



全职高手

THE KING'S AVATAR

– Quan Zhi Gao Shou –

- VOLUME 14 -

-AUTHOR-
Butterfly Blue

[Nomyummi (Qidian International)]





原创文学门户
起点中文网
www.qidian.com
荣耀 (全职高手)
蝴蝶蓝

Chapter 1301

Mistakes and Plays Going Beyond One's Skill

Du Ming had been a bit too excited when he went onto the stage. The instant he went forward to make the first attack, he had still been wondering whether he should chat some more. But with Tang Rou's current skill level, how could it be so easy to deal with her? Tang Rou immediately saw a huge opening. A Circle Swing came out, and Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost kneeled.

Again!

Du Ming's mind raced like galloping grass mud horses*. He had wanted to put on an eye-catching performance, but as soon as the fight began, his show was smashed apart. He had let such a huge opening appear and be taken advantage of. How could he show any face?

Du Ming panicked and blurted out "I was careless".

But this was a competition! Wasn't giving this sort of explanation to the opponent even more shameful than being beaten down? Luckily, besides Samsara's players, no one else thought that. The viewers thought Du Ming was saying these words to his teammates, explaining to them the reason for his mistake.

Tang Rou saw Du Ming's shout, but why would she care? While Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost hastily got back up, Soft Mist's spear whistled towards him, once again putting Du Ming into a panic.

To put it simply, Du Ming looked excited, but his excitement wasn't excitement for the match. It was excitement for meeting Tang Rou again in a match. As a result, he wasn't actually in a competitor's mentality. His performance wasn't as stable as when he had fought against Mo Fan previously. He kneeled as soon as the fight started, and then Tang Rou's crazy offensive instantly took out 20% of his health.

Too shameful!

Two years ago, he could have said that he had been caught off guard facing a normal

player and had been too careless, but this time? If he lost again, wouldn't that indicate how incompetent he was?

I CAN'T LOSE!!

Du Ming shouted in his heart. After Soft Mist's combo ended, he immediately launched a counterattack.

"Isn't Du Ming being too impatient?" Even Pan Lin instantly saw the issue. Tang Rou's combo had ended, but the situation hadn't reset back to zero. She still held the initiative. The combo had finished, but her offense hadn't ended yet. Her attacks were linked very closely together, yet Du Ming unexpectedly wanted to counterattack despite these circumstances. It just wasn't a good decision. Sure enough, Du Ming only just started his counterattack before Tang Rou's follow-up attacks smashed it apart, and another combo started.

"This Du Ming... At the All-Stars Weekend two years ago, he hadn't just lost to a normal player, but Tang Rou, who had only just started playing the game. He lost a lot of face there! It looks like he wants to redeem himself. Holding these thoughts, it's no surprise he's in a rush. I hope he can quickly calm himself down." Li Yibo was quite confident with his analysis this time because there was no other explanation he could think of. If he knew that Du Ming's train wreck of a performance stemmed from his crush on Tang Rou, his mind would also be racing like galloping grass mud horses.

Soft Mist started another combo. The damage from this combo was even higher than the last. Moon-Luring Frost lost 23% of his health. He only had 48% health remaining now, not even half. As for Tang Rou's Soft Mist? Because she had traded blows at the start, she only lost 4% of her health from this exchange, which was already lower than usual. All of this was because of Du Ming's unusually poor playing.

"Damn, this is the pace to a blowout!" Samsara's players had been joking around in the beginning, but now, their tone was more serious.

They knew about Du Ming's thoughts, so they could understand why he hadn't been able to contain his excitement at the start of the match, but he still hadn't adjusted his mindset. This wasn't right. As a pro player, personal feelings should not be affecting your playing to such an extent. If he really lost in such a manner, the team would need to give him a harsh reprimandment.

Samsara's players stopped their banter. Their eyes were focused on the match.

After two combos, his character was not even at half health, while his opponent had only lost 4%.

What am I doing?

Du Ming asked himself honestly.

I might have been waiting this match for a long time, but haven't I been too negligent? This was a competition.

When competing, I should be going in with a steady mindset. Getting too excited or getting too indifferent is no good, and Team Samsara is the best in the Alliance at this point. Despite having won two championships already, we've always kept our calm, never arrogant in victory and never hateful in defeat.

I haven't won or lost, yet I've become a complete mess just because I'm meeting a girl I like?

Yes, a complete mess!

No one was more clear than him just how terrible he had been playing. He could lose, but not like this!

Come!

Tang Rou didn't try to understand Du Ming's mindset and started off with two combos. Her combos were smooth and successful. She obviously didn't plan on stopping here. Her third wave of attacks instantly arrived.

Triple Slash!

Du Ming's Moon-Luring Frost suddenly dashed out at an unexpected moment.

"Du Ming is really being too impatient!" Pan Lin shouted.

Li Yibo was just about to add to these words, but the match progressed extremely fast. Moon-Luring Frost looked like he was just about to crash into Soft Mist's attack, but instead just barely dodged it.

It had been an extremely narrow dodge.

Was it a coincidence? Or had Du Ming suddenly become precise?

Du Ming quickly told everyone the answer. The instant he brushed past the attack, the second slash came out. When he dodged the attack, his sword struck Soft Mist, and his Moon-Luring Frost moved horizontally, using the second slash to circle around Soft Mist. The third slash followed closely afterwards, and the instant it hit, Moon-Luring Frost was behind Soft Mist.

Everyone was dumbstruck, including the players on both teams. Du Ming's sudden burst had been completely outside everyone's expectations. His play had been extremely fast and precise.

Fast wasn't difficult for an overly excited Du Ming, and it was precisely because of that extraordinary speed that Samsara's players felt like he had exceeded his skill level.

But with speed, Du Ming lost precision. Because although he was excited, his mindset wasn't in the right place. His attention wasn't on the match. Without any focus, how could he be precise? As a result, Du Ming might have been fast, but he was also imprecise. It was how Soft Mist was able to instantly break through his attacks and complete two devastating combos.

However, Du Ming had finally become focused again. This Triple Slash had been beyond his skill level, and for a moment, Tang Rou wasn't able to keep up with the sudden change in pace. Two of the three slashes had struck Soft Mist, and Moon-Luring Frost had also circled behind her. Du Ming's counterattack was truly resounding this time. A flurry of sword slashes along with increased damage from back attacks splattered blood across the air. Du Ming had the nickname "Berserk Blade Master" for a reason. The word "Berserk" showed precisely what his playstyle was like. And right now, he was going wild, an extremely precise wildness. A full combo landed on Soft Mist's back.

31%.

This was the total damage dealt by Du Ming's combo. It was far higher than anything Tang Rou had done. One reason was because Du Ming's combo had been from the back. Another reason was because Soft Mist's equipment was still a little bit lacking compared to Moon-Luring Frost's.

Soft Mist's health instantly plummeted to 65%. As for Moon-Luring Frost? After completing his combo, he hadn't received any damage. All of Tang Rou's attempts at resisting had been blocked by him. Moon-Luring Frost's health was still at 48%.

65% to 48%. The gap didn't seem that large anymore.

This time, Du Ming did not show mercy to those had wronged him. He wasn't finished with just one combo and followed up with more attacks.

Berserk Blade Master.

Du Ming's style was actually very similar to Tang Rou's. He was good at fighting for the initiative, forcing fights, and violent attacks.

However, Tang Rou wasn't caught unprepared like last time. Her spear, Dancing Fire Flowing Flames, and Du Ming's lightsaber, Lingering Ice, clashed. Just from the name, it sounded like a battle of ice and fire. The glow given by the two weapons intertwined as if trying to devour the other.

"The battle has only just begun!" This clash pulled the battle back to a point where neither side had the advantage. Du Ming had the time, so he immediately typed out a message. Apart from fighting each other in this match, he also hoped that they could have a bit of chat together.

Of course, telling the other side "this is my true power" through these words was also a bit of selfishness on his part.

"There's no saving him..." When they saw Du Ming back to his usual self, Samsara's players returned to their relaxed state. And seeing how that guy even felt the need to say a few words, they collectively put their hands to their foreheads.

"Shouldn't he win the fight before spouting nonsense?" Samsara's players started discussing amongst themselves.

"But if he wins, who will listen to his nonsense?"

"It looks like he's got the guts to chase after her to Happy's side and worm his way into a relationship."

"He sounds so pitiful. But if it's like this, can we feel relaxed putting him in the team

competition?"

"There's nothing we can do. The lineup is already locked in."

"All five players are needed to win this match! What if his mind is too preoccupied with other things?"

"He looks fine right now!"

"He looks fine right now, but what about afterwards? He'll feel like he performed well in front of his goddess, and then he'll go crazy thinking he's in heaven, what then?"

"That really might be a problem!"

"Yes, we can't be careless. We'll have to shoulder his burden in the team competition!"

"Hey hey....." At this moment, Wu Qi interrupted their discussion, "He isn't even playing in the team competition. I'm the sixth player!"

Chapter 1302

The Belief for Victory

Du Ming had recovered his usual form. His performance was slightly better than usual, aided by the fact that he was somewhat excited today. But what about Tang Rou? She worked as hard as always. She never let her guard down, regardless of the situation or the opponent.

The publicized bet for a 1v3 had already passed, but in Tang Rou's mind, she still hadn't achieved her goal of a 1v3!

Even though she was the anchor in the group arena, and there weren't three opponents for her to beat up, Tang Rou always played with the mindset to do so.

Du Ming switched suddenly from making extraordinary blunders to making extraordinary plays. This large variation did catch Tang Rou off-guard, but her mental state wasn't affected.

Strive for victory.

Tang Rou would always have this mentality. Regardless of whether her opponent was weak or strong, regardless of whether her opponent was blundering or playing beautifully.

Du Ming used the chat, thinking that Tang Rou would now acknowledge his skill. Unfortunately for him, Tang Rou didn't consider anything along those lines.

Bring him down! That was the only thing she was thinking. If Du Ming knew that his goddess's attitude towards him was so single-minded, who knew how long he'd be depressed for.

Thankfully he didn't know, so he felt some satisfaction that his goddess could witness him playing better than his normal skill. However, when he said "The battle has only just begun!", Tang Rou definitely hadn't just begun. While Du Ming considered this a reset and an opportunity to regain the upper hand, Tang Rou maintained her rhythm and clung onto any opportunities to launch attacks.

