this time. The priority on Triple Slash couldn't contest Downwind Sword Slash's priority. Not only was Ten Thousand Sword's momentum halted, he had been struck stumbling.

The stadium exploded into an uproar. Those who were a little slower might even be confused about Steamed Bun Invasion's class. How did he use Downwind Sword Slash too? Those who were faster had already recognized that this was the newly added Brawler skill: Tooth for Tooth.

Tooth for Tooth was an active ability. When attacked, the character would still take damage, but the character would remember which skill was used. That skill would appear on the character's skill list. The number of uses and the skill effects was determined by Tooth for Tooth's skill level. In addition, the amount of mana used for the skill would be double what it originally was.

Clearly, Steamed Bun Invasion had activated Tooth for Tooth earlier. When he was hit by Downwind Sword Slash, he remembered the skill and returned it back to its owner. From this point of view, another issue came up. He had used Tooth for Tooth, but he had also used Threaten beforehand, so the damage from the opponent's skill had been reduced when it struck. Thus, Steamed Bun Invasion's Downwind Sword Slash had also been reduced. Returning the strike had been a good move, but that previous Threaten still didn't make any sense.

But even so, the Downwind Sword Slash had caught Lin Yi off

guard. Steamed Bun took this opportunity to strike back and begin his fierce assault.

Happy's fanclub's spirit revived at once . They shouted "Steamed Bun!" loudly and cheered for him, but at Happy's player seats, Sun Zheping had his brows furrowed. He was thinking back to that previous scene. It just so happened that the screen did a replay of Steamed Bun's counterattack. After looking at it again, Sun Zheping moved closer to Ye Xiu: "If that Threaten hadn't debuffed, then Downwind Sword Slash....."

"Would have been faster and the knockback would be stronger. It would have sent Steamed Bun Invasion flying into the air after his Powerful Knee Strike missed. He would have been knocked back farther away, and he would have needed to Quick Recover. If he had used Downwind Sword Slash like that, he might not have gotten the same results." Ye Xiu said.

"So that guy..."

"Don't ask me if he did it on purpose. I have no idea either." Ye Xiu said. And this was why Steamed Bun's derailment playstyle was so terrifying. His completely unexpected move could be utter trash, but it could also be a brilliant turning point. When it was utter trash, you could laugh at it all you want, but when it became a turning point, it would be a deciding factor. And this deciding factor was impossible to defend against. Even someone as skilled as Sun Zheping needed to think about it after the event took place. When playing in a match, there was no time for so much thinking. How many people could instantly recognize the subtle involvement this move had?

The expression on Xiao Jie's face turned ugly when he saw Steamed Bun's counterattack. However, Lin Yi was a steady player. He quickly got out of Steamed Bun's assault and once again regained control of the situation. Steamed Bun's counterattack looked like one final desperate struggle. Xiao Jie let out a sigh of relief and glanced at Happy's side with delight. He saw Ye Xiu turn his head and look at him too. He immediately smiled: "He really knows how to surprise people!"

"And isn't that why he's so interesting?" Ye Xiu smiled.

"Yeah." Xiao Jie nodded his head. Suddenly, he heard a cry of surprise from the venue. Xiao Jie turned his head and saw that Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords was being slapped into the ground and beaten black and blue by Steamed Bun Invasion's Tyrannical Chain Punch.

What happened?

Xiao Jie was shocked. The situation had been stabilized just moments before. How did it flip all of a sudden?

It just so happened that the screen showed an instant replay.

Powerful Knee Strike. Another Powerful Knee Strike. This time, the distance between the two sides had been very close. Lin Yi's Ten Thousand Swords had been in the middle of a combo. He had used Headwind Strike, when Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly burst forth with a Powerful Knee Strike. Blood flew out from Steamed

Bun Invasion as he slammed into the Headwind Strike head on. However, Steamed Bun Invasion forcefully broke through the sword prison just like that and followed up with a Tyrannical Chain Punch. The airborne Ten Thousand Swords crashed to the ground, following which was the current scene.

Xiao Jie was astonished.

For a final desperate struggle, it should be one last struggle. How could someone facing death do a final struggle again and again? If he kept on struggling, that only meant one thing. This person couldn't die.

Maybe claiming victory already really had been too early? Xiao Jie thought to himself, but he refused to accept it. In terms of equipment, they were stronger. In terms of players, they were more consistent. In terms of the situation on stage, they had always been winning. Just looking at their health bars, even though Steamed Bun Invasion had done two desperate struggles, he hadn't pulled it that much closer. He had taken Downwind Sword Slash full force. He had completely eaten a Headwind Strike too. The damage from Headwind Strike was quite high. In addition, Lin Yi had control of the situation for most of the battle. Ten Thousand Swords had 50% more health than Steamed Bun Invasion. Could Steamed Bun Invasion actually make a come back?

Impossible! Absolutely impossible!

Xiai Jie couldn't bother with going over to Happy and letting out a smile showing his superiority. He stared closely at the screen and saw their lead, yet he couldn't help but feel nervous.

Xiao Jie's nervousness was deserved. Steamed Bun started to slowly make a comeback. The steady Lin Yi was already having trouble controlling the fight. Whenever Steamed Bun went off the rails, he would always deal significant damage towards Ten Thousand Swords. Although Lin Yi was sometimes able to strike back, it wasn't as effective as Steamed Bun's attacks.

Xiao Jie became more and more uneasy. He was even somewhat angry. It looked like he wasn't happy with Lin Yi's performance. Unfortunately, his anger couldn't be transmitted into the fight. The health bars of the two characters grew closer and closer, bit by bit, all the way until both sides only had 8% health left.

Happy's fanclub had gone crazy. They took whatever they had that could make noise and started making as much noise as possible. Under Seven Field's lead, they cheered in unison "Steamed Bun!"

Steamed Bun didn't let them down. On the other hand, Lin Yi's performance was disappointing compared to the start of the fight. Jade Dyansty's fanclub was cheering on their team captain, but when Steamed Bun Invasion led with 5% health compared to Ten Thousand Sword's 3% health, they had trouble bearing it. He had such a huge lead, and he actually lost it?

But no matter if it was 5% health or 3% health, a single wave of attacks could end it for either sides. The match had reached this point. It just depended on who would grasp the final opportunity.

The fans on both sides and the players on both sides were standing up, staring closely at the match screen.

Steamed Bun Invasion!

In the final moment, Steamed Bun Invasion once again made another strange, unconventional move, helping him grasp the final opportunity. Ten Thousand Swords only had 3% health left. He was unable to grasp the final opportunity. Steamed Bun Invasion had won the first round of the group arena.

"Oh oh oh oh oh!!!" Happy's fanclub cheered. The team also clapped in celebration. Jade Dynasty's side was rather quiet. However, this was a group arena, so with the other side only having 5% health remaining, from an overall perspective, it wasn't too bad. Even so, when Jade Dynasty's team captain, Lin Yi, came down from the stage, he was met with harsh rebuke from his boss, Xiao Jie.

"What was that? You had such a big lead, and your opponent actually turned it around? With that type of performance, what type of example are you setting for your teammates?"

"Sorry..." Lin Yi's face carried a trace of exhaustion, but he could only quietly accept the boss's fury.

Chapter 987: Who's Mistake Was It

"What's with that guy?" Chen Guo couldn't bear Xiao Jie's behavior any longer.

If the match was played poorly, it was normal for post-match critique. It was just that when pointing out mistakes, it was best to console the player first and then calmly analyze why the match had gone the way it did. Everyone had their own way of communicating, but starting with criticism outright was no good.

Although Lin Yi lost the match, he had lowered his opponent's health down to 5%. That was still an acceptable result, However, he originally had complete control over the fight, but in the end, his opponent stole away the win. Such a fall was the true reason why Xiao Jie wasn't happy, which was why even though the outcome wasn't too bad, Lin Yi was still extremely indignant.

Chen Guo stopped watching. After all, this was the other team's matter. It wouldn't be good to butt in.

After being admonished, Lin Yi quietly sat to the side. The other players came over and patted his shoulders to console him.

As for Xiao Jie? After venting his anger, his mood seemed to have taken a turn for the better. He looked very satisfied with his strict way of handling the issue. He even had a smile on his face as he turned to say to Happy: "We actually lost with such a big lead. We've really made a fool of ourselves in front of God Ye."

"If it's just because of us making a comeback, you shouldn't blame him too much." Ye Xiu replied.

"What do you mean?" Xiao Jie said.

"If he had been picked to go first because you guys guessed that our first player would be Steamed Bun and specifically made preparations on dealing with him, then the person who arranged for him to go first should be the one responsible for bearing this loss." Ye Xiu said.

"What are you saying?" The expression on Xiao Jie's face changed.

Ye Xiu smiled. He had seen through it all. Usually, the team captain was responsible for the pick order. However, from Xiao Jie's bossy rebuke, it looked like the team owner not only guided the general direction of the team, he even interfered in the team's tactical arrangements.

An amateur leading experts was always a major fear. As for Xiao Jie, he couldn't be considered a complete amateur at Glory. After all, he had been a fan of Glory for so many years. Even if he hadn't eaten pork before, he had seen pigs run. Just because he didn't have pro-level technical skill, that didn't necessarily mean he didn't have pro-level tactics and theorycrafting. It was similar to how although a football coach might not be an outstanding football player, but the coach still had the qualifications to tell the team how to kick the ball. It was the same reasoning.

Since he was interfering with the team's matters, when something happened to the team, he should naturally have a clear idea of knowing where the problem lay. Was it because of a bad pick order or because of the player performing poorly?

Lin Yi lost the match. When he came down, he was yelled at by Xiao Jie. Chen Guo didn't like his conduct, but Ye Xiu didn't even put it in his eyes. Xiao Jie couldn't distinguish between right and wrong. Ye Xiu didn't know if Xiao Jie actually had the skill to control the team in such a manner, but from what he saw in the first match, if Lin Yi had been placed specifically to deal with Steamed Bun, then that had not been a wise move.

Sure enough, after pointing this out, the expression on Xiao Jie's face turned even uglier. It appeared that he really had been the one to make the arrangements, so when Lin Yi had control of the fight, he had been delighted, feeling that it was because of his own genius that allowed Lin Yi to suppress his opponent, but after a comeback was made, he suddenly became furious. He thought that Lin Yi failed to seize such a good opportunity. He had placed victory right before his eyes, yet Lin Yi couldn't even grab it. In his eyes, Lin Yi was utter trash.

But now, Ye Xiu actually said that it was problem with the pick order?

"What do you mean?" Xiao Jie glared at Ye Xiu. He didn't even act as polite like before.

"Judging Lin Yi to be Steamed Bun's bane is a mistake." Ye Xiu said.

"Based on what?" Xiao Jie called into question.

"Based on the results of that round." Ye Xiu smiled.

"What a joke." Xiao Jie sneered, "What does the outcome of a single round prove? What's more, Lin Yi had complete control of the match in the beginning. If he hadn't been careless....."

"Once is carelessness. Twice is carelessness, but being careless continuously? Have you not considered that there might be another reason for it?" Ye Xiu said.

"So you're saying that it was because of the pick order? Are you saying that he shouldn't be matched against an opponent that's too easy, so he won't easily underestimate his opponent?" Xiao Jie's voice was filled with ridicule.

"You should think about the specifics yourself!" Ye Xiu smiled. He didn't give him a detailed explanation.

"What? You don't know?" Xiao Jie sneered.

Ye Xiu said helplessly: "Don't tell me you're hoping that I'll help you analyze how to beat my team?"

"Then how about you enlighten me after we beat your team. When the time comes, it won't affect the big picture anymore."

Xiao Jie said.

"You guys are going to need a lot of luck then." Ye Xiu said.

"Don't worry about it." Xiao Jie said coldly.

The current him had completely torn off his initial modesty. After this loss, his pride, his arrogance, and his conceit had been entirely revealed. From this perspective, Xiao Jie wasn't a sophisticated person. His ugly side took form with just a slight pull of the trigger.

On stage, the second round had already begun. A Ghostblade player from Jade Dynasty came out to battle. From a team composition perspective, Jade Dynasty had its own unique characteristics. Their team's main roster consisted of four swordsmen, a Berserker, a Blade Master, a Ghostblade, a Spellblade, as well as a healer.

This Ghostblade player was one of their main roster players. His character was called Anxious Ghost. He was a fairly standard Ghostblade player that walked the middle road, a Phantom Demon Sword Demon hybrid.

Steamed Bun's Steamed Bun Invasion only had 5% of his health left. The two sides clashed. Not waiting for anything surprising to happen, Anxious Ghost made quick work of him.

The previous round had a been a narrow victory over Lin Yi, but

Happy's fanclub cheered as if Steamed Bun had done a 1v5. Nothing really happened this round and Steamed Bun was killed. Happy's fanclub immediately began jeering at him without mercy, and they even took something as unrealistic as a 1v5 to jab at him. It wasn't them being mean. It was because they viewed Steamed Bun as their friend, a brother who had once played with him in game. It was a form of teasing between bad friends.

Steamed Bun shook his head as he went down from the stage. He actually seemed a bit angry at his quick loss in the second round: "I only had that much health left. They didn't even give me some steamed buns to recover. Ai ai ai!"

Everyone on Happy's side laughed. They saw Steamed Bun sit down dejectedly. No one went over to console him though because everyone knew there was no need to. Sure enough, five seconds later, after hearing the fanclub's teasing, Steamed Bun turned his head and started chattering away. This guy even tried to climb over the wall between the players and the crowd, but the security guards stopped him.

The security guards were at a loss. They had seen fans rushing towards the player area, but they had never seen a player climb towards the fans. Was that in accordance with the rules? The security guards didn't know. They hadn't noticed in the rules whether a player was permitted to leave his seat and go to the audience. Who would think of doing such a thing?"

Not long after Steamed Bun went off stage, Team Happy's second player came up. It was coincidentally Team Happy's Ghostblade --- Qiao Yifan.

Qiao Yifan's Ghostblade, One Inch Ash, was a pure Phantom Demon though, which was a lot worse at 1v1s. He only had two pieces of Silver equipment too, while Team Jade Dynasty's Anxious Ghost was the same as their captain's Ten Thousand Swords. Anxious Ghost had seven pieces of Silver equipment. From just their characters, One Inch Ash was at a fairly large disadvantage.

But in terms of player skill, Qiao Yifan was much more consistent than Tang Rou and Steamed Bun. He had come from a champion team too, so he had solid fundamentals. Even if Team Tiny Herb never gave him a chance to play in a match, just from their practice quality, how could a team like Jade Dynasty, which had been relegated for so many years, compare to a champion team?

Moreover, after receiving wholehearted guidance from a God like Ye Xiu, his class change was a huge success. At this point, Qiao Yifan could already clearly feel the advantages from changing classes. He was like a fish swimming in water. His intuition and awareness were like a match made in heaven with Phantom Demons. He had never felt such comfortableness and freedom when he had played as an Assassin on Team Tiny Herb. As his skill level increased, this feeling of comfort became even stronger. Qiao Yifan simply loved this class too much.

His control over the class had reached a point where his character would move however he wished it to. For Qiao Yifan, it greatly made up for his confidence, which he had always been lacking. He no longer doubted himself. He firmly believed that he would become an outstanding pro player.

The fight began. Team Jade Dynasty's Anxious Ghost raised his sword and charged over. In the previous fight, he made quick work of the nearly dead Steamed Bun Invasion. Victory had been easy. It wasn't enough. The current him was in high spirits. His thirst for battle was also extremely fierce. He hated how he couldn't immediately start clashing with his opponent and fight a real battle.

Qiao Yifan did not directly rush towards Anxious Ghost and instead took a different path. He began circling around from the side. This battle would begin with an ambush from one side.

It had to be said that Qiao Yifan's difficult practice for half a year as an Assassin had helped him grasp the techniques of an Assassin. For example, a sneak attack was something that Assassins needed to be proficient at. Qiao Yifan wasn't great, but he had tried his best the entire time. His grasp of it might not be very high-level, but it was at least very solid. He wouldn't lose it just because he had changed classes. The Phantom Demon One Inch Ash's sneak attack route was extremely precise. He circled around diagonally. When he showed his head, he was already behind Anxious Ghost.

"Idiot! Behind you!" Seeing this scene, Xiao Jie suddenly cursed anxiously.

Qiao Yifan wasn't in a hurry to attack. He hid himself behind Anxious Ghost, observing his movements.