Du Ming thought that typing some words in this situation would be no big deal. He still underestimated Tang Rou's drive for victory, and also her tunnel vision for it.

She had zero intentions of chatting with Du Ming. The words that Du Ming thought were no big deal actually caused him to momentarily lose initiative.

Tang Rou was once again given the role of the aggressor. Magic emanated from and swirled around Soft Mist, while she wildly charged towards the gates of victory.

Du Ming didn't expect to be suppressed so soon. Even though his mental state was quite steady right now and he defended well, Tang Rou's offensive also felt more concentrated than before...

This tireless attitude was really indistinguishable from that time.....

Du Ming's mind started wandering again, rewinding to the Allstars Weekend from two years ago, when his team Samsara was hosting. A beautiful newbie was fortunate enough to get the chance to challenge him. Berserk Blade Master Du Ming didn't want to be cruel and pick on this pretty girl. Turns out the pretty girl was cruel and picked on him, promptly destroying him when they fought.

Du Ming had been anxious. Disregarding the rules, he quickly issued another challenge which he won. The girl then accepted and won again! Du Ming felt ashamed and restless at the time, and with no regard for anything else, kept fight fight fighting... Then he somehow summoned God Ye Xiu, who tore him a new one.

Du Ming was very bitter at the time. He was very bitter that the newbie made him lose face big time. But now... thinking back, why did he feel a sense of sweet nostalgia?

What would have happened at the time if it wasn't for the meddling Ye Xiu? What would have happened if they kept fighting? Du Ming even started fantasizing about how the story could have continued...

Boom!

Magic gathered in front of Moon-Luring Frost's chest and exploded loudly. His guard had been broken through!

Crap!

Du Ming realised that his concentration had slipped yet again. Facing this matter, it really was hard to control his own emotions! Du Ming hastily controlled Moon-Luring Frost to try to salvage the situation, but he was too late. Tang Rou would never let an opportunity slip, and Du Ming was met with an intense wave of attacks. This formed a complete offensive when combined with the previous wave of attacks. Moon-Luring Frost was thrown around by the magical explosions, and his health dropped in chunks...

"Next time, I definitely won't lose!!!" Du Ming called out.

"Still yelling... He couldn't be more embarrassing if he tried!" Samsara's players did not know whether to laugh or cry. Du Ming's performance really was unacceptable. It was fortunate that Samsara still had a big advantage. What if this was the deciding match? What if this match was the championship finals? This kind of unstable performance would render his entire team's effort for naught.

Du Ming returned from the stage. Samsara's players put away their laughing and joking faces they had during the match and switched to looking at him with austere expressions.

Du Ming lowered his head. Of course he knew where his problem laid. He did take control of the situation at some points, but somehow it slipped from his grasp in the final moments of the battle.

"I..." Du Ming wanted to give a reason for his failure, but it was embarrassing to open up about subjects such as crushes.

"You played rigidly, and your concentration was off," said Jiang Botao.

"Yeah." Du Ming nodded. He couldn't argue against that.

"Our captain is very angry. He said you didn't put enough importance on the competition; when the whole team was working hard for victory, you were too engaged with your own thoughts. If this were the championship match and we lost the points because you were distracted and we ended up losing the championship, what would you do?" Wu Qi said.

Du Ming raised his head in surprise. "The captain said that much?"

"Yeah, the captain's rage induced many words," Wu Qi said.

Du Ming rolled his eyes. Wu Qi was definitely just trolling. However, the words may have been nonsense, but idea behind it was not. What if Samsara really lost their chance at three consecutive championships because of him? When Du Ming thought about this, he suddenly felt a wave of fear. This really should not have happened... Du Ming raised his head and watched the replay from his match. 70% of his play in this match was trash.

"As someone with experience, I know this is quite difficult for you. But you need to learn to control it. No matter what happens, it should not affect your performance on stage," Samsara's Cleric player Fang Minghua said. In esports, the average age of the players was very young. There was a big pile of players who were still in their teens, and very few were married. But Samsara's Fang Minghua was one of the few who was.

"I will..." Du Ming nodded his head.

On stage, the final battle of the group arena was about to start. Samsara's captain Zhou Zekai had already entered the stage, and the countdown for the start of the battle quickly began.

"That win came pretty easily..." On Happy's side, Fang Rui expressed his opinion as his team were discussing the match that just concluded.

"Yeah. That kid from Samsara is very inconsistent," Ye Xiu said.

"Wasn't Du Ming the one who lost to little Tang twice in the All Stars Weekend two years ago? I bet he lost his calm today after seeing her! Hahaha!" Chen Guo laughed.

"Probably!" Ye Xiu nodded. Du Ming's crush was completely known to the people at Happy, whom he had never interacted with.

"This match..." Chen Guo looked at the stage and the loading bars for the two characters, and didn't know what to say.

Even though Tang Rou had just won, there was a period where Du Ming performed above expectations. After that, there was also a steady period where he defended well. Du Ming still managed to grind down some of Soft Mist's health, which now sat at exactly 50%. Now, she was to face the number one in Glory, Zhou Zekai.

"Can she win?" Chen Guo felt her heart leap. If she really won, surely Tang Rou would become a hero? Even Happy fans who didn't like her would relish in the fact that she

defeated Zhou Zekai with 50% health, since this was glory that belonged to all of Team Happy. If it was like this, then everyone would slowly change their opinion of Tang Rou. It would only be a matter of time before they started liking her again.

A sense of belief brewed within Chen Guo's mind. She also felt the change of atmosphere from the viewers. Their disinterest when Tang Rou entered the stage melted away. Expending 50% health to deal with Du Ming was nowhere near enough to establish confidence in anyone, but it did give them a sliver of belief. The player currently on stage was not like the viewers. She would not lose her fighting spirit just because she had to face Zhou Zekai.

She was pushing her limits. She worked hard to bring one down, and there was no doubt in anyone's mind that she would continue to work hard; maybe she would work even harder to bring down the next one. Zhou Zekai, the number one in Glory, would make many players lose part of their will to fight before the fight even started. To them, losing against him was almost an expectation.

No one could see this attitude at all on Tang Rou. She was just a rookie. If she lost here, not even her haters would be able to make a big deal out of it. But Tang Rou herself carried the air of someone who wouldn't forgive herself for losing. Once again, she charged forward, poised for victory, with no regard for anything else.

The first to attack was Cloud Piercer.

A fight between a ranged class and a melee class would always start off advantageous for the ranged class. The dance between the two opponents consisted of the melee class attempting to close the distance and the ranged class attempting to maintain it. At the start, it might seem one sided the ranged class uses the melee class for target practice, but as soon as the melee class got close, they could potentially reverse the ranged class's advantage in one fell swoop.

Charge, charge forward! Soft Mist darted around through the hailstorm of bullets. A Sharpshooter was a subclass that has perfected the art of shooting. It didn't have the same fancy array of armaments compared to its three cousin subclasses. It only focused on guns and bullets. Its skills revolved around various methods for shooting.

Quick shots, spread shots, dual wielding, chains. The Sharpshooter had the most shooting styles and stances. The hailstorm of bullets they unleashed was a true bulletstorm. There was little smoke and explosion, just bullet after bullet whizzing

past.

Can she make the charge?!

Soft Mist advanced in what was probably the strongest bulletstorm of the Alliance. Every step forward seemed that much more difficult.

Cloud Piercer's health was still full while Soft Mist's continued declining. However, she seemed like the one with an advantage right now, because the distance between the characters that determined life and death was shrinking slowly but surely. Her health was not being wasted.

Charge! Destroy him!

Gradually, this voice appeared within everyone's heads. At this moment, they forgot who the opponent was. They forgot their mindset that losing to this opponent was only normal.

"Charge!" a shout suddenly erupted in the stadium. Soft Mist finally covered the whole distance. With 17% health remaining, she managed to charge directly up to Cloud Piercer's face.

"Destroy him!" Happy's fans had long forgotten about their previous cold shoulder of Tang Rou, and hollered madly.

Although Soft Mist's remaining health was low, sometimes a melee class could decide the outcome of the battle in one direct confrontation with a ranged class. The two sides would had vastly different fighting styles and had huge differences in strength at different attacking distances.

But...

Bang bang bang bang...

Cloud Piercer continued shooting. Even though Soft Mist was next to him, he used the Sharpshooter's Taijutsu skills. Cloud Piercer began directly trading with Soft Mist.

Gun Fu...

This wasn't a skill described by the game. Rather, it was a high-end technique invented

by the players themselves by mixing and matching skills. Most in the online game could only use Taijutsu. Gun Fu was a technique that only pro level players could achieve. Because of its immense difficulty, it was still difficult to gain an advantage using Gun Fu against a pure melee class. It mostly just prevented Sharpshooters from being helpless once locked in close combat, unlike other long ranged classes.

Right now, Zhou Zekai showed off his Gun Fu. Legs, knees, elbows, as well as bullets... they entered into a brawl with the spear that was in Soft Mist's hand.

It could be seen that even Zhou Zekai using Gun Fu could not suppress Tang Rou. His skill only carried him that far. Gun Fu was indeed very sophisticated, being very swift and accurate. However, it still lacked a melee class's ferocity. Its sophistication could not suppress this wave of ferocity.

He might have been able to deal significant damage, but the ability to control and limit the opponent was too weak. This was the drawback of Gun Fu.

However, the difference between the health of the two characters was far too large.

When Soft Mist got into attack range, her health was 17% compared to Cloud Piercer's 100%.

Zhou Zekai's Gun Fu was indeed more skillful; the Great Gunner Cloud Piercer's equipment was also much stronger than Soft Mist's.

Therefore, even though Zhou Zekai's Gun Fu could not suppress Tang Rou's Soft Mist, he could just rely on trading health. Everyone know that the victory this round still belonged to Zhou Zekai.

In the end, this was the reality.

After getting close, Zhou Zekai chose to fight head-on against Tang Rou with Gun Fu. Tang Rou could only reply by fighting head on. She already got that far, there was no second option.

Finally, Soft Mist fell. That tiny sliver of belief did not bear fruit.

However, that was only this one time. What about next time? What would happen next time?

Cloud Piercer still had 75% health remaining.

During the explosive melee, Soft Mist's 17% health managed to trade away 25% of Cloud Piercer's.

What if Soft Mist entered the battle with full health? Starting at 100% and paying a 33% gap-closing tax, how much damage would she be able to do with the remaining 67% health?