Chapter 988: Ghost Feast

Those who had been following Happy's matches all felt that this moment was very familiar. In the match against Mysterious Fantasy, Happy's Mo Fan and his Deception had followed their opponent in the same patient, careful manner, waiting for the perfect chance to strike suddenly. After gaining the upper hand, he didn't linger, but quickly retreated, before repeating this process over and over until his opponent was dead.

Seeing Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash also quietly sneaking behind his opponent, everyone couldn't help but remember the match that day. Though it was a different player, they were from the same team, so they might use similar playstyles. If that were true, then that would make things very boring, no?

Boos rose from the crowd. It was evident that Mo Fan's playstyle wasn't liked. If you managed to burst your opponent in a sneak attack, that would be pretty great to watch, but Mo Fan's repetitive playstyle, always doing a hasty retreat just as the match was coming to a crescendo, might have been familiar and comfortable to him, but the audience was always denied that last breath of relief because of his rhythm, and held it in uncomfortably.

With this experience in their minds, and seeing Qiao Yifan seemingly about to do the same thing, the crowd loudly expressed their displeasure.

Amidst the boos, Xiao Jie glanced over at Happy; now, he wasn't nervous anymore. This sort of stalling playstyle was rather annoying. However, this was a group arena and not an individual

competition, so every player had the chance to fight multiple players. And this sort of stalling playstyle, while not very fun to watch, tested a player's skill and required them to expend a lot of concentration. In the group arena, players couldn't only focus on defeating their current opponent if they wanted their team to win. They also had to conserve as much energy as possible while defeating their current opponent, so as to do as much damage as possible to the next opponent. Therefore, this sort of playstyle that required a player to expend a lot of mental energy wasn't very appropriate for the group arena.

As if hearing the crowd's boos, the Jade Dynasty player onstage suddenly went on high alert.

After rushing through a good portion of the map and not seeing the opponent, you would usually realize the other planned to ambush you. This was a very common tactic, but for Happy, they needed to be more careful. This was because they had Deception's endless stalking and Windward Formation's shameless and dirty hiding and sneaking. Both were rather disgusting to deal with.

But with Mysterious Fantasy testing out the waters for them, Jade Dynasty's players were prepared for this. Upon realizing that the opponent had such intentions, they didn't panic, instead heading resolutely towards Team Happy's spawn point. This was thanks to the experience they got from the match Happy had with Mysterious Fantasy. This was to prevent the other from finding some random place to huddle up and making them waste their energy and time for nothing.

Seeing his team's player reacting so quickly and accurately, Xiao

Jie nodded in satisfaction. They had done careful planning on going up against Happy, and this sort of situation was the kind they put the most thought into. The decision the Ghostblade player had made was in accordance with Xiao Jie's thoughts, making him feel secure. Even though One Inch Ash wasn't huddled away at the spawn point, there would be no problem, so long as they followed the current strategy.

Just as Xiao Jie was thinking this, a blade flashed on the field and Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash attacked.

Although Jade Dynasty's player had prepared to head off to the spawn point to check, that didn't mean he had let his guard down. Qiao Yifan's sneak attack wasn't very well timed and Anxious Ghost rolled, easily dodging the strike. While he got up, he sent a Moonlight Slash back.

One Inch Ash jumped backwards to dodge, and the flash of energy swept past the tip of his nose. Anxious Ghost followed up with a Full Moonlight Slash. Moonlight Slash and Full Moonlight Slash were two different skills, but since the combination of the skills was cool and practical, one would follow the other more or less eighty percent of the time, as if they were two parts of the same skill.

One Inch Ash had dodged the Moonlight Slash, but was struck by this Full Moonlight Slash. After receiving the blowback, he rolled twice before managing to quick recover and steadied himself. Seeing Anxious Ghost approaching, blade in hand, he turned and ran.

"Hahaha." Seeing this, Xiao Jie immediately laughed aloud. This was exactly what failing to steal a chicken and losing a handful of rice was, in his eyes. This ambush of Happy's was too weak. Not only did he fail to gain the upperhand, but he also fell into a disadvantageous position and was now being chased by their player. Xiao Jie was inwardly delighted and involuntarily glanced over at Happy.

Xiao Jie hoped that Happy's members would display a bit of anxiety on their faces! Yet when he turned to look, they were all sitting calmly as if waiting for a fish to bite, especially Ye Xiu, who was even smiling!

Xiao Jie wanted to say something, but seeing how no one turned to pay him any attention, he held back.

On the field, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash turned and darted into a small alleyway nearby. The map they were on was an ancient town. Under the fading light of the setting sun, One Inch Ash immediately turned upon entering the alleyway. His shadow was still stretched out and left behind him. When Anxious Ghost charged over, he immediately saw this and sped up to give chase.

"Tsk tsk, the small details are what decides victory!" Xiao Jie lamented. The current match, Happy versus Jade Dynasty, was being streamed. Currently, the different angles and shots included the streaked one. Just now, they had given a close up of the lengthy shadow stretched out behind One Inch Ash and the commentator was analyzing the mistake made by Qiao Yifan.

"You should have your back to the setting sun, not your face..."

The commentator expressed. Yet he saw One Inch Ash stop, huddling behind a wall and setting down a Sword Boundary to increase his strength and intelligence, preparing his ambush.

"This... I believe that Jade Dynasty's player couldn't possibly not be ready for this." The commentator said with confidence. Using the corner to make a sneak attack was a commonly employed tactic, so how could a pro player not be prepared for such a happening?

As expected, Jade Dynasty's Anxious Ghost didn't walk along the wall when he came in pursuit, but used an extra two steps to send himself into a rather large pathing curve. This way, he could gain some distance and guard against an ambush. What pro player wouldn't know to do this?

Even so, One Inch Ash's tachi still swung up, a Moonlight Slash was sent at Anxious Ghost, character and sword flying at him.

"Tsk tsk, this ambush..." The commentator was about to comment on this ambush and Qiao Yifan's attack from before and how childish they were, but Anxious Ghost seemed to have become dumbstruck, lifting the tachi in hand, but not seeming to know what he was doing. One Inch Ash's Moonlight Slash struck its target.

After Moonlight Slash was a Full Moonlight Slash, the same combo, expect that Qiao Yifan followed the knockback effect with a Ghost Slash. Anxious Ghost's momentum in the air immediately increased, like a cannonball, flying head first into the mud. The Jade Dynasty player quick recovered, making Anxious Ghost's

original head-into-the-ground into a diving forward roll. As he rolled, he turned. A flash of energy from his sword darted out from beneath his arm, sending out a Sword Draw as he got up.

Yet, the sword struck air since One Inch Ash hadn't even approached him. Over there, the edge of the blade was unsheathed and the power of Phantom Ghosts flowed out and under. Two consecutive Boundaries were cast.

The commentator was really busy now! Not only did he have to analyze the situation at hand, he was inwardly wondering how Anxious Ghost had been successfully sneak attacked by One Inch Ash just now. It shouldn't have been! Such a simple ambush, even he could dodge it if he were up there, no?

However, the two sides were locked in intense battle now, so there was no time to replay the previous scene. The commentator could only pay attention to the current happenings. Yet as he stared at the match and continued to speak and speak, he spoke until he was struck dumb by his own words...

"Happy's One Inch Ash has lain his fourth Ghost Boundary, turning this small area into a Ghost Boundary encyclopedia. Jade Dynasty's Anxious Ghost doesn't seem to be able to do much. High walls surround his left, right, and back. The only escape route is blocked by One Inch Ash. Take a look, everyone, One Inch Ash hasn't thrown all his Ghost Boundaries in a pile together. There are layers to this arrangement. This way, if Anxious Ghost tries to charge out, he'll be stopped by one of the layers of Ghost Boundaries, making it hard to get a good rhythm down and making things easier for One Inch Ash. Sword Draw! Oh, Anxious Ghost

still maintains a very good reaction speed, he dodged it. Huh? What's he trying to do... Anxious Ghost keeps moving forward, but that's a wall over there! Oh, he bumped into the wall. Oh, it's the Seed of Darkness, or the Dark Boundary, as it's more commonly known. Sorry, there's too many interwoven Ghost Boundaries that even I didn't notice it. When did One Inch Ash lay it down? Anyways, Anxious Ghost stepped into the Dark Boundary, and he couldn't see under its blinding effects, so he ended up walking into a wall... this... seems rather ugly..."

"Dark Boundary's effects have worn off, Anxious Ghost turns... Wow, he's frozen now, an Ice Boundary..."

"One Inch Ash has the absolute advantage here. To be honest, I want to just announce his victory now, but the happenings from before taught me a lesson, so let's finish watching the match first." The commentator continued to analyze the situation and even made a joke about himself. Last match, the commentator hadn't been able to help announcing Lin Yi would win, but ended up getting his face slapped. So, in this match, he didn't dare jump to any conclusions though Qiao Yifan had the absolute advantage.

"Anxious Ghost has been trapped there by One Inch Ash, unable to escape. Happy's player has used the terrain to its fullest, perfectly utilizing the advantages of a Ghostblade. Okay, now the scene we're giving everyone is One Inch Ash's skill situation. We have the production director to thank for capturing this scene. Look, everyone, all of One Inch Ash's Boundaries are currently in use. All of the Ghost Boundaries in his skill build are currently on cooldown. Seeing the rotation of these cooldowns, doesn't everyone think this is a beautiful rhythm? I feel like if there was some music to go with it, it would be even better."

"Oh, One Inch Ash has quickened his pace, sending out all his Ghost Boundaries. Now, there are a total of, one, two, three, four, five... Sorry, everyone, I can't seem to make it out clearly either, but with One Inch Ash sending out all these Boundaries, does he want..."

"Ghost Feast!!!"

"Amazing, One Inch Ash has activated Ghost Feast, making all the Ghost Boundaries erupt, immediately taking the rest of Anxious Ghost's health with them. One Inch Ash won! What a beautiful victory!" The commentator yelled, forgetting his composure.

“Failing to steal and chicken and losing a handful of rice” means not only did you fail to accomplish what you were trying to do, but also lost something or made things worse in the process. - Jouissance

Chapter 989: The Cautious Qiao Yifan

Amidst the silence, someone from the crowd started clapping, which quickly spread until applause erupted around the entire stadium.

Happy didn't have that many fans. There were even quite a few people who didn't like them. However, even people who had well-defined likes and dislikes appreciated brilliant performances. Everyone had seen Qiao Yifan's prowess in this fight on the jumbotron in front of them. Such a convincing performance truly deserved such wild applause.

They now had a completely different view of that rash and initial sneak attack. It was without question to lure the opponent into his trap. Its purpose was to draw Anxious Ghost into the necessary position.

"Friends, I don't think you guys have forgotten about the sneak attack from the corner. Let's take a look at it again." When the commentator reviewed the match, he impatiently had the stream cut to that moment.

The clip had already been prepared. However, the fight never stopped, continuing all the way until Anxious Ghost was killed. As a result, there had been no time to show the replay. It could finally be played now. Everyone watched the scene again from Anxious Ghost's perspective.

When Anxious Ghost chased after One Inch Ash to this little

alleyway, One Inch Ash had already disappeared. However, at the corner of the street, a shadow extended on the ground. Anxious Ghost noticed it and immediately ran towards it. Before he reached the corner, he moved in an arc, putting distance between the two before rushing forward to attack One Inch Ash, who had been lying in wait.

The twilight from the setting sun shone down, making things seem real, yet unreal at the same time. From Anxious Ghost's point of view, only One Inch Ash could be seen. The swordlight had been completely hidden by the setting sun. Anxious Ghost wasn't able to see the attack coming. Then, he was thrown into a corner until his defeat.

"So it was like that..." the commentator gasped in admiration, "Happy's player cleverly positioned himself so that the sunlight directly shone on him and covered his attack. Everyone paid attention. One Inch Ash jumped when he let loose a Moonlight Slash. This jump put this swordlight in a position, where the sunlight would also conceal it. Everything had been planned accordingly. Happy had a clear strategy going into this battle. I'm sure everyone knows that even though the maps used in these matches are temporary, once the League started, all of the maps were available for download and use. The maps used in every match are announced beforehand so that the teams can prepare ahead of time. From the looks of it, Happy has put a lot of work in this area. What about Jade Dynasty? The player was also a Ghostblade. Even though he's a hybrid Phantom Sword Demon, he could have taken advantage of the map too, yet he didn't notice this point."

"That victory was beautiful. Let's all remember this player's

name. Qiao Yifan! He truly should come out and accept our applause. Unfortunately, this is a group arena. He still needs to continue playing, but worry not. There's still a long road ahead of him. I believe that this player certainly has a bright future ahead of him. Speaking of which, Qiao Yifan was originally from Team Tiny Herb. For some reason, he never appeared on stage with them and left after being there for a season. Seeing Qiao Yifan's performance today, I wonder if Team Tiny Herb is going to regret their decision."

Amid the commentator's praise and the crowd's applause, Team Jade Dynasty's defeated player came down from the stage. The praise and applause was for Qiao Yifan. For him, it only made it that much harder to bear. He walked very slowly as if he didn't want to go back to the player bench. Their boss, Xiao Jie, was sitting down with a dark face. Seeing his player coming down slowly, he snorted coldly and ignored him. He called over Team Jade Dynasty's third player.

"Be more mindful. The opponent has a strong grasp of the maps. Be careful and don't make the same mistakes. And..." Xiao Jie instructed impatiently.

"I understand." The third player was Zheng Shengchao, a Berserker. His character Severed Yearning. After being given sincere advice from Xiao Jie, he headed towards the stage.

The third round began. The current situation was very unfavorable towards Jade Dynasty. One Inch Ash had consumed lots of mana, but he had only lost 20% of his health in the previous round. Happy had nearly a one person lead over Jade Dynasty.

Even with a disadvantage, Xiao Jie sat upright. He didn't smile as he turned his head over and talked to Ye Xiu.

The match began. Due to Qiao Yifan's outstanding performance in the previous round, the commentator couldn't help but reveal a bit of bias towards him. At the start, he talked about what Qiao Yifan might do since he wasn't at full health and he didn't have much mana left. After his concern for Qiao Yifan, he introduced Jade Dynasty's player, Zheng Shengchao.

It was somewhat awkward for Berserkers to play in group arenas because of their signature skill Blood Awakening, creating the unique health-trading playstyle. Because of how trading health changed the pace of the match, it made things too difficult for Berserkers. In a 1v1, they could easily make this decision, but in a group arena, if they traded away their health cleanly, how were they going to take down more than one opponent? Although Berserkers became stronger the lower their health, they weren't so strong that they could just instantly kill an opponent. Directly trade away 90% of their health at the start? That wasn't how trading worked. When they traded their health, they would lower their opponent's health to around the same range. If a Berserker's health was low, but the opponent's health was high, don't think that was the Berserker trading away his health. Ninety nine percent of the time it was just the Berserker getting destroyed.....

Their class's feature made it challenging for them to participate in the group arena, especially when the opposing side held the lead.

Xiao Jie sincerely instructed his team's Berserker, but his

expression was still grave and stern. He clearly knew what a predicament they were in.

They knew. Qiao Yifan knew even better. It could be seen that from his previous performance, Qiao Yifan had made ample preparations beforehand. He had taken it very seriously and played very carefully. He had even taken note of the sunlight at the corner of the street and utilized it to his advantage. How could he not have been prepared for his current situation?

Zheng Shengchao didn't hurry and search for One Inch Ash. Qiao Yifan also didn't go on the defensive to protect his lead. The two cautiously and patiently looked for opportunities.

Xiao Jie couldn't help but feel somewhat fretful upon seeing this scene.

He had figured that the other side would be more proactive and bold because of his lead. Certain decisions that might not be considered under normal circumstances might be made as a result. After all, he had a health lead as a backup! Thus, he had instructed Zheng Shengchao to take advantage of the other side's mentality.

But from the looks of it, the other side didn't have that sort of mentality. Xiao Jie couldn't help but feel doubtful. In the previous round, Qiao Yifan had taken the initiative and lured his opponent into a trap, but in this round, he had actually become more careful. Let alone boldy attempting it when there was a thirty percent chance, the current Qiao Yifan turned a blind eye to even a fifty sixty percent chance. He was looking for an even more certain opportunity.

Xiao Jie's prediction was completely wrong. He couldn't help but feel unhappy. On stage, Zheng Shengchao had long since noticed this point. After some more careful probing, he decided to abandon Xiao Jie's advice. The other side wasn't falling for it.

Unable to bait the opponent, Zheng Shengchao could only search for an opportunity to forcefully break through to the opponent, but Qiao Yifan refused to face him directly. Qiao Yifan weaved in and out of the alleys as if it was his own home.