98.5%! So close to 100%! If Soft Mist started on full health this fight, she would only be 1.5% health from victory. Maybe she really could have done it?

Of course, if it was a fair fight where both started on full health, Zhou Zekai probably wouldn't use Gun Fu to force out the ending, rather he'd seek a chance to keep the distance. Regardless, this theoretical calculation still let people see hope.

With hope, there would be belief.

For Tang Rou, there was a belief that she could defeat Zhou Zekai!

Happy lost the group arena. However, when Tang Rou left the stage, she heard applause for the first time in a long time. Applause directed towards her.

Tang Rou smiled.

She could bear the coldest reception and continue walking forward with her head held high.

However, support and encouragement would always allow one to feel happiness.

"How amazing!" Du Ming exclaimed, upon seeing the atmosphere change throughout the stadium. Then he met the eternal stares of all his teammates.

"Using Gun Fu to crush a Battle Mage, how amazing! Captain, I'm your biggest fanboy!!" Du Ming hollered at Zhou Zekai as he left the stage.

Chapter 1303

Happy's Cleric

The group arena eventually ended in Samsara's favor. With the individual rounds resulting in a 3 to 2, a 10-0 was now entirely impossible. This meant that neither Happy nor Samsara fans had a good slogan to chant. They had always found 10-0 to be the smoothest of slogans.

Having caught up after winning the group arena, Samsara's morale had been boosted greatly. Their fans were also much more lively. As for Happy? They were a little disappointed that they hadn't managed to claim victory in the group arena, but Tang Rou's performance had far exceeded their expectations. They didn't seem to be worried about losing two points, but Happy's players were feeling far more conflicted. They could feel the pressure from Samsara.

There was a rather long break between the individual rounds and the team competition. The players of the two teams were gathered in their own groups, discussing strategies for the team competition. Technically, teams were allowed to return to their prep rooms during this time, but most teams found it troublesome, so they usually wouldn't run back to their prep rooms.

"For the individual rounds, both sides have losses and wins. How this match will go is truly hard to predict. What do you think, Advisor Li?" During the break, apart from ads, the live broadcast could only have the commentators kill time.

"Indeed, it's hard to predict," Li Yibo solemnly agreed with this judgement, "On paper, Samsara's lineup is stronger, but Happy has the home advantage."

"Then what do you think will be the deciding factor?" Pan Lin asked.

Li Yibo felt pained. This was exactly the kind of precise prediction he wanted to avoid, but he knew that if he avoided all questions like this, he would be worthless as a special guest. Thus, most times, even if he was hesitant, he had to harden his heart and give them something.

"Hm, I think... it will depend on the healers. Happy's healer is their weakness. This

isn't a secret anymore. In the past, many teams have tried to capitalize on this weakness, but the only team to have succeeded so far is 301. We can see that even though Happy's healer isn't the best, without him, Happy's team still cannot operate at its peak and they will still lose. In this round, I think Samsara's focus point will still be Happy's healer."

"Will they have their Assassin use Life-Risking Strike?" Pan Lin wondered.

"Possibly..." Li Yibo contemplated, "One hit KO, a powerful offensive, or like Thunderclap, using strategy to pressure them. I think all these are equally possible. It depends on Samsara's choice."

"Haha, comparatively, I'm actually more interested in how Happy is going to use their Cleric in this match against Samsara. Many of the strategies they plan around this weakness of theirs are very interesting," Pan Lin commented.

"Heh," Li Yibo chuckled, "A significant weakness in their formation, but Happy has never gone to find a way to patch it up. With their current record, they could easily find a better Cleric player during the winter transfer window. However, Happy doesn't seem to have any intentions to do so. Sometimes I feel like Happy's Cleric might seem like a flaw to us, but in Happy's designs, he's a trap, one to counter their opponent's strategies."

"Ah!" Pan Lin was stunned by Li Yibo's analysis, "Your view on this is truly brilliant!"

"With this weakness, Happy can more or less predict what the opponent is going to target. Then, with a cunning and experienced veteran tactician like Ye Xiu, they might've long since calculated for what strategies their opponents will use," Li Yibo said.

"That's brilliant! Absolutely brilliant!" Pan Lin exclaimed even as he felt a little strange at this behavior. It had been a while since this Li Yibo had made such bold predictions about another team's tactics.

"So how are they planning on dealing with Samsara this round? Like you, I too am very curious." Finishing his speech, Li Yibo gave a sigh of relief. He was rather direct. Either he didn't speak at all, or he analyzed everything comprehensively if he did. Pan Lin had already agreed with his views and began to delve deeper into discussing it.

The two killed time like it was a talk show and continued to discuss until the team

competition was due to start.

Happy: Ye Xiu, Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, sixth player Tang Rou.

Samsara: Zhou Zekai, Jiang Botao, Sun Xiang, Lu Boyuan, Fang Minghua, sixth player Wu Qi.

With the formations revealed, the two began their commentary on the lineups.

"Advisor Li, I've realized that these two teams share a point of similarity today," Pan Lin noted.

"Oh?"

"These two teams haven't made any arrangements in accordance to their opponent. They've both chosen to use their most frequent lineups in this match," Pan Lin explained.

"Indeed. The two teams are facing this match with a normal attitude. They didn't place importance on this match like the outside world did and are treating it like any of the other 37 matches," Li Yibo determined.

"Yes, but this match is still amazing nonetheless."

"The players have performed unexpectedly well, thus leading the high performance of the match," Li Yibo said.

After a few exchanged sentences, the players had finished their greetings and entered their booths. The team competition was ready to start. The projection started to show the characters of each team, first the away team, and then the home team. Each side had one onstage, switching positions and the screen began showing the data for each character.

When Samsara's One autumn Leaf and Happy's Dancing Rain appeared simultaneously, the atmosphere suddenly changed. Many of the Glory fans at Xiaoshan Stadium were past-Excellent Era supporters. One Autumn Leaf and Dancing Rain were two characters with six years of history together and harboring far too many of their hopes and dreams. Today, they were once again side by side, but not as Best Partners anymore, but as opponents. This feeling was heart rending for the Excellent Era fans, who had gotten so used their partnership. In that moment, the applause in the

stadium was a little dry.

It was just good that the character introductions wouldn't last too long. After these two, two new characters appeared, then, eventually, it got to the healers of the two teams.

Samsara, Laughing Song; Happy, Little Cold Hands.

"Huh?" Someone immediately realized something was wrong when Little Cold Hands appeared.

"That's Little Cold Hands?" Someone called out in surprise. The equipment and style was completely different from the Little Cold Hands that they had seen for half a season.

The commentator Pan Lin and guest Li Yibo also noticed this situation.

"Little Cold Hands' equipment seems to have changed," Pan Lin noted.

Li Yibo nodded, already looking to the data displayed on the screen. The moment he saw it, he sucked in a breath.

"1810 Intelligence?" Li Yibo blinked. Yes, he wasn't hallucinating. Among Little Cold Hands' four stats, the intelligence was 1810.

"1810?" Hearing this data, Pan Lin was struck dumb. To do his job, he naturally had to have a good knowledge of Glory. He naturally wouldn't be expected or able to remember what the stats of all the pro accounts were, but some rather outstanding stats he knew like the back of his hand.

"No way! Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock only has 1570 Intelligence!" Pan Lin looked at Li Yibo in disbelief and hurriedly went to check Little Cold Hands' data himself. That's right, the Intelligence really was 1810.

By then, Li Yibo's attention had shifted.

"A full set of Silver equipment!" Li Yibo sucked in another breath, a pained feeling rising in his heart. Fuck, in the end he still got face slapped by Happy! He had only just said that they weren't at all focused on strengthening their Cleric, purposefully creating openings to use as bait, yet in the blink of an eye, they might've not switched

players, but they had strengthened their Cleric to its limits. This intelligence was 240 points above the Alliance's Number One Cleric; wasn't that a little overdoing it?!

Li Yibo's mind drifted a little, but Pan Lin continued looking and noticed something else.

"These four stats... don't they look a little off, Advisor Li?" Pan Lin called.

Li Yibo returned to the present and hurriedly took a look.

"Er... This..." Li Yibo's foundations were very solid, so he understood, looking at Little Cold Hands' final four stats.

"They're pushing intelligence to the limit, no wonder it's so high," Li Yibo commented.

"Nowadays... are there still people who would do this?" Pan Lin said, confused.

"No." Li Yibo shook his head with certainty. In order to maximize a player's combat potential, balance was necessary. It was more common to see this push for intelligence in the online game. These Clerics had immense healing ability which would reduce the difficulty of the dungeon run. However, the pro scene was pure PvP. It was good to have powerful healing, but one must consider the other abilities of the healer. The stat increases the system gave upon levelling up were the same for everyone, so no one would get more or less than anyone else. Thus, the eventual four stats of the character would be adjusted by the equipment. The stats on equipment were limited though, so you had to lose some to gain some. Intelligence was the primary focus, but that didn't mean you should sacrifice everything for it.

However, that's exactly what Little Cold Hands had done.

Then, looking closely, the crit...

"This... this is entirely a PvE Cleric!" Li Yibo couldn't help but yell.

"His ice and dark resistance is pretty high," Pan Lin said,

"High counter control, but the other spirit based stats are only so-so. They didn't seem to have pushed for them," Li Yibo noted. The Cleric class' growth was mainly in the spirit stat, then the intelligence stat.

"Intelligence, crit, they're pushing these two to the limit... In terms of purely healing power, this is probably Glory's Number One Cleric," Li Yibo decided.

"No..." Just as he had made his judgement, Li Yibo suddenly rejected it. "It's better to say, looking at just the amount healed by a single skill, this is definitely the Number One Cleric. However, his cast speed isn't outstanding, so if we consider cast time, cooldowns, etc, then it's really hard to say how his heal per second is."

"What is Happy trying to do, making a Cleric like this?" Pan Lin said in shock. By then, the two Clerics had left the stage, switched out for the sixth players of each team.

Chapter 1304

Challenger

No one was paying attention to the sixth player right now. Everyone was discussing Little Cold Hand's huge transformation.

A full set of Silver equipment. Even though they could not see the stats, to the players, the dazzling silver lettering could only be described as tyrannical. 1810 Intelligence. It was immediately obvious that this was the highest Intelligence any Cleric had in Glory. The entire Xiaoshan Stadium was buzzing with whispers.