Zheng Shengchao was puzzled. It was a new map for both sides. How come the other side was so familiar with it? How could he know this map like back of his hand?

Zheng Shengchao, who had been chasing him the entire time, was starting to become impatient. Every time he reached a corner, he lifted his head to see where the sun was. He had to think about whether that place might have traps set, a dead end, or if it could be completely sealed off by ghost boundaries. Because of all the thinking he needed to do, he often lost his target, making him feel even more annoyed.

"Are you planning on running around until you recover all of your mana?" Zheng Shengchao couldn't bear it anymore and spoke to the other side through the all chat. Glory characters had basic health and mana recovery, but it was very very slow in real combat. If not, wouldn't the matches go on forever? Zheng Shengchao knew the other side didn't have that goal in mind. These words were purely to provoke him.

At Happy's benches, Ye Xiu actually went over to ask Chen Guo: "Did Yifan bring recovery equipment into the game?"

"Do you think everyone thinks like you do?' Chen Guo felt hopeless.

Ye Xiu had done this before, but it had actually been a very bold move. Bringing two sets of equipment increased the character's weight significantly. Fighting would feel different. It was hard to say if bringing an extra set of equipment was actually helpful or harmful, so the switching-equipment playstyle only lasted a short while before becoming nonexistent. It was considered okay to bring one or two extra pieces of equipment, but the end result of carrying two full sets of equipment might just be dragging the character to their own death.

Even Ye Xiu only dared to do so against Team Everlasting. If he had to compete against similar-level experts, he would need to carefully ponder over it.

"I feel like with Yifan's skill level, bringing an extras set is still quite reasonable!" Wei Chen gave an enthusiastic thumbs up. His words meant that Qiao Yifan had the ability to toy around with Jade Dynasty's player.

"Do you really think Yifan's as shameless and unscrupulous as you guys?" Chen Guo was about to go crazy.

"I think it's just because Yifan's rather cautious." Ye Xiu said.

"Yeah yeah, he's probably overestimating these Jade Dynasty players." Wei Chen said.

"We also figured that Jade Dynasty was hiding their strength." Ye Xiu said.

"Yes, that's right. If it wasn't for that, he would definitely have brought another set of equipment." Wei Chen said.

"Yeah, he definitely would have." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

"Get out of here! You two, f*ck off!!" Chen Guo yelled.

Chapter 990: Remaining Mana

Ye Xiu and the others were all joking around off stage, while Qiao Yifan, on stage, was completely unaffected by his opponent's taunting. Jade Dynasty's Zheng Shengchao had no idea as to where One Inch Ash was or where he was heading, but the audience could clearly see how One Inch Ash was darting in and out of the alleyways with familiarity.

This sort of playstyle was usually very unpopular, but because of Qiao Yifan's brilliant performance last match, the audience's tolerance for Qiao Yifan's playstyle had obviously become very high. Even the commentator was praising Qiao Yifan's patience, saying that it was rare that someone kept such a cool head when they were in the lead by a full player in the group arena.

"Ok, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash has once again managed to sneak behind Severed Yearning once again. Will he manage to grasp an opportunity this time?" The commentator kept his eyes on the match.

"He's approached, but this position doesn't seem very appropriate for a Ghostblade's ambush. Let's see what Qiao Yifan will do!"

"Oh, he's laid down a Ghost Boundary."

"It's a Flame Boundary. Seems like Qiao Yifan also knows that this environment isn't too great for Ghost Boundaries, so he's aiming to deal damage."

"Jade Dynasty's player noticed, turned around, Collapsing Mountain!!! He has a very fast reaction speed. It looks like Zheng Shengchao was waiting for One Inch Ash to strike."

"Qiao Yifan has backed away. Seems like he felt that this opportunity wasn't a very good one. However, it's obvious that Zheng Shengchao isn't willing to let Qiao Yifan go so easily this time, and he's pursuing. Exchanges like this have happened several times already and Qiao Yifan has continuously managed to slip away, utilizing his familiarity with the map. However, this time... It seems like Zheng Shangchao has gained a better understanding of the map during the match. He refuses to be shaken off."

"Huh...? This place..." The commentator made a questioning sound before he started to become excited. The broadcast very cooperatively flashed to the area the commentator had noticed. The audience looked over, and immediately understood the commentator's excitement. This area had a very similar terrain to where Qiao Yifan killed his last opponent.

A brilliant performance was about to follow! The audience perked up, and some even began applauding. As for Team Happy's supporters, they had already begun to cheer and yell with excitement.

Jade Dynasty's members were extremely anxious at this moment. It didn't feel good to be spectating this at all. They could only watch as their teammate fell into the opponent's trap, but were helpless to do anything about it. Half of Jade Dynasty's players had even stood up, but their boss, Xiao Jie, was still sitting, unmoving, though his own anxiety was evident. His gaze even revealed a hint

of rage, clearly unhappy at how his players were continuously falling for their opponent's tricks.

Under the eyes of the people, Zheng Chaosheng didn't fail their expectations. His Severed Yearning took that final step.

A Ghost Boundary practically matched the timing for this step, coming down on Severed Yearning's head. Qiao Yifan had perfectly timed the skill, beginning to cast it beforehand, and just finishing the cast with this step.

Zheng Shengchao was shocked, but didn't panic. He wanted nothing more than for Qiao Yifan to stop and face him head on! With a Colliding Stab, Severed Yearning charged at One Inch Ash. One Inch Ash whirled around in a dodge, bounding to switch of positions with Severed Yearning.

After the Colliding Stab, Severed Yearning spun around and Zheng Shengchao only noticed the terrain of his environment then. His heart missed a beat, feeling dread rising. However, he was already trapped in a Ghost Boundary and One Inch Ash swung the Taichi in his hand, Ghost Boundaries came down one after another. The audience yelled and cheered, abandoning all pretense, while Jade Dynasty's players all felt like crying.

Zheng Shengchao struggled, wanting to break out of the encirclement of Ghost Boundaries, yet was met with failure after failure.

Compared to the Ghostblade of last round, Berserkers were a lot

better at breaking through, but didn't have nearly as high of a resistance to the effects of Ghost Boundaries. Falling into a CC chain like this was much more troublesome for Zheng Shengchao than for the last match's Ghostblade player. Severed Yearning's life dropped constantly, the audience applauded thunderously, Jade Dynasty's players sat silently and boss Xiao Jie's expression made him look like he was ready to eat someone.

"Qiao Yifan has done it yet again, an amazing performance. However, this sort of playstyle consumes a lot of mana, so it seems that this time he won't be able to wipe out his opponent. That's perfectly fine though; being able to expend all your mana in the group arena means you've truly done everything you can. Qiao Yifan has reached this limit wonderfully. If Happy wins the group arena, then Qiao Yifan would've made the greatest contribution!" The commentator kept praising Qiao Yifan's performance, noticing, at the same time, that One Inch Ash's mana might not be enough and therefore wouldn't be able to keep up this playstyle of layering Ghost Boundaries in excess.

"Ah! So close...." A split second after the commentator finished analyzing the situation, he gave a cry from a sudden change on the field. Meanwhile, the audience suddenly gave a loud collective sigh at the same time.

"Severed Yearning almost charged out of One Inch Ash's encirclement. Though Jade Dynasty's player fell into a trap, it seems like he hasn't given up yet, seeking opportunities whenever he can." The commentator, having almost focused completely on One Inch Ash, finally decided to spare a few thoughts for Zheng Shengchao.

"Uh... Qiao Yifan's control seems to be too spread out this time!" Seeing the two's exchange on the field, the commentator suddenly came up with this comment.

Compared to the complete control of the match, Zheng Shengchao's Severed Yearning could still find some opportunity to try and break away from the control. Though he hadn't succeeded, he wasn't losing as badly as One Inch Ash's previous opponent.

"I feel like... Qiao Yifan might be thinking too much. Seems like he's controlling his rhythm on purpose to not completely deplete his mana so quickly. However, this leaves room for his opponent to struggle. Actually, in a situation where he has such an advantage, why doesn't Qiao Yifan just use up the rest of his mana to maximize his damage? I doubt anyone would be disappointed in him if he eventually lost the match," the commentator said with some confusion and disappointment.

Just as his words fell, the two on the field began their first ever head on exchange. Zheng Shengchao might not have been able to break through, but was able to deal a lot of damage to One Inch Ash.

"Qiao Yifan won't be wiped out before even depleting his mana, right? That would be such a shame... Qiao Yifan... he demands too much of himself..." Seeing how Zheng Shengchao gained the upper hand in this exchange, the commentator began to worry.

"Again! It seems like Zheng Shengchao is very confident in himself."

"Dark Boundary! This Dark Boundary was very timely, otherwise he might really be able to hold on against this barrage. I hope Qiao Yifan can take advantage of this opportunity and regain control over the situation..."

Yet Qiao Yifan didn't accomplish what the commentator was hoping for, continuing to stubbornly keep his slow rhythm and not depleting his mana to set Ghost Boundaries like in the previous match.

"If it's just like this... I feel like there would be no need for this trap. I think Zheng Shengchao would be more than willing to just fight Qiao Yifan head-on, right?" The more he spoke, the more the commentator felt disappointed in Qiao Yifan's actions this round.

"Zheng Shengchao is getting more and more confident as he fights, his status is at its peak." Slowly, the commentator's attention began to shift to Jade Dynasty's player.

"Blood Sword, Destruction Slash, brilliant! Soul-Devouring Crimson Grip, missed, what a shame. If that grab hit, it would have changed the situation completely. Zheng Shengchao's Severed Yearning might not have broken through, but he has gained the upperhand now, unleashing his own barrage of attacks. Qiao Yifan is struggling to endure. Under a situation where he originally held the upper hand, Qiao Yifan didn't utilize his Ghost Boundaries to their fullest, so One Inch Ash lost a lot of health as well, with only ten percent remaining. Now, what he is about to face is an even fiercer offense from his opponent because Blood Awakening has now been activated..."

"Wait, it's been activated..." The commentator suddenly realized something was wrong upon coming to this. He was dumbstruck for a long while and it wasn't until the two on the field engaged with one another that he noticed the health of each character falling and suddenly realized: Severed Yearning's Blood Awakening had already been activated because his health had already fallen by more than 50 percent, and this all happened without any fanfare. All he had noticed was Qiao Yifan's hardship in taking these attacks, but he hadn't noticed how Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had been quietly chipping away at his opponent's health all of this time.

That's right. This wave of damage wasn't nearly as elegant and consistent as the last match. However, if he was as liberal with his mana and consumed it like he did in the last match, how much damage would he be able to do with the little mana he had left?

Yet now, using the head-on exchanges, One Inch Ash might've lost a lot of health, but he had also drained Severed Yearning's health by quite a bit, but how much mana had One Inch Ash used during this fight?

Ten percent!

He had only used ten percent, ten percent of his mana to take over fifty percent of his opponent's health. This was a shocking result, and One Inch Ash had taken a lot of damage to achieve it. Though he still had almost twenty percent of his mana left now, he only had ten percent of his health. He might've been able to save some mana, but did he have enough health to use it?

Just as these doubts arose in the commentator, he suddenly understood.

"It's coming!!!"

Thus, all the people watching the broadcast heard the commentator abruptly say these words.

What was coming? Just as the audience was lost in their confusion, One Inch Ash suddenly sped up the pace, Ghost Boundaries flashed continuously all over the field. This extravagant scene had One Inch Ash's mana plummeting, yet at the same time it quickly depleted Severed Yearning's health as well.

"It's enough! Qiao Yifan's remaining mana is enough to wipe out Severed Yearning. Severed Yearning is a Berserker, so he doesn't have the same resistance to Ghost Boundaries that the Ghostblade from last match had, so Ghost Boundaries deal significantly more damage to him. Qiao Yifan's remaining mana will be enough to take him out." The commentator quickly shared his findings then, but he had forgotten that the previous analysis was all in his head. Suddenly announcing this made the audience extremely confused.

However, the current situation on the field became the best annotation for the commentator's words. One Inch Ash completely took back control as he sped up without warning. Severed Yearning, who had seemingly taken control of the field for a while, was immediately drowned in Ghost Boundaries. He couldn't orientate himself or find a way out. His health depleted rapidly.

His blood may have awakened, but there was no place to utilize it. He was securely locked in One Inch Ash's Ghost Boundaries.

Finally, One Inch Ash's mana was no more, and with the last powerful skill that consumed it, Severed Yearning's life was gone, too.

Qiao Yifan had successfully taken out his second opponent.

Chapter 991: The Older the Wiser

The system announced One Inch Ash's victory, but the stadium was completely silent.

The final turnaround had happened too quickly. Everyone had yet to comprehend what had transpired. The vast majority of the viewers as well as the commentator felt like Qiao Yifan had been playing way too cautiously. He had lured the opponent into a trap, but he failed to perfectly restrict the opponent. The viewers and the commentator had overlooked the fact that, while Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash lost a huge amount of health, he also successfully lowered his opponent's health.

The commentator explained how Qiao Yifan played this match, waking up the viewers watching the stream. However, the stadium didn't have a commentator speaking. Amidst the silence, everyone watched as Team Jade Dynasty's player Zhao Shengchao stood up and walked down from the stage.

In any case, Happy had won again. There was no need doubt about it. As a result, the first to react were Happy's supporters. Even if they didn't understand the contents of the match, just the result deserved applause.

Zheng Shengchao received the cold-shoulder like the previous player. The boss, Xiao Jie, ignored him. Zheng Shengchao sat down nervously. The fourth player went over to Xiao Jie for instructions, but he saw Xiao Jie wave his hands at him with a look of disgust. He didn't say anything and sent him away.

Xiao Jie used silence to express his displeasure with his players. The fourth player was Jade Dynasty's fourth swordsman. His opponent was still Qiao Yifan, except Qiao Yifan's character One Inch Ash only had 10% of his health left. He was nearly out of mana too. Even so, this Spellblade still felt fearful.

This time, Qiao Yifan didn't drag the fight on. One Inch Ash headed straight for his opponent. Without any mana, One Inch Ash couldn't use any skills. He could only use basic attacks. Not long afterwards, the opponent killed him.

Qiao Yifan lost. He got up from his seat and got ready to leave the stage. This time, the stadium wasn't confused. They didn't hesitate and applauded wildly.

Even if many of them weren't able to understand the contents of the previous match, Qiao Yifan finishing a 1v2 in the group arena was clear as day. For a Phantom Demon, which did not excel even at 1v1s, being able to accomplish this was very impressive. The applause towards Qiao Yifan wasn't lacking.

As Qiao Yifan left the stage, he heard the thunderous applause and felt a bit dazed. Once he confirmed that the applause was for him, the formerly invisible Qiao Yifan felt moved. When he looked towards his team, his teammates also stood up and welcomed him with applause. Qiao Yifan felt moved once again. He also felt somewhat embarrassed. He rushed off the stage and walked over to his teammates.

"How does a 1v2 feel?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Pretty good." Qiao Yifan scratched his head. The smile on his face brimmed with happiness.

"Take a break. Watch us next." Ye Xiu smiled.

"Mm." Qiao Yifan nodded his head. He and everyone else returned to their bench. Team Happy's third player didn't immediately take his baton though.

"Old Wei?" Ye Xi looked around. He discovered that Wei Chen was at the very corner of their player bench. His head was buried in his arms, and he was scrunched up like a ball. Who knew what he was doing.

"Wait wait. Let me finish smoking." Wei Chen raised his head. He let out two puffs of smoke from his mouth. Chen Guo was furious when she saw this! The stadium was a public venue. Smoking was not allowed inside. However, this guy had hidden himself in a corner to grab a smoke. Chen Guo didn't know what to say. As the oldest in Team Happy, Wei Chen truly wasn't a role model for his peers.

After breathing in two puffs of smoke, Wei Chen clapped his hands and stood up. Who knew where his cigarette had gone off to. He walked over boldly and nodded his head fiercely at Qiao Yifan: "Little Fan, you played pretty well."

"Haha..." Qiao Yifan laughed foolishly.

"Watch me next." Wei Chen's arrogance pierced the heavens as he spoke.

Chen Guo didn't even say "Good luck!" to this guy.

Wei Chen didn't need this kind of encouragement. He walked onto the stage high and mightily. The stadium clapped out of politeness towards the next player. Then, they saw this guy wave his hands to send his greetings. He looked like he was enjoying it very much up until the applause died down. Only then did he finally climb onto the stage.

Soon afterwards, the next round of the group arena began. Team Jade Dynasty's Spellblade versus Wei Chen's Warlock, Windward Formation.