Was Happy's weak point, their healer An Wenyi, about to make a counterattack?

The problem was that the main criticism towards An Wenyi had been his skill. Everyone felt like if Happy could find a better healer, the team would instantly improve. However, Happy did not replace their healer and instead sharply upgraded his character. This method of fixing their weak point didn't seem logical?

The crowd didn't care about all that though. As soon as they saw their own team's character suddenly burst onto the stage with flashing Silver equipment, they instantly erupted with excitement. On the broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo started to discuss this issue.

Why was Happy willing to spend so much on strengthening their healer character instead of spending the money on a better healer player?

Was there something special about An Wenyi that made Happy willing to pile so many of their resources onto him?

Pan Lin and Li Yibo looked at their information on Happy, but they just couldn't figure it out. The battle officially started, and the two characters loaded onto opposite corners of the map.

The map was Labor Mining Site, located at a mining site at the foot of a mountain. The structure of the terrain was complex, and there was no part of the map spacious enough to fit all ten players fighting at the same time. It was a map which required

each team to move into a formation before advancing ahead into the terrain.

Happy moved swiftly as soon as the battle began and pressed forward, taking the middle route. Samsara pushed forward as well, but as they moved, their chat blossomed with liveliness.

"Did you guys see Happy's Cleric?" Jiang Botao and Lu Boyuan typed out simultaneously.

"I saw," Fang Minghua replied.

"What are your thoughts?" Jiang Botao asked. When discussing a healer, Fang Minghua would obviously be the one with greater authority.

"High intelligence, high crit, his heals will be stronger. Happy is making up for An Wenyi's weakness to a certain extent," Fang Minghua said. Samsara had analyzed Happy's weaknesses long ago. There was no need to re-emphasize this point.

"But aren't his stats a bit imbalanced?" Jiang Botao said.

"It's a bit on the extreme side. His cast speed is too mediocre. He'll require more protection when he's healing," Fang Minghua said.

"So you're saying that his teammates will have to take up a greater burden?" Jiang Botao pointed out the important part.

"Yes," Fang Minghua affirmed.

"It's indeed not bad a adjustment!" Jiang Botao said.

"How are we playing this?" Sun Xiang asked. The huge change that Happy had made happened to be the main focus point of their prepared plans.

"I suggest no change," Fang Minghua said.

"Mm, just treat it as a normal match and put pressure on the healer!" Jiang Botao said.

Happy's healer was their weak point, which became the focus of every team's strategy. But even without the healer being the weak point, targeting the healer was a very common strategy in the team competition. Samsara adjusted by treating this match as

an ordinary one. They clearly had their misgivings towards suddenly upgrading An Wenyi's equipment.

Along with Pan Lin, Li Yibo, and many others thinking the same question, Samsara didn't think strengthening the character was a good solution.

This method may have resolved the old issue, but it brought up a new one too: the rest of the team had to share the extra burden. That meant everyone else needed to focus more of their attention towards protecting him. The hazard might have been reduced, but it had also become more spread out. What would happen if someone became distracted for a moment and failed to complete their task of protecting him?

Therefore, focus the healer!

Team Samsara's final decision for the core of their strategy had not changed. As for the specifics, those would change depending on the circumstances. They had to at least just how much the upgraded healer character impacted Happy.

The two teams soon came across each other. They did not immediately fight. On this complicated map, the instant the two teams found one another, the two teams scattered to quickly occupy advantageous positions.

The long-ranged classes searched for attacking spots, where they could better display their firepower. The close-ranged classes searched for routes, where they could better hide themselves while moving forward.

As the main team, Happy had a smoother time on this point. They had been prepared and practiced long beforehand. Everyone quickly found a good spot for themselves. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain climbed to a rock jutting out of the mountainside and made the first attack in the team competition.

Bang!

A Stinger arced in a curve as it flew through the air. It quickly dropped down, and with a bang, it exploded like fireworks. Countless missiles burst out.

Boom boom boom...

The stingers crashed to the ground and turned the area into a sea of fire. Sun Xiang and Lu Boyuan were depressed. These two close-ranged players had picked this ditch

to close in on Happy, but as soon as the fight started, Su Mucheng sent a missile at them.

One went left, and the other went right as they scurried out of the ditch. The two could only stare at Dancing Rain, who was on top of that rock with her hair fluttering in the wind. There was nothing they could do. They didn't have the range.

Zhou Zekai looked to have moved sluggishly, but he had been waiting for Happy to fall into position to make the first move. After Dancing Rain attacked and exposed herself, Cloud Piercer, Samsara's longest-ranged character, immediately moved towards her. Only he had the range to keep Dancing Rain's support under control.

But before Cloud Piercer could move into position, a gunshot landed beside him. Zhou Zekai could tell from the sound that it wasn't from Dancing Rain. The only other person who could fire a gun was Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

Lord Grim had climbed over a ruined wall. The distance between him and Cloud Piercer was only five steps. Lord Grim could even combo his movement skills. What was five steps to him?

Zhou Zekai also realized the crisis. Cloud Piercer hastily retreated.

Lord Grim used his movement skills and rapidly rushed at him.

Ye Xiu, Zhou Zekai.

The number one players of the old and new generation. A face to face confrontation had come.

Who was better? Everyone was curious about this question.

Zhou Zekai had debuted in Season 5. It was from that season onwards that Excellent Era never entered the finals again. But at that time, Ye Xiu shined as brilliant as ever. The crown of number one player in Glory belonged to him. Who would have thought that Samsara, a mid-tier team, would find this quiet person who would one day become the Great Gunner and become the number one Glory player of the new generation.

When the Zhou Zekai of that era fought against Ye Xiu, no one would have regarded it as a battle between number ones, but rather a pretty good rookie versus a God.

But soon, everyone started to realize that this Zhou Zekai wasn't as simple as "pretty good". After Samsara took in this player, their fate instantly turned around. That season, Samsara made it to the playoffs, a breakthrough for them. However, because of the quiet personality of Zhou Zekai, he didn't synergize well with the rest of the team. In the end, the team was only able to make it to playoffs but nothing more.

Samsara had a headache over this problem, but soon afterwards, they uncovered a new rookie in Season 6. At that time, Jiang Botao had been a part of Team Parade. After a careful observation, Samsara quickly confirmed that Jiang Botao was exactly what their team needed, a person to stand by Zhou Zekai. That winter season, Team Samsara impatiently purchased this rookie. After half a year of practice, Jiang Botao was able to become the link between Zhou Zekai and rest of the team just like they had wanted. And in Season 7, Jiang Botao took up the position of vice-captain. At this point, the young players of Samsara had matured. The Season 7 Samsara had finally broken past the first round of the playoffs. Zhou Zekai's popularity was incomparable that season. In comparison, Excellent Era had started to go on the decline. The title of number one started to falter. Wang Jiexi? Huang Shaotian? Zhou Zekai? These names started being mentioned. Among them, Zhou Zekai was the youngest and his performance on stage was the most dominating. Everyone thought highly of his future. The only thing he was missing was a championship victory.

Finally, in Season 8, Ye Xiu retired midway. The former number one said goodbye to the stage, and someone needed to take up his banner. That season, Zhou Zekai and Team Samsara seized the championship cup. It seemed to be a declaration that he was the successor to the title. And in Season 9, Samsara won the championships for a second time. From then on, his title as number one was unshakeable. But then, in Season 10, the former number one, Ye Xiu, returned...

Who was the real number one?

The media definitely wasn't going to miss such a fiery topic. But Ye Xiu was already at such an old age. Excellent Era had started declining years ago, and now, he was leading a grassroots team. Wouldn't debating whether Zhou Zekai and Ye Xiu was the current number one be seen as a joke?

Ten years of glory, the former number one player, had now unexpectedly become a challenger. And some even thought that he wasn't qualified.

But Ye Xiu's performance and Happy's performance showed otherwise.

Ye Xiu was undefeated in the individual competition. After Happy started coming together in Round 9, their record had crushed Samsara's ever since. Ye Xiu had earned the qualifications to take back his title as number one.

As a result, the media started working hard to utilize this as a topic. In Round 1, everyone had been questioning Ye Xiu's qualifications!

Unfortunately, neither Ye Xiu nor Zhou Zekai came across each other in the individual rounds. Finally, not long after the team competition began, the two had already started fighting.

Lord Grim rushed forward, while Cloud Piercer retreated backwards. Everyone seemed to have stopped breathing. Then, a formless qi suddenly struck Cloud Piercer from behind.

FUCK!!!

Countless curses exploded.

We want to see a fight for number one, could a dirty bastard like you not fucking interrupt it???

Chapter 1305

A Long-Awaited Scene

Using a Qi Blade, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea interrupted the contention for number one between the two generations without any hesitation. The countless players and reporters, who were interested in it, immediately started cursing.

Qi Blade wasn't easy to notice even when facing it head on. As a sneak attack, even the number one player wasn't able to notice it. However, this was a team competition. Zhou Zekai hadn't noticed it, but others had.

The instant Jiang Botao gave the warning in the team chat, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer dodged. One person's warning and another person's movements coordinated beautifully.

But with this opening, how could Lord Grim not seize it to close in onto Cloud Piercer? People realized that Ye Xiu and Fang Rui were also coordinating with each other, and it had probably been planned beforehand. While everyone was overjoyed at seeing a fight between Ye Xiu and Zhou Zekai, Ye Xiu and Fang Rui conspired together and formed a pincer attack on Zhou Zekai.

The contention for number one and a qualified challenger were truly exciting topics, but did the players on stage care?

Just when these two formed a pincer attack onto Cloud Piercer, Samsara's Jiang Botao hurried over. The 1v1 that everyone had been hoping for didn't happen. The two had only just seen each other before everything turned into a mess. Lord Grim was currently interrupting Jiang Botao's Empty Waves from casting a formation, while Cloud Piercer was blocking the dirty sneak attack from Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

The fight between the two sides had started all-around, but Happy's more prepared utilization of the terrain gave them a certain advantage. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain was a troublesome existence for Samsara, and the only one who could keep her in check was Cloud Piercer, who Fang Rui and Ye Xiu had intercepted. Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash rushed over to provide support, and An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands stood beside him with his cross raised. The silver Holy Contract radiated with holy light as

he chanted. This seemed to be his first time supporting his team in a direct conflict. An Wenyi was a bit excited. Could he finally participate in a team battle outright in the open? Before this, the situation always needed to be set up in a certain way before he could do anything, and Ye Xiu didn't hold back in telling him the reason.