"Okay, I'll give you three minutes to come find me! If you can't find me, you should just forfeit!" As soon as the match started, the first thing Wei Chen did was type this into the all chat.

Jade Dynasty's player ignored him.

In that match, Mysterious Fantasy forfeited to Wei Chen because that point didn't even matter to them. In fact, that forfeit actually raised their team's morale. It was a trade off for better psychological stability. In this group arena, no matter how lacking a team's morale was, it didn't make sense to directly forfeit.

Everyone treated Wei Chen's words as psychological warfare. No one took it seriously, but in the next second, everyone actually saw Wei Chen's Windward Formation decisively run into a corner. This guy had actually started hiding.

The crowd went into an uproar. All sorts of rowdy jeering and whistling sounded. There was even some applause, but it sounded very weird. The applause was clearly a sarcastic one.

Chen Guo felt so ashamed that she wanted to crawl under the seats because Qiao Yifna's outstanding performance had helped Happy win a lot of fans. Chen Guo reckoned that all of that work had instantly been undone by Wei Chen's dirtiness.

Jade Dynasty's Spellblade wasn't affected by Wei Chen's words. He didn't directly head over though and instead took a more roundabout path. This was the first time Jade Dynasty's player went along a more strategic path. He walked around, but wasn't able to find the target. Wei Chen was still hiding in a corner near his spawn point, not moving.

The commentator suffered the most. No matter how experienced he was, it wouldn't be enough. One side wasn't moving. The other side was running around in circles. What was there for him to do? Calculate the distance between the two players?

Jade Dynasty's player ran around in a circle a few times but still didn't see his opponent, but continued to look around. This player had clearly underestimated Wei Chen's shamelessness. He didn't think Wei Chen would go so far as to do such a disgusting move. However, Wei Chen still did it. He sat in a corner near the spawn

point like a cat.

In the blink of an eye, three minutes passed. Wei Chen typed out on the dot: "Three minutes is up. You still haven't found me. Go forfeit."

The stadium suddenly made all sorts of noise. However, the player booths were soundproof. The players wouldn't know what the stadium's reaction was. After all, Glory was different from other esports. Leaks could be game changing. As a result, players on stage were practically sealed in.

Even if he could hear the crowd's reaction, Wei Chen definitely wouldn't bat an eyelid towards it. He shouted for the opponent to forfeit, but there was no reply. Wei Chen continued to grumble: "Why aren't you forfeiting? Do you think this is fun for me?"

The crowd suddenly felt the urge to curse at him. That was exactly what they wanted to say to Wei Chen.

Jade Dynasty's player ignored him, but after running in circles for three minutes, he had to start seriously considering that his opinion of Wei Chen's shamelessness had been way off. The Spellblade turned around and started moving towards Windward Formation's spawn point.

During this time, Windward Formation kept on typing messages, using all sorts of unscrupulous words to provoke Team Jade Dynasty. He obviously used Qiao Yifan's 1v2 a lot. The viewers finally got something. The viewers confused about Qiao Yifan's

second win had been explained through Wei Chen's trash talk. What an incredible player! The viewers, who now understood Qiao Yifan's play, admired him even more. At the same time, they also felt sympathy: How did such a player have such a filthy teammate?

Finally, Jade Dynasty's Spellblade reached Windward Formation's spawn point. He started moving slower, carefully observing his surroundings.

Wei Chen's trash talk continued as if he didn't know his opponent was nearby. Everyone had one thought right now. They hoped that Jade Dynasty's Spellblade would hurry up and uncover him so that guy could shut up already.

He's getting close! He's getting close!

The viewers had an omniscient view of the match started to become excited, but the moment the Spellblade was about to make the last step to find his opponent, Windward Formation suddenly ran out of his corner and started moving.

F*ck!

Many people in the crowd cursed inwardly. How did he know? No one understood. He probably cheated? Quite a few people had started doubting Wei Chen's morality.

In any case, the Spellblade missed his opportunity. He wasn't able to find Windward Formation at the spawn point and that

guy's trash talk kept on pouring out. This time, the Spellblade was finally a bit confused because he had lost all sense of direction. He started wondering if Windward Formation was even there.

He is! He's about to come too!!

The viewers hated how they couldn't rush over and tell the Spellblade what was happening. From their god's view, they discovered that after Windward Formation went in a circle, he had circled around to the Spellblade's back. The commentator became excited too because, after Qiao Yifan's two matches, he started taking the habit of paying attention to the map's terrain. When he switched viewpoints, he suddenly realized that after Windward Formation circled around, the distance, angle, and terrain were all favorable towards Windward Formation.

The commentator immediately said this point and couldn't help but sigh: "It looks like Team Happy's veteran and Team Blue Rain's former captain isn't as boring as everyone imagined him to be. I only have one thing to say: the older the wiser."

Chapter 992: Victory Boos

The viewers watching the broadcast could hear the commentator's words, so they understood how impressive Wei Chen's play was. However, the lesser skilled members of the audience couldn't see anything special about it. They continued to boo at Wei Chen.

Amidst these boos, Windward Formation moved into an exceptionally good position. Perfect timing and advantageous terrain. Everything was in his favor. As soon as he attacked, he forced Jade Dynasty's Spellblade into a difficlult situation.

Warlocks excelled at controlling situations. Their attack range was higher than a Spellblade's. In addition, Windward Formation's Silver weapon, Death's Hand, gave +4 to spell casting distance. The Spellblade was being toyed around by Wei Chen like a wooden marionette.

The crowd was still booing wildly, hoping for Jade Dynasty's Spellblade to teach Wei Chen a lesson, but they soon discovered that it was the complete opposite from what they had hoped. Jade Dynasty's Spellblade was actually being destroyed by that dirty, shameless guy.

The boos stopped. The crowd had mixed feelings. For a moment, they were unable to give any applause to Wei Chen, even though he had beautifully grasped the distance and pace of the fight.

At the same time, the other match taking place at a different

stage had officially ended.

1v5. What was thought to be impossible was established on the basis that the level of the two participating sides were close. Continuing their streak from the last match, Excellent Era's Sun Xiang once again swept through the group arena alone. In the follow team competition, after easily killing one of the other side's players, Excellent Era ended the match early with all six of their members intact.

There were many Excellent Era fans at the stadium. Although they couldn't help but focus more of their attention on the match between Happy and Jade Dynasty, Excellent Era sweeping through this match was still welcomed with applause.

This kind of achievement wasn't anything to be proud of for Excellent Era, but they wouldn't refuse the passionate support of their fans. Excellent Era's players stood together on stage, waving their hands towards the audience. The broadcast officially announced Team Excellent Era's advance to the Challenger League's finals.

However, it looked as if Team Excellent Era didn't care who their next opponent would be. After satisfying a few requests for signatures and pictures, Team Excellent Era exited the stadium. They didn't even bother waiting for the other match to end.

Xiao Jie noticed Excellent Era's arrogance and felt extremely unhappy. He couldn't bother bickering about it at this moment though. It was still a question whether or not Team Jade Dynasty could beat Team Happy.

Team Jade Dynasty hiding their strength was originally supposed to be a surprise for Team Excellent Era, but when they faced Team Happy, Xiao Jie was shaken.

After all, he had been a fan of Glory since the very beginning. He was no stranger to the names Ye Qiu, Wei Chen, or Sun Zheping, so after hesitating again and again, Xiao Jie reluctantly decided to reveal his surprise ahead of time.

With that, he thought beating Happy wouldn't be a problem, but even after switching to superior equipment, Xiao Jie was unable to see any sort of advantage. They were being dominated from start to finish. This match didn't even look like a competition between two equals. They were still being beaten even after switching equipment. If he had left the surprise until the end, how badly would they be losing?

Xiao Jie didn't dare think about it. Seeing Windward Formation force his team's Spellblade into all sorts of predicaments, disgust was written all over Xiao Jie's face. He hated losing and loathed this kind of performance. He had bought Team Jade Dynasty to have fun, not to endure suffering.

The Spellblade was finally defeated. Wei Chen won effortlessly. If the part where he had shamelessly went into hiding had been removed, the crowd would have been very willing to give him a round of applause. However, with that sort of opener, the crowd felt like the quality of the match had been dragged through the dirt.

To think he won like that... everyone thought to themselves.

Xiao Jie continued to sit there, not saying a word. The let the players swap on their own. They were already on their last player. As for Happy? Including Wei Chen, Happy still had three players. Ye Xiu and Sun Zheping had yet to even make an appearance. Xiao Jie didn't have any hope towards this Spitfire either. He only hoped that he would lose without making a fool of himself and not give a shameful performance.

The poor Spitfire player didn't have any confidence either. 1v3? For a small character like himself, such an achievement only appeared in his dreams. He didn't dare think about who the next player on Happy was. He was afraid that he might not even be able to beat the player on stage right now. What shameless method would this despicable guy use to deal with him?

The Spitfire player trembled with fear as he walked towards the stage. He swiped his account card. A short moment later, the match began. A string of letters popped up in the all chat: "Is there any point in trying to fight? Why don't you just forfeit!"

The boos from the crowd nearly shook the stadium. They had never seen someone so shameless before. Couldn't you try a different method for once? The viewers saw it clearly! While Windward Formation typed that out, he once again hid in a corner just like in the last match.

What about Team Dynasty's side? The Spitfire player carefully moved along a strategic route. The thought that Wei Chen would do the same thing as in the previous round didn't even cross his

mind. Not just anyone could fathom such shamelessness.

But after going around and around, he was unable to find his target. Jade Dynasty's player was forced to lower himself and consider things from a shameless point of view.

No way, right?

He questioned his own guess as he controlled his character to move towards Windward Formation's spawn point.

The crowd was in an uproar. If this kept going, it wouldn't be a copy of the last round, would it? Boos and shouts erupted. Even Happy's most loyal supporters felt too embarrassed to say anything. The Happy fanclub formed by Seven Fields and the others had shrunk down into their seats. It looked as if they were ready to slide to underneath their seats at a moment's notice.

Fortunately, Jade Dynasty's player wasn't as stupid as everyone thought. After seeing his teammate get ambushed by Wei Chen's Windward Formation, how could he not be on guard against it? As he approached the spawn point, he changed his pathing, going along the route that Windward Formation had previously used to flank his teammate.

"Beautiful!!" The crowd couldn't help but cheer. Right now, they weren't concerned about the competition between the two teams. They just wanted to see that despicable Warlock get taught a lesson. They hoped that the Spitfire would surprise that guy from behind and make him piss his pants in fear.

This scene was about to happen. The Spitfire slowly approached, but Wei Chen's Windward Formation remained still. If this was before, he would have already started running, right?

Shouldering countless people's hopes, the Spitfire finally circled around to the spawn point. Wei Chen's Windward Formation didn't seem to be aware of him.

"Arrived?" He simply said in the chat.

What's arrived?

Everyone was puzzled. They hadn't thought that it was just a casual greeting. Weren't they playing a serious match, right now?

Unfortunately, the poor Jade Dynasty player was also puzzled. He had been startled by the sudden question. Then, Windward Formation's attack flew at him.

Jade Dynasty's player wasn't so confused that he had forgotten what he was doing. As soon as he saw the opponent attack, he instinctively dodged and counterattacked. The two characters immediately started fighting, exchanging blows.

The crowd started discussing amongst each other. They didn't think that this scene was as simple as it looked. Happy's Warlock must have some sort of disgusting trick up his sleeve.

What could it be? Everyone thought to themselves. As they thought about it, they saw Team Jade Dynasty's Spitfire fall.

Done?

Everyone was dumbstruck, when they saw the word Glory jump onto the screen.

Where was his signature despicableness? Where was the shamelessness? Why was it over already?

The stadium didn't have a commentator helping them, so they were all scratching their heads in wonder. However, those watching the broadcast had already been told by the commentator, who didn't know whether to laugh or cry, that this was just an ordinary fight. Happy's Warlock was more or less too lazy to move, so he just waited for the Spitfire player to come. Then, the two sides fought, ending with the Spitfire falling.

The viewers watching the broadcast were cursing, while the crowd at the stadium were still puzzled. They felt like they had missed something. Everyone was staring at the screen, hoping to find something from the replays.

But they still weren't able to see anything. The crowd watched as Wei Chen walked out from the stage, also completing a 1v2 like his previous teammate. However, they had no idea what to do.

But after seeing that guy waving his hands towards them, a single

thought formed in their minds.

Boo at him! Keep booing!

The crowd once again booed the winner. And then, they saw this guy continue waving his hands, welcoming their boos.

Did he not understand what these boos meant? The boos suddenly became louder. Wei Chen acted as though there was no one there and returned to his seat.

In the group arena section, Team Happy had won 3 points. It could be considered as an impressive result. In the next team competition, as long as they killed three of their opponent's players, they could not lose the match. If they killed another one, the match would end in their guaranteed victory.

The pressure had been piled onto Team Jade Dynasty. Xiao Jie no longer stayed silent. He got up and walked towards the players.

"What did you think about your performances in the group arena?" Xiao Jie asked.

No one in Team Jade Dynasty uttered a word.

"It looks like all of you know and feel ashamed. What about the following team competition? What do you plan to do to win? Will it be like the group arena? Stroll right into the opponent's trap? Get crushed by the opponents?" Xiao Jie said.

"Of course not." Someone suddenly lifted his head and gave a smile full of confidence.

Chapter 993: Deciding Match

The person who spoke up was Team Jade Dynasty's Cleric, Lu Shilin. Xiao Jie had personally scouted him. In his eyes, he was an outstanding Cleric. When Xiao Jie purchased Team Jade Dynasty, he naturally stuck him into the team. Lu Shilin could be considered as someone under his personal command. Xiao Jie had originally intended on directly handing Lu Shilin the team captain's position, but he wasn't stupid. He knew that he hadn't brought half of the team over. He had only brought one person. An individual's power was rather weak, even if he had the boss' backing. It might not be enough to convince the rest of the team.

As a result, the team captain was still Lin Yi. Apart from that, Xiao Jie even asked their former captain, Zhang Jian to help. Thus, when Team Jade Dynasty's ownership changed, no one was unhappy.

It was just that, at this moment, Xiao Jie was not happy at all. He had thought that they were in a superior position, but he didn't see any of their superiority in the group arena, which made him seriously question these players' ability to perform. If not, how could they have lost in such an ugly manner?

Right now, if they wanted to reach the finals, they needed to win the team competition with three or more players surviving. If this team continued to perform the same way that they did in the group arena, it would truly be hopeless. Fortunately, the true core of Team Jade Dynasty would finally be coming out.

This was Team Jade Dynasty's true power. Just wait and see,

Happy. Xiao Jie shot a glance at Happy. An arrogant and proud smile once again appeared on his face.

The break time in between the group arena and team competition quickly passed. Jade Dynasty's players readied themselves. There was nothing new to their player list. It was the same five players from the group arena along with Lu Shilin.

"Do well! Take revenge!" Xiao Jie yelled to his teammates.

"Haha, revenge already? Then what will happen when you get eliminated?" The person who replied was Happy's Ye Xiu.

"You truly deserve to be called a God. You're quite confident!" Xiao Jie's voice carried a hint of sarcasm. His politeness at the start of the match was non-existent.

"And I should be." Ye Xiu nodded his head towards Xiao Jie's remark.

"You'll pay the price for your conceit." Xiao Jie sneered.

Ye Xiu didn't know whether to laugh or cry: "And I thought you were conceited! You didn't give any advice to them for the team competition, right?"

Xiao Jie's face darkened. He hadn't said too much in the team competition, but he still said a few words. He had purchased Team Jade Dynasty so he could enjoy planning strategies with the team.

"I hope you didn't. If not, the Alliance might have to work overtime and convene a meeting to discuss the new competitive format if this match ends too quickly." Ye Xiu said.

"Hahahaha." Chen Guo was unable to keep up her image and started laughing loudly. She had long since gotten a bad impression of Xiao Jie since long ago.

Xiao Jie always acted as if his beliefs were infallible. If the team played spectacularly, it would be because of him. If the team played poorly, it was the fault of the players; he wouldn't blame himself at all. If Ye Xiu hadn't returned fire, Chen Guo would have rushed forward to say a few words herself. Fortunately, Ye Xiu did it first. His replies were much more brilliant. This type of reasonable and justifiable trash talk was truly Ye Xiu's strong point!

The Alliance wanted to test the new competitive format in the Challenger League, but they forgot that there was a huge skill disparity in the Challenger League. Didn't Excellent Era quickly and easily finish up and go home to eat? If Happy crushed Jade Dynasty and also finished early, what conclusions would the Alliance be able to come to with this Challenger League experiment? That truly was quite an incisive question!