An Wenyi was Happy's weakness. His technical skill was poor. Everyone in the Glory scene knew that. Believing in one's own lies wasn't something a logical person like An Wenyi did. Ye Xiu also trusted in his personality and didn't feel the need to keep his skill level a secret. Cleanly pointing it out would help him grow faster.

Reality was as such. An Wenyi was always clear where his shortcomings were and always consciously worked on improving them. The only thing restricting him was probably his talent. His rate of improvement seemed to be very slow, and he couldn't help but worry about his future.

However, Team Happy's actions wiped away this worry.

An Wenyi was extremely confident right now. He was certain he would definitely become qualified to be the lifeline supporting the team. He wouldn't be like before and sometimes become the bait for the team's tactics.

Cast. Small Heal.

Even though Little Cold Hand's equipment didn't stack cast speed, Small Heal was a low-level skill, so the cast time was short anyways, and it was quickly cast.

Holy light flew out and converged onto Lord Grim.

Crit!

The high crit rate didn't let him down. After a switch of equipment, the very first skill Little Cold Hands used had crit.

The holy light surrounding Lord Grim looked to be brighter than usual. His health immediately went up a notch.

That feels so good!

For a healer, nothing was more satisfying than watching a health bar go up. The others felt a thrill watching their attacks deal damage, but Clerics felt a thrill watching their

skills heal.

The bigger the heal, the more satisfying it felt. And this was just a Small Heal, and not a huge one.

An Wenyi calmly observed the battlefield, waiting for a chance to use a high-level skill. When he had been adjusting to his new character, that sort of leap almost made his heart jump out. In real combat, in a fight, a leap in health meant a nullification of all the hard work the opponent had put in. This was the type of attack only healers could do, a spiritual blow to the opponents.

Come!

The always logical An Wenyi couldn't hold back his excitement. He had been holding it back for too long. He had been waiting for this day, this moment for too long.

Which side?

An Wenyi looked left and right, searching for an area that needed his support.

One Autumn Leaf and Chaotic Cloudy Mountains climbed out of the ditch and entered the fray. Samsara's healer Fang Minghua and his Cleric Laughing Song looked to be in a position symmetrical to Little Cold Hands. He was also in position, waiting for a side that required his assistance.

This was a battle between healers! How exhilarating! An Wenyi saw Laughing Song across from him. The other side seemed to have noticed him too. The hot bloodedness in his mind couldn't help but surge forth again.

There!

An Wewnyi suddenly found an opportunity. However, that side didn't require any healing. If he placed a Sacred Fire there, would he be able to restrict One Autumn Leaf's mobility?

Ah! This side too!

Or maybe I should Hypnotize Empty Waves?

Would I be noticed though? Little Cold Hands had a slow casting speed. Zhou Zekai's

Cloud Piercer could interrupt his cast with just a single bullet.

Maybe I should cast a Sacred Fire first! An Wenyi made up his mind, but...

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

One Autumn Leaf suddenly swept outwards with his spear. After finding an opening, he took a step and attacked Little Cold Hands with a Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

The distance isn't enough!

The first thing An Wenyi noticed was that Dragon Breaks the Ranks wouldn't be enough for One Autumn Leaf to fully close in onto him. But this surprise attack had still drastically increased the threat towards him.

An Wenyi didn't panic.

Sacred Fire!

He had originally planned on using this skill to decrease One Autumn Leaf's mobility, but One Autumn Leaf broke off from the fight first. The Sacred Fire was still sent towards him nonetheless.

Under the light of Holy Contract, the pale flames slid out from it. One Autumn Leaf had only been five units away, so the Sacred Fire was bound to be within his path. The spell had been timed to the extreme. But the instant the pale flames leapt up and it looked as if One Autumn Leaf would step on them, One Autumn Leaf leaped into the air.

Frightening reaction speed and extraordinary technical skill were all things An Wenyi lacked, but at this moment, Sun Xiang displayed these traits beautifully. It was just an instant, but Sun Xiang was able to react in time.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks was forcefully cancelled, but because he had jumped, the momentum carried him high into the air.

Shattering the Lands!

One Autumn Leaf's Evil Annihilation danced in the air. Under the gloomy backdrop, the flickering black light looked even crueler.

An Wenyi was still engrossed in what had just happened. How he envied Sun Xiang's reaction speed and technique! It was only an instant later, and One Autumn Leaf was coming down with a Shattering the Lands!

An Wenyi's reaction speed had always been his weakness. The attack itself was a large AoE move. Where could he dodge to?

He had nowhere to dodge, and he had no attack that could stop Shattering the Lands. Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash was close to Little Cold Hands, but he had no way of helping because this attack could not be blocked!

Boom!

Magic waves rippled and shook the earth.

Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash promptly jumped out of harm's way, but Little Cold Hands wasn't even able to take three steps before the spreading shockwave landed.

No one could block the attack, but they could always rescue him after it.

An X-1 Extruder launched from Dancing Rain's cannon towards Little Cold Hands. Anyone in its vicinity would be pulled away.

This sort of protection was only temporary. Getting the healer to safety required constant defense. Starting from Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf breaking through, Samsara held the initiative because Happy needed to maintain a certain distance from their target of protection.

Ye Xiu and Fang Rui weren't able to continue fighting on the other side. They needed to shrink their defensive zone to protect their healer.

Random Firing!

Zhou Zekai seized this timing to fire a burst of attacks. Bullets shot out from his dual guns and under his extraordinary control, nearly every bullet threatened Lord Grim and Boundless Sea.

This wave of attacks stopped the two from retreating, using a strong offense as a defense.

Empty Waves began casting a wave formation!

"Interrupt!"

Ye Xiu called out in the chat. This wave formation could not be allowed to be summoned. Lord Grim raised his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and used its shield form to block Cloud Piercer's attacks. Fang Rui's Boundless Sea went into the cover provided by the umbrella and let out an attack towards Empty Waves.

Samsara's offensive had been repeatedly thwarted by Happy's players, but finally, Lu Boyuan found an opening to act.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountains flipped his palms...

Grapplers didn't have long-ranged attacks, and there was no one near him. However, the movements he made made An Wenyi's heart leap.

This was... the Qi Master skill, Cloud Grasping Fist!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountains was a Fighter class, so a skill of the same class could be added to his weapon. And in this match, he chose Cloud Grasping Fist. In order to target Happy's weak point, had this been an arrangement they had planned from the start?

An Wenyi wanted to dodge, but he immediately discovered that Sun Xiang had his eyes completely fixed on him.

With Dancing Rain's X-1 Extruder flying over, One Autumn Leaf wasn't able to press closer for now, but if Little Cold Hands moved, he would be outside of X-1 Extruder's protection, and One Autumn Leaf would instantly start attacking.

Samsara's teamwork put him in a helpless position. An Wenyi felt despair. However, the moment Chaotic Cloudy Mountains sneak attacked with Cloud Grasping Fist, a character stood in front of him.

Phantom Demon, One Inch Ash.

Chapter 1306

What Makes Him Special

Cloud Grasping Fist didn't have mountain-splitting power. When One Inch Ash came over to block it, the qi landed upon his body and instantly pulled him toward where Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was. This skill only pulled the target toward the user, it didn't restrict the target's movements. One Inch Ash, who had purposely taken the attack to help Little Cold Hands, was of course prepared for this. As he was pulled away, he also sent an attack.

Ghost Slash!

The blade light arrived in front of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain a second before the person did. But Lu Boyuan had seen that the opponent had taken the initiative to serve as a meat shield, so an attack like this was within his expectations. He dodged to the side with precise timing, already thrusting a hand toward One Inch Ash's shoulder.

Lu Boyuan had predicted Qiao Yifan's actions, but Qiao Yifan had actually also guessed that Lu Boyuan would respond. The problem was, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's hand had arrived in the last second before Cloud Grasping Fist wore off. Cloud Grasping Fist didn't restrict the character's skills, but movement was undoubtedly locked. Even though Qiao Yifan knew that Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's attack would arrive, he simply had no way of controlling One Inch Ash to dodge. Lu Boyuan's hand flashed out with incredible precision, and his positioning was beautiful. Helpless, Qiao Yifan tried to change the direction of his Ghost Slash, but he still couldn't catch up to Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's movement.

Qiao Yifan was already out of strategies, but fortunately, this wasn't an individual battle. A Laser Rifle was accurately fired toward Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, forcibly splitting the connection he had tried to establish with One Inch Ash. Even though it failed to cause any damage, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had already recovered from the movement-restricting effects of the Cloud Grasping Fist.

Moonlight Slash, Full Moonlight Slash!

Two slashing attacks one after another instantly leapt toward Chaotic Cloudy

Mountain. The slashing attacks of a Phantom Demon didn't cause much damage, but Lu Boyuan of course wouldn't just let his character be chopped up. He quickly backed up two steps, avoiding these two attacks. One Inch Ash quickly withdrew, as he had no intention of getting tangled with him here.

Even though Happy hadn't taken too much damage for now, their formation had unquestionably been thrown into chaos by Samsara's continuous disruption. Over by Little Cold Hands, Dancing Rain's X-1 Extruder had already exploded, and One Autumn Leaf was rushing forward. Dancing Rain again tried to block him, but he didn't dodge or retreat. Over there, Fang Minghua's Cleric Laughing Song was already casting, clearing covering for One Autumn Leaf as he forcibly killed off Little Cold Hands.

Happy was now completely on the defensive, all starting from when Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf had broken through with a Dragon Breaks the Ranks. Once upon a time, Samsara's weakness was their lack of a close-range, brute-force attacker. But after obtaining Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf, they finally had a character who could charge through, forcibly carrying the whole team into the offensive.

Samsara's weakness had been fixed with a transfer, but what about Happy's weakness? Right now, he was suffering under One Autumn Leaf's furious attacks, helplessly waiting for rescue by his teammates.

"It really is hard to understand Happy's actions." Pan Lin and Li Yibo, in the television broadcast, were discussing this topic instead of the events going on in the match.

They'd originally thought that Happy had gone to all this effort to update Little Cold Hands' equipment because An Wenyi had some special talent that would allow him to control this character very well. But just looking at this ongoing match, they couldn't tell. All they saw was, as usual, the weakness of An Wenyi's slow reactions. And this weakness was directly causing trouble for Happy in this match.

"If he had used Sacred Fire a little faster to restrict One Autumn Leaf's movement space, then One Autumn Leaf's formation-breaking charge might not have been successful."

"If his reactions were a little faster, he should have been able to dodge that Shattering the Lands. He shouldn't have been hit and then directly exposed in front of One Autumn Leaf. Now the whole team has lost the initiative."

"Team Happy's team roster here relies on the Phantom Demon's support and control to strengthen the battle ability of the whole team. So, as soon as the battle begins, they need to let the Phantom Demon successfully cast his boundaries. And the Launcher is the core of long-distance attacks. In other words, Lord Grim and Boundless Sea are the only ones directly controlling the situation from the front. This arrangement requires the team's Cleric to give a certain amount of support. An Wenyi has failed to do this, and so Happy was quickly scattered by Samsara..."

The two continued to discuss and analyze the problems. And An Wenyi was the core of this heap of problems. The simple conclusion drawn was that if Happy changed their Cleric player, even if it couldn't be said how the battle would ultimately play out, at least Happy wouldn't be so quickly broken by Samsara in a battle where they had the map advantage.

Yes, broken.

By this time, Happy had already been broken for good.

The Ghost Boundaries hadn't been set. The healer had been stolen away and was being beaten up. Only under Dancing Rain's desperate supporting were Lord Grim and Boundless Sea able to struggle out of their situation and turn around to try and save the healer. But Samsara instantly turned fire, with Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf throwing away Little Cold Hands and attacking Lord Grim and Boundless Sea. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer took over for him, continuing to rain damage upon Little Cold Hands.

Inside-Out Tactics.

One of the basic strategies in Glory. Close- and long-range attackers exchange positions, continuously outputting damage.

And now, Inside-Out Tactics were being used by Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai, these two pinnacle attackers in the Alliance, with One Autumn Leaf and Cloud Piercer, these two pinnacle characters. One could only imagine how powerful it was. Because of the restriction caused by the inside-out exchange of these two players, Happy had no way of interrupting their offensive. Over the course of this season, Samsara had used this method to swiftly wipe out who knew how many crucial characters on the opponent side. Even if it didn't succeed, this method greatly restrained the opponents, preventing their strategies from effectively playing out.

The situation Happy faced now was even more disastrous. Their healer was directly kicked out of the match by the opponent.

Happy lost, but no one expected that they could lose so quickly.

11 minutes and 58 seconds, that was how much time this team competition ultimately took. This was only a little over two-fifths of the average team competition duration of 25:47. Anyone could tell that this was a match where the healer was immediately killed off.

Samsara's fans were jumping and laughing. Who cared if they lost the individual rounds? The ultimate victory still belonged to them. Happy's fans, meanwhile, were quiet. When they'd seen Tang Rou's performance in the group arena, when they'd seen Little Cold Hands flashing new Silver equipment, they had held high hopes for this team competition. They truly felt that their team was about to defeat the champion team Samsara. But in the end, the team competition was such a swift and brutal defeat.

An Wenyi disappointed everyone. Although he had always been called Happy's weak point, thanks to the team's intentional protection with their strategies, he had never affected Happy's victory. But this time, it was exactly as Pan Lin and Li Yibo had analyzed. An Wenyi's weak point left a gaping vulnerability in the match, and it was this vulnerability that led to Happy's rapid loss to Samsara.

"Just switch the Cleric player!" The supporters in the stadium, the supporters in front of the television, even Pan Lin and Li Yibo in the live broadcast were giving this suggestion to Happy.

"Increasing the character's strength won't help! The character is dead, the player is alive! You have to start from the player!" At the end of this match broadcast, this was Li Yibo's exclamation.

In the post-match press conference, this issue became the focus. And An Wenyi, at the center of this whirlpool, hadn't been sent out by the team for this press conference. He sat in the prep room, silently staring at the television as Ye Xiu was swarmed by the media, the reporters firing question after question about An Wenyi.

An Wenyi took off his glasses and buried his face in his hands.

He'd really screwed up this time, he knew. The team had built this Cleric character just for him, a character specially catering to his playstyle, but his performance was still

like this. It looked like he really wasn't suited to be a pro player. Everything he'd hoped for, dreamed of, they were no more than soap bubbles bursting in the air, right? Maybe this was the final chance the team would give him, and now they were probably going to find a new player. The transfer window still hadn't closed...

"Do you think An Wenyi is even at the professional level?" An Wenyi had taken off his glasses, but he couldn't stop the sound from reaching his ears, and he heard from the television a reporter asking such a direct question. Unlike many commentaries where they tried to tactfully express that An Wenyi's skill wasn't good enough, this reporter bluntly questioned whether he had a chance as a pro player...

An Wenyi wasn't the only one left in the prep room during the press conference. After hearing this brutally direct question, Qiao Yifan reflexively began searching for the remote to turn off the television. But then, they heard Ye Xiu's clear and certain answer:

"Of course. Without a doubt."

Qiao Yifan froze, and then slowly, the hand holding the remote slowly fell back to his side. He looked at An Wenyi, and saw that his teammate had lifted his head, a shocked expression on his face. But soon, he put his glasses back on and stared attentively at the television.

"Then how do you explain his performance today? There were several moments that I don't think were because of accidental mistakes or such reasons. They happened because he's not good enough, right?" a reporter asked.

"No." Ye Xiu shook his head with a smile. "That was because he's only had this new character for two days. He needs to adjust to the character, and at the same time, he needs to adjust to a few responsibilities that he hasn't taken on before."

"Responsibilities that he hasn't taken on before? What is that referring to?"

"Just like in today's battle, a Cleric standing directly at the front of the battlefield," Ye Xiu said.

"But he didn't do very well."

"This was his first time, and this was against Team Samsara. How well would you hope he'd do?" Ye Xiu asked.

"That is to say, Happy won't look for a new Cleric player, and will continue to believe in him?"

"Absolutely," Ye Xiu said.

"What's so special about him, that Happy has such faith in him?"

"Special? He is a member of Team Happy. That's what's special about him," Ye Xiu said.

A member of Team Happy...

An Wenyi stared blankly at the screen. When he once again doubted himself, when he once again lost confidence in the future, Ye Xiu appeared in front of everyone and clearly emphasized his identity.

He was a member of Team Happy.

Was all of the faith just from that? An Wenyi was extremely moved. But clearly, the reporters weren't touched by such an answer. To them, this was too idealistic, this was belief for the sake of belief.

"If An Wenyi repeats his performance today, will you still say that statement?" one reporter asked.

"I think that he won't give me that difficulty," Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 1307

The Buddhist Monk from a Foreign Land

Ye Xiu's declaration at the press conference didn't dispel many people's doubts. Stubbornly insisting on using someone, who was universally regarded as having subpar skill, received all sorts of criticism. The forums, in particular, had lots of nonsense like An Wenyi was Chen Guo's sugar daddy, and he could not be kicked because of the boss's authority. Numerous people actually accepted this conjecture, quite a few were even Happy's fans.

Fortunately, the reporters weren't so unreasonable and only criticized Happy's obstinacy.

"Happy's future this season is looking quite good, but perhaps it will end because of their stubbornness!"

A few media stations reported in this way because the transfer window had closed after this round and Happy truly had no intentions of recruiting a better healer. An Wenyi was the only person they could rely on now. Healers were different from other classes. There were usually no substitutes for them. Cries of mourning could be heard all around Happy. Even many of Happy's supporters complained about their team's stubbornness. Rumors without boundary started to spread further and further.

The only voice that could thoroughly dispel these doubts was a strong performance, but...

"Don't be anxious. This isn't something that can be resolved in a match or two." Early in the morning, Ye Xiu got up and found An Wenyi practicing since who knew when.

"The entire team needs time to get used to this new way of playing. It wasn't just you that made mistakes against Samsara. The team didn't protect you well enough either," Ye Xiu said.

"You're not consoling me, are you?" An Wenyi asked.

"I always say it how it is," Ye Xiu said.

"I believe you," An Wenyi nodded his head. Ye Xiu was truthful to the extent that he could infuriate others.

"Continue to work on your reaction speed. It'll always be helpful. And then practice and play together with the team to work on our synergy," Ye Xiu said.

"Maybe we can go back to how we played in the past..." An Wenyi said these words, thinking with the team in mind. He was a bit scared of holding back the team from winning just so that he could become a qualified Cleric.

"That style of play isn't sustainable. Even that slow Li Yibo is starting to smell out the traps inside. Do you believe that the likes of Yu Wenzhou, Zhang Xinjie, Wang Jiexi wouldn't be able to? We need to think about the long term. Starting from now on, we need to think about playoffs," Ye Xiu said.

"Playoffs?"

"I don't think we'll decline so far as to fall out of top eight," Ye Xiu said.

After Round 20, the fluctuations on the rankings were miniscule. Only four teams had changes.

Royal Style beat Radiant 7-3, and Miracle lost to Tyranny 1-9. As a result, two of these teams switched places on the rankings. At the moment, Royal Style was in 12th, while Miracle was in 13th.

Apart from that, there was Team 301 and Team Void. These two teams confronted each other directly. In the end, Team 301 won 9-1 versus Team Void. And in this match, the player Bai Shu, who Team 301 had dug out from who knows where during the transfer window, triggered quite a discussion.

The unknown newcomer displayed extremely high technical skill, and what was even more astonishing was that he seemed to have plenty of competitive experience.

A nobody having exceptional technique could perhaps be explained by bitter closed door training, but rich competitive experience wasn't something that could be obtained in seclusion. The Glory online game couldn't bring about this sort of high-level experience either.

Where did this Bai Shu come from?

Finally, Team 301 gave the answer to this mystery by revealing his identity. This guy was also a pro player, but he wasn't a domestic player. He was a Chinese pro player from England's Glory Super League.

This was... foreign help?

The pro circle was astonished. It obviously wasn't only China that had a Glory competitive scene. Glory was a popular global game, and many countries had formed their own leagues. It was just that up until now, each country had their own competitive formats. The scene was still young too, so there hadn't been any across-border interactions yet. At most, it would just be a few videos of other pro matches appearing on the Internet. The international scene had unfamiliar players, equipment descriptions that they couldn't understand, and it didn't offer anything that they couldn't see in their own country, so it naturally didn't have much of an impact.