"Hang in there! You have to hang in there!" Chen Guo added fuel to the fire and blurted out a few more words.

"Hmph. You won't be smiling in a bit." Xiao Jie replied.

"Of course." Chen Guo said proudly. She was usually the one who was the more worried, but in this critical moment, she was suddenly filled with confidence. She firmly believed that Happy wouldn't lose to this team. That wouldn't be professional!

Team Happy's participating players started going on stage too.

Because only three players had appeared on stage in the group arena for Happy, it was still unknown who would be going on stage in the team competition. The players who closely followed the Challenger League were quite familiar with an eye-catching team like Happy. They paid particular attention to this issue. Even the commentator was guessing who Happy would send out for the team competition. It was only until Happy's players started going on stage was the answer revealed.

The one in front was Ye Xiu. He wasn't just a God in Team Happy. He was someone who remained unsurpassed in the Glory scene. Behind him was Sun Zheping. With the name Blood and Blossoms, he was only one step away from the peak of Glory. From the boos from the crowd, it wasn't hard to guess who was next. Wei Chen. He would win by any means necessary. He embodied the concept of shamelessness. After the boos, the crowd suddenly started cheering and clapping because this was another player who had won through solid fundamentals in today's group arena, Qiao Yifan. He had come from a top team and had similar accomplishments in the group arena like Wei Chen, but the treatment towards him was the complete opposite. It was certainly a wondrous scene to look at.

After Qiao Yifan, the next player was clearly quite popular as this player received many cheers. This player had always received a lot of attention over the entire course of the offline tournament.

Tang Rou. Not only did she possess incredible mechanics, she also had outstanding looks. After appearing in the offline tournament, she received all-around attention. Chen Guo had received not just a few requests for Tang Rou. There were even many powerful people who directly looked for Tang Rou, trying to recruit her.

These people seemed to have a good understanding of Happy's situation. As a result, they felt like the reason Tang Rou was willing to play for Team Happy was definitely because she didn't fully understand her own value, and in order to recruit such an outstanding player in all regards, many teams were willing to pay a high price for her. This was why the clubs were quite confident.

Unfortunately, they didn't completely understand Tang Rou. They thought that they could move Tang Rou with very generous offers, but these had no effect on Tang Rou.

What exactly did she want?

This was what the various clubs wondered after getting in touch with Tang Rou. Unfortunately, no one could find the correct answer. They could only watch quietly as Tang Rou performed spectacularly again and again for Happy. It made them lament. Such a pearl was being thrown to the swines right in front of them, but they were unable to save it. It was truly too regretful.

After Tang Rou was Happy's Cleric, An Wenyi. Healers were a rather mild and not very eye-catching class that made people's blood boil. In addition, all of his other teammates shined too brightly. When An Wenyi appeared on stage, the atmosphere in the stadium clearly became a bit colder, but An Wenyi dind't mind because he never felt like he had done anything to deserve their cheers. If someone actually cheered for him, wouldn't that be more strange?

When he came onto the stage, he saw that Jade Dynasty's Cleric hadn't gone to his seat yet. Instead, he was waiting on the side for Happy's players. Ye Xiu, Sun Zheping, Wei Chen, Qiao Yifan, Tang Rou. All of them passed by him one by one. He kept a smile on his face and didn't pay much attention to them, but when An Wenyi walked by, he came over and welcomed him.

"Hi." Lu Shilin extended out his right hand.

"Hi." An Wenyi naturally shook his hand.

"In this team competition, the two of us will be the ones who decide who wins and loses." Lu Shilin said. Then, he drew back his hand and left with a smile.

An Wenyi was startled. His hand was hanging still in the air. The other side had only shook his hand casually. As for Lu Shilin's words, it wasn't hard to figure out what he implied from the way he shook hands. He was hinting that the huge disparity between the Clerics would decide the winner of this match.

"What an arrogant guy!" Wei Chen exclaimed. The rest of Happy had heard Lu Shilin's challenge to An Wenyi.

"Haha, psychological warfare? Boring." An Wenyi shook his head.

"Not entirely." Ye Xiu said, "Healers are frequently the deciding factor in the team competition. This isn't a bad tactic."

"I'll still do my best." An Wenyi said.

"Everyone will." Ye Xiu smiled.

"Then you guys work harder. It's best if you don't need this senior to rescue you guys." Wei Chen said lazily and then headed towards his seat. In this team competition, he was their sixth player.

Happy's players took their seats and swiped their cards. After checking everything, the characters on both sides entered the waiting room. Once the countdown reached zero, the two sides loaded into the map. Happy versus Jade Dynasty. The deciding battle that decided who would advance to the finals officially began.

The players on both sides spawned at the corners of the map and started moving. Both sides had studied the map previously. As for their opening moves, none of them started discussing them when

the match started. They had already made preparations beforehand. Afterwards, they would need to make the appropriate adjustments throughout the match.

Team Jade Dynasty's four swordsmen circled around Lu Shilin, maintaining a complete formation before advancing. Team Happy's five players separated and ran randomly around the map like they had no solid strategy planned.

Of course, no one believed that Happy didn't actually have a strategy going in. The commentator looked around the map through his god's view, observing the movements of Happy's characters to determine their intentions.

"One Inch Ash and Little Cold Hands are fairly close to each other. They aren't moving forward as fast as the other three. The attackers clearly aren't going to be these two. As for those other three, Ye Xiu, Sun Zheping. One is the Battle God, the other is the former number one Berserker. I think besides Han Wenqin, no one is more aggressive than those two? As for Tang Rou, even though she's a rookie, her aggressiveness isn't lacking compared to her seniors. In terms of style, I don't think there's a player combination that's more aggressive than these three....."

Chapter 994: Now He's Dead

What the commentator called the strongest offensive trio in all of Glory didn't stick together. The three characters each went down different paths. The broadcast switched to a bird's eye view of the entire map, with the players of each team outlined by different colored highlights. All the pathings of the players became much more obvious.

"Uh, from the bird's eye view we have, we can clearly see the movements of the players on each team. Jade Dynasty's players are more concentrated, maintaining a formation as they advance together. Team Happy, on the other hand, is completely scattered around, apart from One Inch Ash and Little Cold Hands, who are just barely in range of supporting each other. The other three characters have all pulled away, but from the directions they're each heading in, their intentions are rather clear. It's a little hard to believe, but these three... It seems like they plan to surround Team Jade Dynasty." The commentator's tone was very doubtful.

However, the developing situation gave them their answer.

Team Jade Dynasty, advancing forward in a straight line, met Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep first. With a greatsword in hand, he charged right towards the front of their team's formation. He was a single man, but he seemed to have the air of a general leading an army of thousands into battle.

Jade Dynasty's formation didn't change. The four swordsmen charging forward to meet their opponent while maintaining their positions around Lu Shilin's Cleric. However, none of them could

resist looking around as their characters charged forward. Sun Zheping was just charging over on his own? There really wasn't anyone nearby to support him?

"Don't let him close in." That was when Lu Shilin gave that order. The Spellblade among the four swordsmen stepped forward, an Earthquake Sword sweeping out. Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep sidestepped it and continued to advance. Jade Dynasty's Berserker then jumped out, also wielding a greatsword, and charged furiously at Another Summer of Sleep.

However, his charge was just a feint. The real attack was the Ghostblade hiding beside him, sneakily summoning a Ghost Boundary. He swung his blade down, but then saw Another Summer of Sleep abruptly swing his Broadsword at him.

Clang!

The Ghostblade hastily raised his sword into a Guard, sliding back several units, but still managing to take the blow. Following that, the Blademaster and Berserker executed a pincer attack against Another Summer of Sleep, the Spellblade's Wave Formation had trapped Another Summer of Sleep within as well. They were really quite surprised, not expecting for Sun Zheping to charge right into their formation like that. This was underestimating them. Even though Jade Dynasty might not have been the best, they had once been pros. They didn't think that they had fallen to the level of being underestimated like this.

They decided to punish Sun Zheping for this. Yet that was when Tang Rou's Soft Mist arrived, spear raised, charging over at their

flank with a Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Lu Shilin smirked. What was this? Support? These two were both recklessly charging into their formation, not supporting or working together. This was the level that Happy's tactics were at? One of the legendary four Master Tacticians?

Lu Shlin thought to himself and then turned his view, seeing a glimpse of Lord Grim from a different direction. So he had snuck around their back and was still on his way over!

Lu Shilin was really almost about to laugh out loud. So he wanted to use wave after wave of furious attacks to mess up their formation, huh? The problem was, they were absolutely terrible at controlling the pace. They were just coming out to get killed one by one!

"Take out the Berserker first," Lu Shiling ordered, not telling the four Swordsmen to deal with the two newcomers yet.

That was when he saw Soft Mist not even bothering to help Another Summer of Sleep and instead charged at Lu Shilin's Cleric.

"This isn't something unexpected." Lu Shilin kept up his smile, backing away a few steps and entered the Ghost Boundaries and Wave Formations of their Ghostblade and Spellblade. This was originally a defense against Another Summer of Sleep, but now it also acted as the perfect protection for Lu Shilin.

As expected Soft Mist didn't dare to follow him into such dangerous territory and could only change directions to go and assist Another Summer of Sleep. Never mind Lu Shilin, even the commentator felt like Happy's strategic arrangements were terrible this round.

"This round of attacks from Team Happy wasn't executed very well! First of all, Sun Zheping made the mistake by facing his opponent's head on; he completely underestimated Jade Dynasty's players and him being surrounded means that the second wave of attacks from Tang Rou didn't work very well. They've lost their goal for this wave of attacks. I trust that Happy didn't intend to throw Another Summer of Sleep into enemy territory and then pull him out a again."

"Now Ye Xiu's Lord Grim is approaching as well, but can he turn the tides alone? Oh... He's stopped. It seems like he doesn't intends to charge into the fray. It's true that the situation isn't the best, but he can't just give up like that, can he? Are they giving up on Another Summer of Sleep? It seems like it. Soft Mist is preparing to retreat."

"Hahahaha..." On the player stands for Jade Dynasty, their boss Xiao Jie finally witnessed a situation he could enjoy. It was unfortunate that he couldn't talk to Ye Xiu now. After all, that guy was currently trying to awkwardly clean up after the strategic disaster he had planned, no?

"Hey, I say, is this your strategy?" Xiao Jie called out to Chen Guo who was watching the match on Happy's side.

Yet, at the same time as his shout, the audience suddenly cried out in collective shock.

Xiao Jie turned his head back around to see Lord Grim, who hadn't jumped into the fray, suddenly break his weapon in two and stretch out his hands. Then, Lu Shilin's Cleric was grabbed, and Soft Mist's retreat seemed more like a pursuit.

"What?" Xiao Jie stood suddenly.

These words were heard by all the viewers watching this match. What they heard, naturally, wasn't Xiao Jie's yell, but the commentator, who had only just been commenting on how terribly Happy was doing, suddenly stop and cry out in surprise.

This scene was too unexpected. Because the stadium itself had many angles being played together, the audience there could see what was happening. However, the TV broadcast only had what the program director showed them. Most of the time, only one scene was being played on the TV and the scene just now hadn't been broadcasted on TV because the program director had not been expecting it at all. By the time he saw it and hastily switched to the correct angle, Lu Shilin's Cleric was already flying through the air, eventually landing in Lord Grim's hands.

"Cloud Grasping Fist?? Was that a Cloud Grasping Fist? How did Lord Grim manage to use Cloud Grasping Fist? We all know that unspecialized characters can learn all of the pre-advancement skills from every classes, but this doesn't include skills beyond level 20! All the skills learned beyond level 20 are only available after job advancement, unless... unless..."

"It's an equipment bonus!? The commentator yelled out in realization. "If it's an equipment bonus, then of course he'd be able to use it, god! What sort of weapon does Lord Grim have? We knew it could change forms, becoming weapons of all sorts of class types so that Lord Grim can fully utilize all of his skills, but now it seems that there are skills built into the weapon too! That means Lord Grim is no longer limited to those low leveled skills. Though these skills won't be at a very high rank, another skill means more options and more combinations. For example, what we're seeing now is a Cloud Grasping Fist. It might not have the same speed and range as a maxed rank Cloud Grasping Fist, but its usage here might be the deciding factor of this match. Jade Dynasty's Cleric has been abducted from their formation by Lord Grim just like that..."

"Okay, he was stolen a while ago, and now he's already dead..." The commentator had yelled excitedly, only focused on analyzing that Cloud-Grasping Fist and forgetting to talk about what had been occurring. When he got back to it, the Cleric of Jade Dynasty's had immediately received a beating. Soft Mist definitely hadn't been retreating just now, but running over to kill her target.

The four Swordsmen Jade Dynasty panicked, forgetting about dealing with Another Summer of Sleep. This wasn't a fair trade at all. How were they going to fight without a healer?

The four hurriedly ran over to help, but that was when two others arrived. One was One Inch Ash, who arrived with his Ghost Boundaries that immediately came down in a chain. This was the layering playstyle that he had used in the Group Arena. No, to be

accurate, it was even more fierce, even more swift, because what he needed to do now was block them, stall for time, so he didn't need to consider how long this could last. As long as he stalled them for a little bit of time, allowing them deal with the Cleric, he would have done his job.

On One Inch Ash's other side, Little Cold Hands charged out, not to heal, but as support for their offense. A Holy Commandment was branded on Lu Shilin's Cleric, raising his damage taken by thirty percent, as if afraid he wouldn't die fast enough.

While one side was bleeding, the other side had just bled.

"Question: What does a Berserker that has lost blood do to the people that made him lose blood?"

In the public chat, Another Summer of Sleep suddenly sent out this sentence. The four people freaking out at being blocked by One Inch Ash saw this and turned their cameras, only to find Another Summer of Sleep with Berserk and Whirlwind Slash activated, charging over.

The four hurriedly attempted to parry. As expected of a Berserker that had lost enough blood, the addition of Berserk transformed him into a hurricane and blew them everywhere. However, the four had no time to think about themselves. Cleric! This match depended on the Cleric's survival!

That was when they saw a sentence in the global chat, coming from Lord Grim. "Your Cleric said this would be a battle between

two Clerics. Now he's dead. What about you guys? Are you going to continue?"

Chapter 995: Life Isn’t Fiction

Not a sound could be heard from the stadium.

Compared to the Jade Dynasty players on stage, the crowd had watched as Jade Dynasty's Cleric was grabbed from inside his team's formation and beaten to death.

Cloud Grasping a healer wasn't anything new. Even in the Arena, players in team competitions liked to use this move to create an opening. The prerequisite was naturally that the team had to have a Qi Master.

Yes, a Qi Master. This class was the prerequisite. Happy didn't have one though, so Jade Dynasty hadn't taken any sort of precautions against this move. However, a Cloud Grasping Fist actually appeared. Jade Dynasty's Cleric was kidnapped and wasn't able to resist. Then, Lord Grim and Soft Mist ganged up on him. On the side, Happy's Cleric also helped out. In a moment, there would be a Holy Commandment; the next, there would be a Sacred Fire. Jade Dynasty's Cleric wasn't even able to defend himself. He was being kneaded like a piece of dough. Even when he turned into a corpse, the corpse was sent flying with a blow-away attack. Ye Xiu threw out those words in the chat at the same time. Bang! Jade Dynasty's Cleric flew past One Inch Ash's Ghost Boundaries and landed in front of the rest of Jade Dynasty.

Nothing was worse than having the Cleric killed in a team competition. The only exception was if the team didn't bring a Cleric in the first place.

Team Jade Dynasty clearly wasn't the exception though. What's more, they regarded their healer as their core.

The healer was six feet under. The core had died. It was exactly like Ye Xiu had just asked. Was there even a need to continue?

The outcome of the match was soon decided. Happy easily won. Looking back at their run through the group arena, everyone realized in astonishment that this match wasn't as intense as they had anticipated it to be. Happy won the match without much trouble!

But Team Jade Dynasty's players didn't think the same. The instant the winner of the match was announced, the Cleric Lu Shilin rushed out from his seat in a frenzy. In this match, the viewers weren't even able to see his character name clearly or show his Cleric's ability before dying. Everything was because of that stupid Cloud Grasping Fist.

Yes, such a crude method that even normal players used had been the deciding move in this very important match. There weren't any deep or complex tactics involved. Sun Zheping and Tang Rou simply drew their attention, allowing Ye Xiu find the right opportunity to launch a sneak attack.

In reality, there was a single prerequisite that allowed for this to happen: Team Jade Dynasty didn't know Lord Grim could use Cloud Grasping Fist. If they had known, they would have protected their healer differently and paid particular attention to Lord Grim. They would have treated him more like a Qi Master. No matter what, Lord Grim wouldn't have been able to stand behind them so

casually. He wouldn't have been able to lift his hand, whisk him away, and kill him so quickly.

Lu Shilin refused to accept the result. He refused a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand times. The outcome had nothing to do with strategy or skill. It was only because their Team Jade Dynasty didn't know one small detail...

Happy had an unfair advantage. They should be feeling ashamed at such a victory!

Wei Chen was the first to get up from the player seats on Happy's side. As soon as he got up, he stretched his body: "So fast! I had only just fallen asleep!"

"You..... You....." Seeing Team Happy's players come out one after the other, Lu Shilin pointed his hand at them. He was so furious, he could only shake with anger, unable to say anything.

What could he say? Happy should have told them that they would use Cloud Grasping Fist, so Jade Dynasty could be on their guard? Lu Shilin obviously knew that was impossible. Thus, even though he refused to accept the results, he was unable to find any convincing arguments.

After saying "you" for awhile, just before Happy left the stage, he jumped out: "What type of f*cking class is an unspecialized? They're allowed in a competition????"

He was already grasping at straws. The Alliance never had any restrictions or requirements towards characters. There simply hadn't been a precedent for an unspecialized before. There was no rule stating that unspecialized characters were forbidden.

Lu Shilin's argument had no effect on Happy's players. They just kept talking and laughing, completely ignoring his existence. They left the stage and celebrated their victory with the others.

Lu Shilin still wanted to rush over and argue, but someone grabbed him from behind. He turned to look. It was Team Jade Dynasty's team captain, Lin Yi.

"What are you doing?" Lu Shilin furiously threw Lin Yi's hand off of him. He clearly didn't have much respect for this captain of his.

"A loss is a loss. Lose with dignity!" Lin Yi said.

"Dignity? Wow, you've really got some! You can accept such a stupid loss?" Lu Shilin shouted.

"That's the way competition is. At least, next time we won't make the same mistake." Lin Yi said.

"Next time? When's that? Next year?" Lu Shilin ridiculed, "You can hang around the Challenger League for three years because you can put up with such stupid losses, but not me!"

"I don't think it was a stupid loss. We just lost to something unexpected. In the end, it's because we didn't prepare enough. That goes for the team competition and the group arena too." Lin Yi said.

Lu Shilin listened and then laughed: "So it's like that. You want to look for an excuse for your trash performance in the group arena? So you're actually very happy that we lost in this team competition! This way, it proves that you're not actually incompetent, right?"

"Calm down." Lin Yi felt helpless. He could understand Lu Shilin's feelings though. Losing in the Challenger League was a huge blow because this meant that another year had been wasted. It was even more painful than losing the championship title. If you lost the championships, it wasn't the end of the world, but losing in the Challenger League just might be the end of the world. Didn't Team Everlasting disband this season because of their consecutive losses in the Challenger League?

Team Jade Dynasty being unable to make it through the Challenger League year after year made the players live in fear everyday. Perhaps one morning they would wake up and suddenly be told that the team was disbanding. Everyone go home.

This was the life of those at the bottom of the competitive scene. It was similar to those at the bottom of society. They couldn't talk about their dreams or goals. Just surviving was already difficult.

Jade Dynasty had walked along this arduous path year after year. No one understood the fear and desperation of being at the bottom

better than them. Xiao Jie's sudden appearance had been welcomed with heartfelt gratitude. They at least didn't have to worry about their team surviving for a short period of time.

But they soon realized that their new boss wasn't as pure as they imagined him to be. He eagerly wanted Team Jade Dynasty to return to the Alliance and return to the soil where the pro players truly resided.

Who didn't want that? Team Jade Dynasty had persisted year after year for this very goal, no? But in order to realize this goal, they had to face reality. Team Jade Dynasty had participated in the Challenger League for three years. How far their strength had fallen could easily be imagined.

Indeed, Xiao Jie had brought along a pretty good player. At the same time, he had found their former captain Zhang Jian as a helper. Using the experience accumulated from all these years, along with solid financial backing to massively upgrade their equipment, the entire Team Jade Dynasty had been reborn.

But even so, immediately returning to the Alliance this season was too early, no?

No one wanted to be in the spotlight more than Lin Yi and the other players, but a reborn team with new characters and equipment needed time to get used to. Their new Cleric became their core. With their core changed, the entire team's strategies and tactics also needed to be revised. Apart from that, this season's Challenger League had an unprecedented mountain to climb: Team Excellent Era.

It wouldn't be exaggerated to call Team Jade Dynasty's situation this season as a mess both internally and externally, but their new boss? Their new core player? They viewed this as a challenge and also saw it as an opportunity they could grasp. If they could beat Team Excellent Era and return to the Alliance, Team Jade Dynasty would instantly rise and return with their heads held high. After that, the two had actually started talking about becoming the champions.

Team Jade Dynasty's players couldn't adapt to such a sudden change. They didn't know how they had suddenly gone from worrying about the survival of their team to becoming the champions.

It wasn't like Team Jade Dynasty's players didn't have such ambitions. However, their boss' and new teammate's attitude were too exaggerated.

As the team captain, Lin Yi had specifically looked for Xiao Jie to discuss this issue. The boss completely ignored his worries. He lost himself in his own methods. For example, not using good equipment and waiting until the final battle to catch their opponents off guard. In his opinion, Team Excellent Era losing their heads out of fear at such a scene was too much of a joke.

At that time, Lin Yi was also helpless, just like how he was when facing Lu Shilin now. This new boss and new teammate were too much in sync. It wasn't without reason. Both of them were extremely conceited. A lot of clearly difficult problems were solved by them with a laugh.

Team Jade Dynasty had taken off under these circumstances. Xiao Jie repeatedly reminded them to preserve with their strength, so they could surprise Team Excellent Era in the finals.

The famous author Xiao Jie treated his team like a work of fiction. He thought everything was under his control. If he wanted the team to suppress themselves and then reveal their true strength, then it would happen. If he wanted them to disguise as pigs and then eat the tiger, then it would happen. He treated reality like a work of fiction. Everything would unfold just like how he intended it to, but when what happened in reality completely went against the plot he had thought of, his faithful believer, Lu Shilin, who had lost himself to this imaginary plot, took the lead and collapsed.

Chapter 996: Deliberate Provocation

All of Lin Yi's persuasion couldn't calm Lu Shilin down. However, what else could he do? Even if he made a huge scene onstage, he couldn't alter the results of the match. That would probably only get them thrown out of the stadium by the security.

Lin Yi felt that he could no longer communicate with this guy. He could only take the rest of the players back to their seats. However, when he looked over, Boss Xiao Jie also had an angry look on his face.

"You guys go back to clean this stuff up. Leave me alone!" Xiao Jie pointed towards a group of players offstage. As soon as he said this, he turned and left without looking back.

Lin Yi and the others looked distressed. After staying in Jade Dynasty for this long, they had only thought about going their separate ways in the event that the team was unable to go on. Yet, they had never considered a result like what had happened today. None of them could be considered extremely strong players. Without this kind of team, they might never be able to become pro players again.

Lin Yi sighed. For them, this competition had only decided whether the team lived or died. However, Lu Shilin was actually acting like it was the end of the world. Indeed, this was also a type of mockery!

After Xiao Jie left, he disappeared in the blink of an eye, walking

away without looking back once. Jade Dynasty's players had definitely seen their end as pro players, and their hearts ached. However, at this time no one went up to the boss to beg or give an explanation. After a year of getting to know each other, they knew what type of personality their boss had. His conceitedness made it so that he wouldn't go back on his word even when he knew he was wrong.

Lin Yi stood in place in a daze. He didn't chase after his boss, nor did he immediately leave. Instead, he turned around and walked towards Happy.

Seeing Happy celebrate made Jade Dynasty's players feel envious. When Happy saw Lin Yi head towards them, everyone in Happy restrained their emotions. They should show empathy towards the feelings of the losers!

"That was a good match." Lin Yi extended his hands towards Ye Xiu. Even if that loss spelled the end of his career, Lin Yi didn't lose the professionalism he should have. The respects paid to each other by the team captains before and after the match were too often just for show, but Lin Yi remembering to do this even with this kind of outcome showed his sincerity.

"Thanks." Ye Xiu shook his hand, "Don't give up. Keep working hard."

"I want to." Lin YI forced a smile, "I'm only afraid that there won't be any more opportunities for us."

Everyone in Happy was startled. Chen Guo pointed towards Xiao Jie disappearing into the passageway: "Could it be that... those words weren't just out of anger?"

They had seen Xiao Jie flare up at them. The match had just ended though. In the time it took to raise his hands, he disbanded the team under everyone's eyes. Who would easily accept such words? As a result, they just treated those words as a burst of anger from Xiao Jie. However, from what Lin Yi seemed to imply, those weren't empty words.

"I hope we'll have a chance to meet again in the future. I wish you all good luck." After Lin Yi finished speaking, he turned around and got ready to leave.

"Ah! Wait!" Chen Guo suddenly jumped out and shouted towards Lin Yi.

Lin Yi stopped his footsteps and turned his head.

"Those weren't just words of anger from your boss?" Chen Guo was still pondering over this issue. She couldn't believe someone would handle things so unreasonably.

"I'm afraid not." Lin Yi quietly said.

"Then what do you guys plan to do in the future?" Chen Guo asked.

"I don't know yet. For players at our skill level, we probably won't get any offers from teams!" Lin Yi laughed at himself, "Today's match is probably our final match."

"Uh...." Chen Guo hesitated. She appeared to be thinking over how to word her reply as she turned her head to look at Ye Xiu.

"Our boss is trying to say that if you guys don't have any way out, you guys can come over to Happy for now." Ye Xiu spoke for her.

"Ah?" Lin Yi was shocked.

"But..... I'm afraid you probably won't have the chance to be a team member. There are still a few suitable positions related to Glory work." Ye Xiu said.

Lin Yi listened and understood. They were all people from the same scene. How could he not understand Ye Xiu's implications? These positions were what many retired pro players hoped for. After all, Glory was what they were best at, but the problem was that Jade Dynasty's players weren't at the point where they wanted to retire yet. If the circumstances allowed it, they were more than willing to continue as a pro player and compete on stage. Even though they knew their skill levels were limited, they felt like it was still too early for them to be certain that they had no room for improvement.

If Lu Shilin was here, he would probably immediately jump out and question it: "What do you mean? Are you saying that I'm not good enough to be a pro and that I'm only good enough to do

miscellaneous tasks?" However, Lin Yi knew that the other side had good intentions. Perhaps only a team of old players like Ye Xiu, Wei Chen, and Sun Zheping would truly understand and sympathize with such players, who were at the end of their road.

"Thanks." Lin Yi first expressed his gratitude, "But I think it's best if I discuss this with my brothers first before coming to a decision!"

"No problem." Chen Guo nodded her head, "Leave me your contact info!"

The two exchanged contact info. Lin Yi thanked them once more and then turned around to return to his teammates. As they left, they constantly turned to look towards Happy. Their expressions were filled with surprise. Lin Yi had clearly told them about Happy's intentions.

Lu Shilin was still petrified on stage like a statue. He stared blankly at this scene. Suddenly, he woke up and jumped down like a madman, pointing at the departing Jade Dynasty. Then, he pointed at Happy and shouted: "Good! I get it now! You guys were working in collusion with each other. You guys have already been bribed, which was why you guys intentionally performed poorly in this match! Too despicable. I'm going to complain. Referee! Where's the referee?"

This guy had gone absolutely mad. He actually thought that a normal conversation between the two sides was a shady business deal. Such a grand line of thinking made everyone surprised. Even the experienced Ye Xiu had never seen such an extreme person

before.

"F*ck, what's with this guy? Steamed Bun, it's time for you to shine." Wei Chen responded and immediately cursed.

"Okay." Steamed Bun jumped out bravely, "How should I do it? Kill him?"

"Stop stop stop!!" Ye Xiu hastily stopped him.

"What? You dare to do it, but you don't dare to admit it?" Lu Shilin looked as if he had found a magic treasure that could reverse the situation and furiously retorted.

"Don't stop me! I'm about to cripple this shameless b*stard!" Wei Chen couldn't bear it anymore and was prepared to personally take action.

Lin Yi and the others were about to leave, when they heard Lu Shilin lose his mind. Xiao Jie had already disbanded the team, but in the end, Lu Shilin was still one of their teammates. They saw this guy causing trouble and even thought of himself as correct. He actually accused them of playing a fixed match. They couldn't help but get angry.

Jade Dynasty's players came back, ready to drag Lu Shilin away.

"Let go of me! You shameless b*stards. Don't you have any sense of professionalism?" Lu Shilin did everything he could to break

free as he cursed at his teammates.

The expressions on the players of Jade Dynasty were ashen. If they really had no professionalism, they would have already beaten Lu Shilin to death. Just look at Team Happy's Wei Chen! Wasn't he already preparing to come over and beat him up!

The crowd went into an uproar, but because they were rather far away, they could only see it happening. They couldn't hear what the two sides were saying. It looked like Team Jade Dynasty had gotten into a dispute with Team Happy.

In the end, Ye Xiu was the most experienced. He didn't attack the unreasonable Lu Shilin, nor did he try and reason with him. He blocked Wei Chen, while shouting left and right: "Security! Security, help! There's someone here who refuses to acknowledge that he's lost the match."

As he shouted, someone laughed. When he looked at Lu Shilin, he felt like he wasn't that annoying anymore. He was just a brat who didn't get what he wanted.

The security guards noticed these movements and rushed over. Not even half a minute after Ye Xiu started yelling, they had reached the scene. Ye Xiu and the others hadn't even said anything to them yet, when Lu Shilin looked as if he was clutching onto his last hope as he grabbed the security guard's hand: "I'm going to report them. These guys colluded to play a fixed match."

Everyone slapped their hands to their foreheads. The Alliance

obviously had a disciplinary committee to handle these matters and there were means to make a report, but the security was not responsible for it. These two systems were completely unrelated.

The security guard was experienced at dealing with these issues. After being grabbed onto by Lu Shilin, he didn't force him off. Instead, he warmly encouraged him: "Okay okay okay. Calm down first. Here here here, speak slowly."

"It's like this..." Sure enough, Lu Shilin started talking. Then, Happy and Jade Dynasty watched as this noisy kid was escorted out by the security guard.

"He got his life saved." Wei Chen said with certainty.

Ye Xiu didn't bother with this braggart. Lin Yi's group said farewell to Happy again. This time, Happy was ready to leave too. Chen Guo boldly walked towards Seven Fields and the others, who were staring foolishly at what they had just witnessed, and waved: "Let's go celebrate our victory!!"

Tonight, Team Happy had a reason to relax. It had been a long and arduous journey, but they had finally reached the final step. Next up was Team Happy's goal for this entire year: Team Excellent Era.

Excellent Era had arrogantly left, not waiting to see the results. After they left the stadium, before they could even sit together at the hotel, they already got the news. Team Happy had won and would be their opponents at the finals.

"That fast?" Everyone in Excellent Era was shocked, seeing the time. Even though Jade Dynasty was a weak team in their eyes, wouldn't Happy also count as a weak team on the same level as them? Yet Happy beat them in such an overwhelming manner? On the way back to the hotel, no one in the team talked about the upcoming finals. This was a rare scene.

Chapter 997: Excellent Era's Exclusive Interview

The Challenger League had finally reached its last stages.

Two days after the match against Team Jade Dynasty, the media began to harass Team Happy, all wanting to interview Ye Xiu. The finals of the Challenger League. The showdown between Team Excellent Era's ex-captain and Team Excellent Era for the right to return to the Pro League. For such a spectacular topic, even the Pro League matches could be pushed to the side.

And within this topic, the most exciting aspect was Team Happy's exceptional performance. This built up anticipation for the possibility of a task once thought impossible. Happy's strength wasn't nearly as bad as people had thought. If you took a look at the victories they had scored in the Challenger League all the way until now; almost all of them were one-sided victories. Among these defeated opponents, there was Everlasting, Mysterious Fantasy and Jade Dynasty, these three pro-level teams.

Even though these three were all very weak pro teams, they hadn't been a threat to Team Happy at all. In other words, Happy's strength was far above theirs. Them challenging Excellent Era wasn't arrogant or absurd.

The winds were changing.

At the beginning, everyone thought that Happy was just looking for death, wanting attention, shameless, but now more and more

people began to become interested in Happy, eager and expectant for what they would do next.