But this time, Team 301 officially broke the communication barrier and recruited a pro player from outside of the country.

Bai Shu quickly received numerous interview invites from several media outlets. In the end, the one who came out on top was Esports Home, the country's highest authority in esports.

Bai Shu's unknown history was finally revealed through the interview. There was nothing crazy about him. He had been a student studying abroad and liked to play Glory during his free time. He was quite talented, so his skill level quickly improved. After making a name for himself in the Glory community, he attracted the attention of pro teams and was recruited. He already had nearly four years of competitive experience. Team 301 expanded their search for talents to outside of the country and brought Bai Shu back to China.

The Glory news reporters weren't as clueless towards the international scene like many normal players. England's Glory Super League had the highest level of competition in the European region, and Bai Shu had been a core member of one of the top teams there. His skill wouldn't lose to top player in China. From the results of the Round 20 match, many people believed that Bai Shu was at an All-Star level.

These were just words, though. He needed to prove it with action.

How bad was Happy's An Wenyi? How good was 301's Bai Shu? For a moment, these

two topics became the most popular topics in the Glory competitive scene, and a match that would put them to the test had finally arrived.

Round 21. Happy had an away game against Hundred Blossoms, while 301 had a home game against Tyranny. This time, there wasn't too much debate from the broadcast for which match to show. Team 301 versus Team Tyranny was picked. Everyone was very curious about this international player.

Bai Shu's performance didn't disappoint. In their match against Tyranny, Team 301 won 8-2. Bai Shu's performance in the team competition was even more praiseworthy. In this match, Team 301's captain Yang Cong once again used Life-Risking Strike to OHKO the opposing side's healer. Tyranny's healer was on a completely different level than Happy's An Wenyi though.

An Wenyi was considered the Alliance's worst healer, while Zhang Xinjie was considered Glory's best healer. Zhang Xinjie had the experienced generals Han Wenqing, Zhang Jiale, and Lin Jingyan surrounding him, yet under Bai Shu's brilliant cover, Yang Cong was able to land a fatal blow.

The monk from the foreign lands had quite the skill! On the other hand, the domestic healer looked quite shameful. Happy ended up losing to Hundred Blossoms 4-6.

In the individual competition, Ye Xiu once again stood undefeated. Happy also won the group arena. However, in the team competition, their healer once again failed them, which led to their defeat.

The dissatisfaction of the fans rose even higher. But apart from complaining about it, there was nothing else they could do. The transfer window had passed, so no matter how terrible An Wenyi may be, Happy could only keep using him, unless they decided not to use a healer in the team.

The gloomy Happy fans didn't lack passion, giving all sorts of advice to Happy, but no matter how it was spun, it always came back to asking Happy to switch healers. Enlightened by Team 301, their search started expanding outside of the Alliance. An unknown but enthusiastic fan had gathered numerous matches showcasing healers from the international scene and then sent all of them to Happy's public mailbox for Happy to survey.

Chen Guo was helpless. She could only give another official team announcement

expressing the team's faith in An Wenyi. She also hoped the fans could understand and be patient for a better future.

When the announcement came out, it persuaded a few, but there would always be stubborn fans. Happy's statement once again gave rise to all sorts of rumors. Possibilities such as An Wenyi being the boss's sugar daddy was no longer enough to satisfy them.

Including Happy's loss to Team 301 in Round 19, this was their third consecutive loss. However, just like last time, the rankings barely changed at all. No one really cared whether Conquering Clouds and Radiant, the 17th and 18th place teams, moved up or down. The other change was Void, who lost to Thunderclap 3-7, being overtaken by Misty Rain, who won 7-3 against Royal Style. However, these two teams were 20 points away from the playoffs zone. Apart from them, Team 301 was closing in onto the playoffs zone. After beating Happy in Round 19, Bai Shu joined their team. Ever since that round, Happy had lost three in a row, while 301 had won three in a row. The distance between 301 and the eighth place Wind Howl had shrunk to 13 points.

Team 301 looked to be making a strong comeback in the second half of the season. Their captain Yang Cong stepping back and their new player becoming a part of the main roster had changed Team 301's tactical style. Yang Cong seemed addicted to Life-Risking Strike at the moment. Team 301 might just make it their main playstyle. As for Bai Shu, everyone was still very curious about how much more potential he had left to show.

As for Happy's current predicament, besides their loyal fans, no one else truly worried for them. On the other hand, people like Ruan Cheng had found a gold mine. Their disgust towards Tang Rou had spread to the entirety of Team Happy. They couldn't find anything to criticize Tang Rou for at the moment, so they just brought her team into the mess.

In the new issue of the Esports Time, Ruan Cheng attacked Happy ferociously. However, his timing was poor. In Round 22, Happy would be facing Happy. For the current Happy, a small mishap like this wasn't enough to a team like Radiant to upset them. After three consecutive losses, Happy made a resounding comeback with a 10-0, a loud slap in the face to people like Ruan Cheng.

Ruan Cheng wanted to cry but no tears came out. What could he do? Esports Time was released biweekly, so they couldn't publish immediate reports. When his article came

out, Round 22 had ended. Ruan Cheng's criticism towards Happy received all sorts of condemnation from the community due to Happy's 10-0 victory.

Are you blind?

Countless Happy fans cursed angrily at Esports Time, at Ruan Cheng.

Chapter 1308

Tyranny's Home Stadium

After Round 22, there were only only small changes on the points ranking. Clearly, after half a season of accumulation, the various teams all had a solid point foundation, and it would be very difficult for the points of one round to cause any big shifts on the rankings.

In the three rounds after the new year, the most-eye catching team was undoubtedly 301...

None of 301's opponents these three rounds - Void, Tyranny, and Hundred Blossoms - were weak. But 301 had still managed to win beautifully with a 9-1 and two 8-2 victories. Bai Shu didn't disappoint all those curious about him and had a strong performance in all three matches. 301's Captain Yang Cong had already completed his style change in these few rounds. He was no longer that directly-attacking warrior Assassin. Cold, ruthless, deadly, this was the impression that today's number one Assassin in the Alliance gave everyone, and he did a better job than many other Assassins who had always used this style. This sort of clean and neat style change led people to feel that this was a player who had always been somewhat underestimated.

Even though 301 hadn't risen on the leaderboard after these consecutive victories against strong opponents, they were steadily closing the gap between themselves and the top 8. After this round, their opponent Hundred Blossoms had fallen to eighth place with 131 points, only eight points ahead of 301.

The other team that was worth paying attention to was Team Wind Howl. Wind Howl, named the soft-footed shrimp*, had really been beaten bloody by the strong teams during the first half of the season. 10-0'd by Happy, 9-1'd by Tiny Herb, that was the tragic ending they faced in the last two rounds of the first half. During the winter transfer window, they'd tried to invite Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie with much fanfare, but ultimately they'd failed to make the deal, and they'd left behind a strong impression that they desperately needed to adjust the team. If they wanted to make any acquisition after that, all of the teams were lions with jaws gaping wide. Any player could have an asking price over ten million for them.

Wind Howl was quite desperate, but they weren't going to be taken for a ride like this! Zhang Xinjie was a player that could truly take care of all their problems, a God, a popular player, they were willing to pay a sky-high price. But now any random player cost over ten million, this was simply robbing a burning house. To Wind Howl, these players were just spare tires. There was no way they'd make such a large investment.

They were unwilling to be cheated, but they also couldn't discuss any suitable transfers. In the end, the transfer window closed without Wind Howl being able to complete any discussions. They could only pretend they had everything together, sending out an announcement expressing the team's belief in the current roster, belief that their current strength was enough to win everything, and so on.

Quite a few people who liked drama all anticipated seeing Wind Howl's continued fall! But at this moment, the match schedule helped out Wind Howl. In the opening of the second half of the season, none of Wind Howl's opponents were strong teams. Conquering Clouds, Radiant, Lightly, in front of teams like this, the soft-footed shrimp could still bare its fangs and wave its claws, eating them one by one. After Hundred Blossoms lost to 301, Wind Howl reached seventh place.

And coming up next? In Round 23, Wind Howl's opponent was Bright Green, a team that with Seaside was already locked in the relegation zone. It looked like Wind Howl, for now, wouldn't be falling.

Those paying attention to Wind Howl were only interested in seeing results. The fans who truly enjoyed watching high skill and technique displayed during a match had quite a few high-level confrontations they could choose in Round 23.

Tyranny vs Happy, Blue Rain vs Samsara, and 301, who had found its momentum in the second half of the season, would be playing their away game against the team whose team competition style had completely changed this season, Thunderclap.

After deliberating, the television broadcast team finally decided to give up on the match between the number two Blue Rain and the number one Samsara, simply because the difference between Samsara and Blue Rain was a whole 22 points. Even if Blue Rain earned a ferocious 10-0 victory over Samsara, they still had no way of shaking Samsara's huge lead. After thinking of this kind of result, this match felt a lot less interesting.

On the other hand, Tyranny and Happy were currently tied at 148 points, and their

relative ranking was determined by the outcome of the previous match they'd played against each other. This time, whoever won would reach fourth place on the rankings.

The higher the rank at the season's end, the more prize money and dividends the team could earn. It also had a bit of an effect on the playoffs. In the playoffs system that had come into effect last season, the right of playing the home match in the third tie-breaking match between two teams was given to the team who had the higher ranking in the regular season. Even though this home match didn't include the right to choose the maps, the boost in morale from the home fans was useful.

For the broadcast of Round 23, they ultimately chose to show Happy's away game against Tyranny.

February 21.

City Q.

After the All-Star Weekend, Team Happy once again arrived at this city.

Tyranny's home stadium had actually sent a large bulk of security officers to welcome Team Happy. After half a season, Chen Guo had never seen such a welcome before!

"Is this necessary?" Chen Guo said.

"This is an official match, and the arriving person is Ye Xiu," the captain of the officers said in a very serious tone. But as he spoke, a coldness also seemed to flash in his eyes as he coolly glanced at Ye Xiu. His right hand seemed to subconsciously drift toward the baton hanging at his hip.

"The hatred is that bad?" Even though Chen Guo was an Excellent Era fan in the past, she had never followed the team to Tyranny's home stadium, and didn't know the atmosphere here. As soon as she asked this question, she suddenly heard a loud shout from somewhere: "Ye Xiu, 1v1 me!"