This sort of enthusiasm was real and not just people who wanted to see Excellent Era fall and therefore supported Happy, like it was in the beginning.

Back then, their support of Happy was just to embarrass Excellent Era. Truthfully, they didn't believe Happy could threaten Excellent Era. However, now their support was more and more real because they began to acknowledge Happy's strength. This would, without doubt, make them even more anticipatory, because now there was an even bigger chance of seeing Excellent Era get humiliated.

Some reporters went ingame and randomly interviewed random Glory players, asking them about their thoughts on this match. After asking several hundred people, they compiled their results and surprisingly found that the number of players supporting Happy exceeded the number of players supporting Excellent Era, a whole 68% percent...

And when the reporters asked for their reason in supporting Happy, the gist of it was a single sentence: it's fun to watch the drama unfold.

From this point of view, a newly brought up army, a team that came from an Internet cafe, defeating the Glory powerhouse Excellent Era was evidently more unexpected and more interesting than Excellent Era winning.

An upset was very attractive to many people.

However, this was only a hope. Another media outlet also went around interviewing random players and didn't ask for hopes, but estimations. In this round of questioning, Excellent Era was far in the lead. 91% of players estimated that Excellent Era would win the match, even though many of them had said they hoped Happy would win.

On the Monday issue of Esports Home's weekly, these two interesting results were discussed together. At the same time, Esports Home also had what each thought of the upcoming match. This was something other media outlets didn't have. On the weekend, both teams were harassed by many different reporters from different media outlets, but both teams rejected interviews. After that, they went to the reporter they were familiar with to have a chat.

Excellent Era had Cao Guangcheng, while Happy hadChang Xian. The two reporters that had practically been silenced because of Excellent Era being relegated, now had monopoly of all the best resources.

Edports Home had resolutely expressed that the final match of the Challenger League had to be fully and comprehensively reported on, even if that meant giving it a portion of the sections reserved for the Pro League, which was just finishing up and in its most crucial moments. As for the Alliance, they also placed great importance on this Challenger League match that was the most popular one yet. On the weekend, they had been extremely busy.

After talking things over among themselves and contacting the necessary outside parties, they made a last-minute change to the location of this final battle. To better present this match that had captured so much attention, the Alliance decided to move the finals to the Liulisong Sports Arena in the north sector of the city.

The largest difference between this stadium and the last was that it was fully equipped with holographic projectors. The Alliance had decided that the finals of the Challenger League would receive the same treatment as Pro League matches and that meant displaying it through the holographic projection technology to the audience.

This aspect was added mostly for the audience. There wasn't any difference for the two competing teams. The holographic projectors just changed the way the match was shown. For the participants, they were still in the player booths, sitting and competing in front of their computer screens. They couldn't see the holographic projections; that was an omniscient view.

However, the media to the Alliance to the passion of the normal players clearly showed that the amount of attention this Challenger League match was receiving was unprecedented. It wasn't just because there was a powerhouse superstar team like Excellent Era present. To be honest, the reason it could attract so much attention was mostly because of the drama Happy had created.

As the match approached, how did each side see things? This was what the media was looking for and what the players were curious about.

So, on the Monday issue of Esports Home, they found their answer. In the interview with Excellent Era, Happy hadn't been mentioned even once. What Excellent Era was so fixated on discussing was just one name, Ye Qiu.

"Ye Qiu is a good captain." When Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan, spoke of this, his expression was tinged with complicated emotions. He asked the journalist for a cigarette and from what the journalist knows, Boss Tao had already quit for a while now.

That's what the reporter, Cao Guangcheng, had written in the interview with Excellent Era.

"Ye Qiu is a good captain, very impressive. He's brought an honor onto Excellent Era that no one has managed to surpass. This is something that we can't deny. If possible, I really hope that Ye Qiu and Excellent Era could be frozen in that perfect moment in time and continue that way forever. Unfortunately, nothing in this world stays the same. The Alliance develops, Glory moves forwards, we also have to keep moving forward. If we stand still and isolate ourselves, then I feel that we would have trouble keeping our competitiveness. Excellent Era is actually a very good example of this. After getting our three consecutive championships, we couldn't keep surpassing our limits, only hoping to keep our current pace. Yet that led to us watching as the other teams caught up one by one, snatching the championship from our hands."

"So in these years, Excellent Era has always been pursuing change. I hope we can find a way to survive that better suits the

current situation of the Alliance; that's the only way to allow Excellent Era's continued and stable development. This sort of change, naturally, requires a cost. I had mentally prepared myself for this, but to be honest, I hadn't thought Excellent Era would be relegated. Being relegated was an accident, but what I say is that everything has its pros and cons. The year of rest we got after being relegated might just be the relaxed atmosphere we need to turn things back around for ourselves."

"Excellent Era might not be in the Alliance anymore, but if you ask me, I think Excellent Era is always looking forwards, positive, never giving up, no matter where we are, we only have one goal: the championship. We will never give up on working towards the championship. However, the road to this goal is longer than usual this time. We have to start from the Challenger League, and here, we met the greatest player we at Excellent Era have ever had, Ye Qiu. Yet now he's our opponent. To be honest, this is more surprising to me than Excellent Era being relegated."

"Recently I've heard people from other teams say, and of course, our reporter friends ask me, saying everyone is very curious, wondering if Ye Qiu had a spat with Excellent Era. Otherwise, why would he suddenly come back after retiring and go against Excellent Era in the Challenger League?"

"Heh, why Ye Qiu suddenly retired and suddenly came back, I think you should ask Ye Qiu this question! Though I'm close with him, I'm not a part of his mind. Of course, I understand everyone's troubles. Ye Qiu never accepts interviews from the media, so getting an answer from him is practically impossible."

"How he thinks about this exactly, I can't really guess, but I believe that I can tell everyone for certain that Excellent Era and Ye Qiu have no bad blood between them."

"Whenever there's a fluctuation in performance or rumors of transfering in the teams today, it'll always come with guesses like that. But in reality? It's baseless rumors. Excellent Era and Ye Qiu have no bad blood between them, but if you want to say we have some differences in opinion, that's true. Like if I say snails are delicious and you say pork is delicious. Can these differences in opinion be called bad blood?"

"These differences in opinion exist wherever people exist, so I won't go on about it. Now Ye Qiu is our opponent, and to be truthful I'm still not very used to this situation. How did Ye Qiu become our opponent? But this is alright, I respect his decisions. This time, let's battle it out as opponents. Of course, if he okay with it, I wouldn't mind going out for a drink together after the match."

Excellent Era's interview was attended personally by their boss. This was extremely rare. And in the interview, Excellent Era's boss seemed to have completely opened himself up, confidently, eagerly, and directly answering many of the questions everyone had about Excellent Era and Ye Qiu.

The only question he avoided was why Ye Qiu came to the Challenger League to face off against Excellent Era. He kicked that question to Ye Qiu for him to answer.

Those who were kept in the dark naturally would come after Ye

Qiu for questions, but those who knew wanted to flip the table in rage. For example, Chen Guo.

"Shameless!!" Chen Guo slapped the newspaper onto the desk harshly, as if she was hitting Tao Xuan with this slap.

Tao Xuan had answered all the nice things and thrown the one trapped question right to Ye Xiu. That was such a sly move.

Chapter 998: A Storm is Coming

Excellent Era's boss Tao Xuan personally accepted an interview, this was definitely giving them enough face. However, after compiling the draft, Cao Guangcheng had experienced the cunning and intelligence of a boss level figure. In the interview, Tao Xuan fully expressed his and Excellent Era's tolerance and understanding of Ye Qiu's actions, but it was this move that was a needle hidden in silk.

Excellent Era was so understanding and generous to Ye Qiu, but Ye Qiu had led a team against them into the Challenger League, ready to fight to the death with them. With this, their images in the eyes of the public were clear. The only words, apart from traitorous, that could be used to describe Ye Qiu's actions was biting the hand that fed him.

Spectacular!

Cao Guangcheng couldn't help but exclaim to himself as he compiled the draft. So, how would Happy deal with this?

Though Excellent Era and Happy weren't sitting face to face together, one couldn't forget that the reporters interviewing the teams were all from Esports Home.They could easily guide the interview in any way they wanted to, and they could make the two interviews match each other. Cao Guangcheng was responsible for Excellent Era's side. He was only disappointed at not being able to interview Happy himself, getting Chang Xian to go for him.

Yet when Chang Xan came back and compiled his draft for Cao Guangcheng to see, Cao Guangcheng was furious.

In Chang Xian's draft, he saw that the other had written: when the past was brought up, Captain Ye Xiu smiled and then lit a cigarette, before eagerly beginning to chat with the journalist.

As expected, a famous teacher trains a fine student! This saying was extremely similar to the situation where he wrote about Tao Xuan "asking the journalist for a cigarette". However, under the same situation, Tao Xuan had made a needle in the cotton move, while Ye Xiu kicked his legs up and said: no comment.

Cao Guangcheng wanted to slam the desk and scold Chang Xian for this, then he'd be able to finally get everything he was holding in regarding Chang Xian off his chest. However, Cao Guangcheng knew very clearly, this wasn't that Chang Xian didn't put effort in, but that his interviewee wouldn't cooperate, avoiding the topic. If it was so simple to get what you wanted to know, then a journalist career would be far to easy. This draft gave Cao Guangcheng sufficient reason to doubt Chang Xian's ability for a while.

Despite being doubtful, he still had to use the draft. Even though it hadn't captured the point, this was still an exclusive interview. Currently, only Chang Xian could successfully interview Team Happy. The two reporters that were sent specifically to report on the Challenger League had become especially awkward once the tournament had reached the finals. That was because the two finalist teams didn't accept interviews from just anyone, forcing them to join the other reporters and media, lying in wait to ambush the teams' players for just a few questions here and there

like paparazzi.

Compared to the amalgamation of what scraps they could pick up, god knows how much better Chang Xian's draft was. However, Cao Guangcheng was already prepared for the harsh scolding he was bound to get when turning these drafts in to the editor in chief.

As expected, not even an hour after the drafts were given in, the editor-in-chief called Cao Guangcheng's mobile, and unleashed a torrent of curses at him. Although the draft that wasn't up to standard was Chang Xian's, the editor-in-chief's first sentence was, "Little Chang is a newbie so it's natural that he might not be able to do well, but are you a newbie, too?"

Like how Cao Guangcheng ignored how hard it would be for Chang Xian to talk Ye Xiu into giving up information, the editor-in-chief also ignored how Cao Guangcheng didn't have any control whatsoever over the interview Chang Xian did with Happy, and slammed the big black pan onto his head.

However, the end result was the same as Cao Guangcheng scolding Chang Xian. Though he had gotten shit for it, the draft still had to be used. They had hoped that they could get some tension and drama between the two sides, but in the end, one talked about the weather while the other focused on the food.

In the end, Chang Xian's interview of Team Happy deepened everyone's understanding of Team Happy as a team, while Tao Xuan's personal interview once again stirred up a wave of hatred for Ye Qiu among Excellent Era fans.

The continuous implications, resulted many uncertain Excellent Era fans, who thought that there might be more to the story, resolutely standing to the side of their team.

In the next few days, Chen Guo didn't dare look at the discussions going on online regarding this topic. Se was afraid that if she did, she'd die of anger. It was a good thing that the atmosphere in the team was stable, and Ye Xiu was as calm as always. This time, Chen Guo didn't get mad at Ye Xiu for being so calm. The finals were approaching and she was grateful for Ye Xiu's attitude, otherwise if he was easy to anger as she was, he'd have his mind in chaos and wouldn't be able to compete properly.

Yes, compete.

The current Ye Xiu was completely focused on the finals. These days, he was often discussing things with Wei Chen, with Sun Zheping, with all the members of the team.

This wasn't a last minute effort.

They had started preparing to defeat Excellent Era from summer last year, when Excellent Era was relegated.

Glory had an online game as its foundations, and this made it so that it wasn't just the tens of minutes on stage of one's performance that would influence the final result.

A minute on stage hid ten years of work. This saying was more or less appropriate for Glory as well. In this year, after putting everything they had into these behind-the-scenes work, the tens of minutes on stage was about arrive.

When it came down to it, everything depended on these tens of minutes. No matter how well you prepared, how much effort you put, if you didn't perform to your best in these few minutes, everything would be for nothing.

How would Team Happy face this final battle? Chen Guo didn't even know. All she knew was that this was what Ye Xiu had been talking to the others about recently. Some, she heard, some she didn't, but she never went and asked. She hoped that Ye Xiu could focus his time and effort completely on the competition. There was no need for him to explain anything to her.

At this time, Chen Guo seemed like the person in Team Happy with the least to do. Though she was usually passionate and energetic, she didn't seem to have any intentions on joining in any time soon. What she could do now, was make sure to not bother anyone. With this, she felt content and not at all left out or lonely. Seeing everyone so busy, she only felt security and warmth.

At times like these, Chen Guo was reminded of another person, a person who was currently in enemy territory.

Su Mucheng.

What was she feeling now? Was she like the members of Happy,

doing her best in preparation for the match? Though Chen Guo hated Excellent Era now, she wouldn't find any wrong in it. This was the professionalism a pro player should show. They should put their best efforts into any match. Though a lot of uninvolved people tried to place many unneeded expectations and implications onto this match, Chen Guo could clearly see from Ye Xiu, everyday, that Ye Xiu didn't care at all about anything outside of the match itself.

Taking revenge because he had been forced to retire? He wasn't doing that. Having conflicted emotions because he couldn't bring himself to fully cut ties with Excellent Era? He didn't have that either.

Yes, that's how it was. There was no good or bad, it seemed cold and cruel, but he faced Glory, and competition with this honest attitude. This was the oldest God of Glory in her eyes and with just this, Chen Guo felt that her years of being his fan hadn't gone to waste. This was someone worth respecting with all your heart because he could do what no one else could. For example, Chen Guo understood this logic and approved of this attitude, but she just wasn't able to to accomplish it herself.

She was unable to face Excellent Era with a calm heart. Thinking of what Excellent Era had done to Ye Qiu, she would just love to see Happy rip them apart a hundred times, and them tearfully kneeling in regret beside them.

Time went on, day by day, and the match day was getting closer and closer. Chen Guo made sure to take over anything that could disturb the others, while doing a good job on staring into space.

Even if Chang Xian came over during this time, he would only be able to interact with Chen Guo, and when he saw Chen Guo's seriousness, Chang Xian didn't dare to bother the other members of Happy.

Friday. Match day. Esports Home released an issue. Team Happy and Team Excellent Era's face off in the Challenger League finally made the headlines on Esports Home's weekly issue, the topic bigger than any of the pro matches that were due to happen the following day.

On those headlines, the two words "Ye Qiu" were even larger than Happy. This was originally a fight between two teams, but for the media, who liked this sort of drama, focused on Ye Qiu versus Excellent Era. If Happy didn't have Ye Qiu, then no matter how talented they were, the fact that they were in the Challenger League meant that even at a time like this, they probably wouldn't be seen anywhere near the headlines.

In this issue, the reporters at the frontlines hadn't managed to get any firsthand information. Chang Xian didn't want to disturb them and Excellent Era had also closed themselves off to train, so Cao Guangcheng couldn't approach them either. However, in this situation, it gave them room to express their own opinions, describing what they had seen and thought. Thus, that tension of a storm about to come was fanned and fueled to its highest by the two. The two reporters took note on what they had seen and heard, describing the two teams they had interacted with in the past few days and placed that on the section left for the Challenger League. A costly section like the headlines obviously wouldn't have anything with actual, realistic content. It was usually just for the title to attract readers.

Esports Home's Friday weekly issue was sent to the newstands all across the city in the early morning and it was at that time that Happy boarded the Alliance-arranged coach to the stadium.

Although the match was in the evening, they had switched stadiums, so the teams had to warm up and familiarize themselves with the environment. After contacting Happy for their opinion, they sent someone over in the early morning to get Happy to the stadium for warm up. Excellent Era also got the same call for their opinion and were currently also on their way over to the place where the final match was taking place: Liulisong Sports Arena.

And then that's when the two teams met at the entrance to the stadium.

Black pan is a saying for the blame or the responsibility, usually for a fuck up. - Jouissance

Chapter 999: Warm Up

"Hey, Old Ye!"

The one to greet Happy wasn't a random person, but Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan. As he called out, he walked over briskly. His tone of voice and conduct didn't lack cordiality. For a moment, Chen Guo felt dazed. Had she confused him with someone else?

Ye Xiu smiled and waved. It could be considered a greeting.

"You guys came quite early." Tao Xuan smiled.

"You guys did too." Ye Xiu said.

Tao Xuan's gaze shifted towards the members of Team Happy, sizing them up. He was a senior member in the scene. Wei Chen. Sun Zheping. If he tried a bit, he could recognize them. However, as the boss of a powerhouse, he didn't need to waste his time trying to make friends with players past their prime, so he treated them the same as ordinary players. He nodded his head as a greeting to the rest of Happy.

"Who would have thought? Your team is quite interesting. Happy, right? I never noticed that our neighbor was a crouching tiger hidden dragon!" Tao Xuan said and gave a smile towards his team. If their boss was smiling, how could they not do the same? All of the players in Team Excellent Era started smiling.

After Tao Xuan was done talking, he didn't wait for anyone in Happy to give a reply. His eyes turned towards someone in Team Happy.

Tang Rou.

The only person in Team Happy who truly interested Tao Xuan was Tang Rou. However, Excellent Era's Battle Mage position was taken by their ace player, Sun Xiang. Tao Xuan didn't have any intentions on replacing him. It was just that when he saw Tang Rou in Happy, he felt even more regretful than the other teams interested in Tang Rou

"Miss Tang, it's nice to meet you." Tao Xuan ignored everyone else and specifically singled out Tang Rou.

With Tang Rou's background, she was someone who had experienced many things. She could handle any situation. She gave a polite reply towards Tao Xuan's greeting. Then, she heard Tao Xuan say: "Miss Tang, someone as talented as you definitely shouldn't stay buried. After this match, if you're interested, you can contact me at any time. This is my business card."

"Hey, what are you saying?" Chen Guo was listening on the side and flared up. Tao Xuan's words implied that he considered everyone else beneath him. Not only was he trying to recruit her in front of everyone, he was also hinting that Happy losing the finals was set in stone.

"I'm not saying anything." Tao Xuan smiled. His tone of voice was

confident and at ease because Tang Rou had already accepted his business card and nodded her head, saying thanks.

"That's enough chit chat. I'll see you guys tonight." Tao Xuan called out to Excellent Era's players and started walking away. Excellent Era's players followed their boss. Not a single one glanced at Happy. Only Su Mucheng remained behind. She acted as if she didn't know and started talking to Ye Xiu and the others. Tao Xuan obviously knew about it, but when he turned his head and saw this scene, he didn't say anything and left the along with the others in Excellent Era.

"That guy is too infuriating. Why didn't you have any reaction?" Chen Guo looked around. Ye Xiu and Wei Chen were usually experts at making people angry. Why were they so calm?

"I just felt like it! Such a powerful boss personally ran over to talk some trash in front of us. It's not a trivial matter. I felt like I should give him some room to express himself." Wei Chen said in deadly earnest.

"Oh? Who was that?" An Wenyi and Luo Ji asked curiously. Tao Xuan thought he was some top dog, but he forgot that he was too high up. Ordinary people wouldn't recognize him. His trash talk had been prepared quite meticulously, but unfortunately, he didn't think that there were people in Happy who didn't even recognize him. They just saw him give Tang Rou his business card.

"Is he a scout?" If An Wenyi and Luo Ji had to make a guess, they would most likely give this answer.

Chen Guo wasn't able to get angry. She pulled Su Mucheng over and chatted about all sorts of things, but despite this being before a big match, she didn't mention Glory even a single time. Chen Guo was clearly avoiding this sensitive subject. After all, no matter how clear Su Mucheng's position stood, she was their opponent this match. Even if she faced them as a professional, what type of feelings did she have in her heart? As a result, Chen Guo felt like it wasn't good to talk about Glory.

After entering the venue, both teams had people specifically to receive them, and Su Mucheng had to go back to Excellent Era. The two teams were led to their lounges. The appropriate arrangements had already been set up in the venue. The two sides each had two hours to get used to the set up.

"Team Excellent Era said that you guys can enter the stage first to familiarize yourselves with the set up." The employee passed on the message.

"Okay. Thank them for us." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

"Okay. I'll relay it to them." The employee immediately left. The people in Happy wandered around their huge lounge. Even Wei Chen was deeply moved. In his generation, even pro teams didn't have such luxurious conditions. Stadium? What a joke. At that time, who had such nice accomodations? Finding some sort of building that could house a few hundred or a few thousand people was enough for a match. It hadn't even been ten years since then and teams now had their own arenas. Glory's growth could only be described as rapid.

"Not bad! Not bad! Really not bad!" Wei Chen touched and looked around. His spirit was trembling with excitement as he waved: "Come on! Let me see what the set up is like on stage."

Everyone in Happy left the lounge and walked through the player passageway to arrive at the stage.

From the audience's seats, there wasn't much of a difference compared to the previous venue. The accomodations were about the same. However, the decorations were completely different.The player preparation areas were all on the south side. The stage was split on the east and west. The center of the stage was a vast empty area, where the holographic projections could be shown. After nearly a season's baptism, the holographic projection technology was quite mature. Those in the crowd would absolutely have a different experience than those watching at home. It wasn't just as simple as the atmosphere.

After this change, the number of seats filled up in a stadium soared. The Alliance and the various teams had benefited greatly. This method would continue to be improved.

After Happy walked around their preparation area, they went towards the stage. For the players, the empty area in the middle for the holographic projections wasn't important because they wouldn't be able to see it in the middle of a match. The stage was their true battlefield.

Each side had six booths for the maximum number of players

inside a team competition. The computers in front of the seats were all set up uniformly. It was an Alliance standard. Players could bring their own mice and keyboards. It was easy for them to plug those in. However, before the match, they would undergo an inspection to see if they complied with the Alliance's regulations. If a player forgot to bring their own equipment out of carelessness, there was no need to worry. The Alliance wouldn't cancel the player's qualification to compete. The player could borrow a teammate's or the use standard equipment provided by the hosts.

The players could start warming up on stage. The necessary inspections had already been done. The regulations for this year's Challenger League finals was quite strict. It was completely in line with the Pro League.

Everyone in Happy went to their side. They turned on the equipment and tried them out. Even Chen Guo got to experience the feeling of a pro player playing on stage. After checking out their equipment, they left and saw Wei Chen standing alone on stage staring blankly at the rest of the stadium.

Chen Guo didn't go up and bother him. She learned from Wei Chen and looked around. A retired old soldier like him had never thought he would return to such a familiar scene, but such a scene was happening today. What was he feeling right now?

Chen Guo turned his head to look towards Wei Chen. Then, she saw Ye Xiu also standing next to him. The two seemed to be having a good time smoking. The smoke swirled into the air for everyone to see.

Chen Guo was speechless at these two. Can't you leave some room for others to get emotional?

Although Wie Chen had never been on such a large stage, as a veteran of the scene, he had frightening adaptability. He wasn't like the young ones who checked out each seat curiously. Two hours soon passed. Team Excellent Era's players could be seen.

In reality, the warm up for the two teams didn't conflict with each other. The two hour time limit wasn't really a time limit. If a team wanted to spend another hour, it wouldn't violate any rules. It was just that right before the match started, all of the equipment would be inspected one last time. At that time, players were required to leave.

As a result, Excellent Era saying Happy could go on stage first was an unnecessary courtesy. Their arrogance as a powerhouse showed.

Only the players from Excellent Era came to warm up. Tao Xuan didn't follow along. When they saw that Happy was still there, they didn't say anything. After taking a look at their preparation area, they went to their area on stage. Just when Happy was about to leave, someone in Excellent Era suddenly said: "Hey!"

Everyone in Happy stopped. It was Sun Xiang, who refused to give up even after being ridiculed numerous times.

"Ever since the offline tournament started, I won every match 1v5." Sun Xiang held out his hand and waved it: "Tonight will not

be an exception."

"This kid is hopeless." Chen Guo was helpless. Even she remained aloof at Sun Xiang's taunt. Sun Xiang's cried "The wolf is here!" yet the wolf never came. Who knew how many times this joke had happened.

Everyone in Happy ignored him and left the stage.

At 8:00PM, the Challenger League Finals officially started.

Chapter 1000: A 3v1 Arrangement

As expected, the finals didn't disappoint. There was still an hour left before the match officially went underway, yet the Liulisong Sports Arena was already completely packed.

This wasn't Excellent Era's home stadium, but the influence of a powerhouse was not something those at the level of Jade Dynasty or Mysterious Fantasy could compare to. In the finals, Excellent Era's fans gathered together. There were plenty of local fans and City H's most loyal fans, who would always follow the team into battle as Excellent Era's iron fan army; they too graced their presence for this match. Banners in support of Excellent Era could be seen all throughout the stadium. However, those hoping for tonight's victory were in the minority. More of them were pointing towards next year, pointing towards Excellent Era's sweep through the Alliance.

Just like the survey had found before the match, even though many were hoping for Happy to win, more people's predictions favored Excellent Era. As Excellent Era's most loyal fans, how could they doubt the superior team? In comparison, those who hoped for Happy to win just wanted drama. Cheer for them? They were afraid that others would think of them as idiots.

Despite the trend, there just happened to be a bunch of idiots. Among the sea of Excellent Era banners, that bunch held up Happy's logo high and shouted that Happy would topple Excellent Era. They became the joke of the surrounding people, but they didn't care. They were staunch supporters of Happy. The players and the characters from Team Happy had a connection that stemmed from the game.

"Happy! Happy!!" Seven Fields led everyone to shout with all they had. It was a reminder to everyone: don't ignore Happy.

Excellent Era's fans quickly discovered this small group of reckless people and flung all sorts of insults and biting remarks at them. Seven Fields and the others remained unmoved as they continued to express their support for Happy.

At 7:30 PM, the lighting in the stadium gradually began to darken. Everyone immediately became excited because this indicated that the match was one step closer to starting.

Whether it was the broadcast or the holographic projections, all of them required light. Watching a Glory match was similar to watching a movie. As soon as the match started, apart from the stage, everything else would be pitch black. If not for these conditions, it would have been very difficult for Ye Xiu's face to not have been revealed after so many years of playing.

When the lights went completely dark, the host began calling for the players to come onto the stage. First up was Team Excellent Era. The person at the front was Xiao Shiqin, who had transferred to the relegated Excellent Era because he was confident about Excellent Era's future. The spotlight shone on the player passageway. Xiao Shiqin walked out and waved to the crowd. He was no stranger to this scene, but it had been a year since then. When he saw the projection of Life Extinguisher appear next to him as he walked out, even Xiao Shiqin felt fascinated.

The brought to life character made a heroic battle pose. The crowd applauded. Afterwards, the spotlight shifted to Excellent Era's second player. The holographic projection on stage also changed.

This was the new way players came onto the stage. The crowd's spirits were thoroughly ignited. Excellent Era's fans cheered. The last player to come out was Sun Xiang. He and the pose struck by his character One Autumn Leaf made the crowd's cheers reach its highest point.

After Excellent Era was Happy. When the host announced their name, the stadium erupted with boos. When the host introduced Happy's first player, Ye Xiu, the boos reached its highest point. There were even curses and insults thrown in as well. When Ye Xiu's character, Lord Grim, appeared on stage, the crowd roared in laughter.

It was just a model, so the proportions didn't need to be rescaled. The character was larger than a real person. As a result, the character's equipment was even more clear, and the joke that was Lord Grim's mix and match equipment was magnified.

Lord Grim's equipment was all Level 75 Orange equipment, but it included cloth, leather, light, heavy, plate armour. How could the crowd not laugh? Such a dress style was too much of a novelty.

The crowd became even more hectic with their laughter. As Excellent Era's fans laughed at this set of equipment, they continued to curse at the ungrateful traitor. Some fans even tried to rush on stage, but were quickly stopped by security and kicked

out. Towards such a controversial match, the organizers had made plenty of preparations towards possible behavior like that.

After Ye Xiu, the boos towards Happy clearly lessened. At the end, when Luo Ji and An Wenyi came onto the stage, there was practically no noise at all. Seven Field's group continued to cheer, but in this packed stadium, what noise they could make was rather small.

After introducing the players, about half an hour had passed. The two sides sat at their respective benches. At the player preparation area, Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan, personally came to watch over the match. Before the match started, he once again came over to give a polite greeting to Ye Xiu. Under the gazes of so many Excellent Era fans, he had to put in enough effort.

Soon afterwards, it was time for the final preparations before the match. The list of who would be playing in which match had been set. It could not be changed anymore. However, there had been a leak. With the new change in format, the Alliance might change this fixed player roster to teams picking their players at the match continued, but these were all after matters. The usual format would be used in this match. When it was almost 8 PM, the host called for the first players on each side to go on stage and get ready. Happy's first player stood up.

Tang Rou!

The first player sent out by Happy was Tang Rou.

This was Ye Xiu's arrangement. She herself liked it too because the first player sent out by Excellent Era should be Sun Xiang. Tang Rou liked to fight against skilled players. From Ye Xiu's analysis, the combo of Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf wasn't something any one in Happy could beat face to face. Ye Xiu had formulated many plans. In the end, he decided on Tang Rou first, meeting force with force. If the fire inside Tang Rou was ignited and she went beyond her limits to win, then that would be great. If not, with Tang Rou's Battle Mage style, Sun Xiang would also have to go all out. As a result, the second player sent out would be Mo Fan.

Mo Fan's quiet and extremely patient style would make it so that Sun Xiang would have nowhere to vent all the pent up energy he had from the previous match. That pent up energy would turn into annoyance. With that mentality, it would be easy for openings to leak. Mo Fan slowly contending with him was the most suitable. Even if he didn't win, Wei Chen would be up third. His shrewd and dirty style would be enough to deal with the extremely gloomy Sun Xiang.

Tang Rou, Mo Fan, Wei Chen.

These three were the first three players in the group arena lineup. This arrangement was to deal with Sun Xiang alone. Even though Sun Xiang had yet to beat them in a verbal battle, that wouldn't make Ye Xiu underestimate his skill in Glory so much so that he even arranged a 3v1 specifically to target him.

Tang Rou headed towards Happy's booths on the right side. At the same time, the matchup for the first round in the group arena

was announced.

Team Happy - Tang Rou - Battle Mage - Soft Mist.

Team Excellent Era - Xiao Shiqin - Mechanic - Life Extinguisher.

Xiao Shiqin!?

Hearing this name come out, Tang Rou stopped in astonishment. She turned her head to look.

She hadn't walked far yet. She could clearly see from Excellent Era's bench, the person who was about to go up was that one wearing glasses, the player who looked like an intellectual.

It's not Sun Xiang? Tang Rou wasn't the only one surprised in Team Happy. Everyone looked towards Excellent Era's bench. Their expressions of surprise made Sun Xiang delighted. Sun Xiang was clapping and laughing out loud. He was pointing at Happy as if they were monkeys at a zoo.

"You thought the first player to be sent out would be me? You've been fooled! Hahahaha!" Sun Xiang wasn't going to let this opportunity pass and immediately called them out.

Xiao Shiqin turned his head to look at Happy and smiled. Then, he turned his head back and headed towards Excellent Era's booths on stage.

Happy didn't underestimate Sun Xiang, but from the looks of it, Excellent Era didn't underestimate Happy either. Was Sun Xiang provoking them with a 1v5 intentional? Or did the team make adjustments because of his brainlessness. Trying to figure that out was pointless at this time. Sun Xiang not going first made Happy's battle arrangements pointless. What's worse, Excellent Era very likely read Happy's likely plan and made their own counterplan.

Xiao Shiqin versus Tang Rou?

Just from the this matchup, Ye Xiu could smell hints of a counterplan. Having a highly intelligent tactician deal with a battle fanatic like Tang Rou was most definitely the correct choice, but then again, an intelligent player like Xiao Shiqin wouldn't be on the losing side towards any type of playstyle. Him leading might just be a safe arrangement.

The unexpected arrangement disrupted Ye Xiu's plans. He had to analyze the situation. Even though the lineup had been set, he could give different instructions to the players depending on the circumstances.

Ye Xiu looked towards Tang Rou. He saw that when she found out that she would be facing Xiao Shiqin, she let out a rather regretful expression.

Ye Xiu understood Tang Rou's expression too well. It was just that she was giving out this expression towards a player like Xiao Shiqin. If the other side knew, who knew what they would think.

Xiao Shiqin was an All Star player too. Even if his title as a Master Tactician stood out more, even Sun Xiang wouldn't be certain he could beat him in a 1v1. For a player of this caliber, let alone Xiao Shiqin, even if Zhang Xinjie came over with his Cleric, it would be hard to say what the result would be!

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