And then a water bottle flew toward them, its cap very rudely opened, spilling water all over them.

"7 o'clock, 7 o'clock!!" This security officer's directions were like the directions given in a Glory match. Immediately, people charged toward the 7 o'clock direction, seizing the target. As for what happened afterward, Happy's members didn't know. The target

was tightly surrounded by security and swiftly escorted inside the stadium, all the way into the prep room.

"How scary!" Chen Guo exclaimed with lingering fear. "What if that hadn't been water? What if it was acid or something?" Chen Guo examined where she'd been soaked by the water.

Ye Xiu was dumbfounded. "Isn't that a bit too cruel? How bad is this hatred?"

Right after he said that, there came a knock on the door of the prep room. It was a very precise and rhythmic knocking, quite eerie.

"Who is it!" Chen Guo was instantly on full alert.

"Zhang Xinjie," answered the person outside the door.

"Uh..." Chen Guo hadn't expected that it was actually a God and quickly opened the door.

"I heard that you all arrived, so I came to greet you." Zhang Xinjie greeted everyone in the room, and Chen Guo quickly let him in.

"Who's first from Tyranny in the individual round?" Ye Xiu asked.

This was a question that would very easily chill the atmosphere. But Zhang Xinjie still responded, "You'll see when the battle starts."

"Are you going in the group arena?" Ye Xiu asked another question.

"No..." Zhang Xinjie said.

"Do you know how to have a conversation?" Chen Guo finally couldn't restrain herself any longer.

"What is there to talk about?" Ye Xiu retorted.

Chen Guo was just about to answer, but Zhang Xinjie actually agreed with Ye Xiu's view. "Yes, I just came to greet you all. Play well, everyone. I'll take my leave now." After speaking, he just left.

"What?" Chen Guo was so confused. "There's nothing going on, he really came over purely to greet us? Was he trying to strengthen his sense of existence or something?"

"Then I'll go strengthen mine too!" Ye Xiu stood up.

"Do you need me to go too, Boss?" Steamed Bun jumped up.

"Up to you!" Ye Xiu didn't care either way.

"Let's go." Steamed Bun followed him.

"Me too, me too!" Fang Rui also joined the excitement.

"Boring." Wei Chen expressed his disdain toward these guys. The others were all more rule-following, and naturally didn't go along with this fun.

The three left the room. The prep rooms of two teams were generally either directly opposite or next door to each other, so it wasn't long before Chen Guo heard the hallway sounding with Ye Xiu's voice. "Open up, I'm here!"

With that tone, it sounded like this was his own home, and he couldn't be any more familiar.

The door to Tyranny's prep room opened. Without invitation, Ye Xiu just walked right in, followed by two others.

"The host team's prep room is always nicer!" Ye Xiu exclaimed. "What's the temperature here? Ours is a little cold." After saying this, he saw the control for the air conditioning on the wall and very skillfully controlled it a bit.

"Why are you here?" Standing to the side, Han Wenqing asked.

"Reciprocating the greeting!" Ye Xiu said.

"Old Lin." Fang Rui also greeted his old partner Lin Jingyan.

"The number one Brawler Lin Jingyan!" Steamed Bun shouted.

Lin Jingyan was instantly very happy. It'd been a long time since anyone had given him that title. This inexplicable guy from Happy was very good at chatting, it seemed!

"Happy's idiots are already here!" At this time, the door to the prep room was pushed open again, and a person charged in.

"Talking about people behind their back, where's your professionalism?" Ye Xiu turned around. The person who had just entered was Zhang Jiale.

"Oh, you're here." Zhang Jiale acted like he had nothing to do with it.

"You were the one who threw that water bottle just now, weren't you!" Ye Xiu said.

"What water bottle?" Zhang Jiale was confused.

"Don't pretend. I saw that throw style, it was completely like a grenade you'd throw," Ye Xiu said.

"What's all this nonsense?" Zhang Jiale said.

"I'll teach you a lesson during the match." As Ye Xiu spoke, he headed outside.

"Teach you a lesson!" As Steamed Bun left the room, he also gave Zhang Jiale an aggressive and intimidating shout.

"Those guys in Happy... they're really confusing!" Zhang Jiale watched as these two people left.

"Did you really throw that water bottle?" Even Tyranny's own members were asking him. Evidently, even though this thing had only happened just earlier, the news had already spread to Tyranny's players.

"I'm not that childish!" Zhang Jiale said. "But was it only water? How come they didn't put in a drink or paint or something? Let those guys from Happy go onstage all bright and colorful, hahaha."

"How bad is this hatred!" someone exclaimed.

"Gah!" Zhang Jiale jumped. "There's another one!"

"There was always another one..." Lin Jingyan was speechless. Fang Rui had come over to chat with him, so when Zhang Jiale had come in, he'd only seen Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, and didn't notice that Happy still had another member waiting in ambush.

"If you come to Happy again, there might be drinks or paint or something waiting for you!" Fang Rui said to Zhang Jiale.

"How bad is this hatred!" Zhang Jiale said.

"Who said it wasn't?" Fang Rui laughed. "See you!" He said his goodbyes toward everyone and then left.

"Damn. Next time we go, we really have to be careful. Happy's dirty and shameless, they'd definitely do something like that," Zhang Jiale said, after Fang Rui left.

"Why's it so cold in here?" After saying this, Zhang Jiale felt the temperature in the room, and then saw the air conditioning control on the wall.

"18 degrees? Are you guys crazy!" Zhang Jiale shouted.

"It was probably Ye Xiu..." Everyone remembered how Ye Xiu had been fiddling with the control earlier.

"Just like I said! Those guys can do anything!" Zhang Jiale said.

T/N: 18 degrees Celsius, about 64 degrees Fahrenheit

*Soft-footed shrimp = coward/weakling

Chapter 1309

Who's Under Pressure

In Round 23 of the regular season, where Team Happy faced Team Tyranny in their away game, the players from both teams had already started entering the stadium with holographic projections showing off each character's flair.

"Ye Xiu, your record ends here!!"

The moment Ye Xiu stepped foot into the stadium, the crowd started issuing battlecries. This was evidently something premeditated.

"Haha, what a nostalgic feeling!" Everyone else was shocked, but Ye Xiu simply laughed it off. Come to think of it, he hadn't encountered this kind of treatment for a long time. His reception at the All-Star Weekend was similar, but ultimately incomparable to during Tyranny's actual home game. The All-Star Weekend was a grand occasion for all of Glory, and having it hosted in Tyranny's home stadium would only result in slightly more Tyranny fans. There would still be many other fans from other teams, or even neutral fans of Glory, so Ye Xiu's reception wouldn't be as grand as this one, where seemingly everyone in the stadium was targeting him.

While walking towards the player seats, Ye Xiu respectfully listened to the various jeers that the crowd were freely coming up with and shook his head, "It's been a few years already, how come these fellows from Tyranny can't come up with any fresh ideas?"

After Team Happy, Team Tyranny's players entered the stadium, which was naturally a completely different scene to behold. Team Tyranny's fans had an unstoppable passion, whether it was against their enemies or for their team.

The players from both teams met each other, and as everyone crossed the stage and shook hands, the crowd once again hollered, "Ye Xiu, your record ends here!" Ye Xiu, who was shaking hands with Zhang Jiale, laughed and said, "Listening to the hopes of the fans, your first player must be under a lot of pressure?"

Since the competition was about to begin, divulging who would be playing first was

no big deal. The gazes of all the players from Team Tyranny fell onto Lin Jingyan.

"Oh, it's Old Lin, hehe," Ye Xiu said.

"..." Lin Jingyan was depressed. The reactions of the fans in the crowd were something that the players couldn't predict. Ye Xiu wasn't wrong, with such expectations from the fans, the pressure on him was considerably weighty. If he wanted to win against Ye Xiu, it really wouldn't be an easy feat!

"It's been hard on you, I'll just take this point first," Ye Xiu took the opportunity to say this as he was shaking Lin Jingyan's hand.

"You're too arrogant," Lin Jingyan said.

"Work hard!" Ye Xiu patted him, continuing to be as arrogant as ever.

"Old Lin, you can't lose!" Zhang Jiale got fired up.

Lin Jingyan innocently looked at him, "Why don't you go?"

"I already went the last time! Now it's your turn!" Zhang Jiale said without any hesitation.

"Naturally, I'll do my best," Lin Jingyan said. Since he had already been selected as the first player, there was no need to hide his true feelings. Ye Xiu was truly a troublesome opponent. His response seemed to lack passion and fervor, but the stability he had from his many years of experience was something that up-and-coming new players couldn't compare to.

In no time at all, the competition officially began and the players from both teams entered the field. Team Happy's first player was, as expected, Ye Xiu, and Team Tyranny's was Lin Jingyan. The crowd took it upon themselves to start the jeering again, but Ye Xiu had already been tempered by years of experience and was unfazed by it. On the contrary, it was Lin Jingyan who was under a great amount of pressure. To be honest, this was a scene that Ye Xiu had seen countless times, but Lin Jingyan had never experienced it himself. When he'd arrived at Team Tyranny, Ye Xiu had already changed to the unspecialized, and the first time they'd met, it had been at Happy's home stadium where the atmosphere was naturally very different. It was only now that they were playing at Tyranny's home stadium that Lin Jingyan began to understand exactly what kind of attitude Tyranny fans had towards Ye Xiu.

"How bad is this hatred?" This was a question that Lin Jingyan really wanted to ask.

Go onstage, log-in to the character, enter the map. The players already couldn't hear the the shouts from the crowd. Still, the fans of Tyranny continued to use all their effort to verbally assault Ye Xiu.

"Stop making so much noise." All of a sudden, Ye Xiu's message appeared in the public channel.

"It'll be over in a flash." Ye Xiu used these words to send his message to the crowd.

Could everyone possibly stop making noise after that? The noise from the crowd momentarily grew even louder, to the point where Lin Jingyan could faintly hear their cries from inside the player booth.

"This is unscientific!" Lin Jingyan was astounded. He'd spent so many years as a professional player, and except from at the very beginning, when the facilities were basic and crude, it was his first time being able to hear the crowd after entering the booth. How many decibels was the noise outside? Wasn't this Ye Xiu too good at adding fuel to the fire?

"Old Lin, hurry up and accept your death!" Ye Xiu began to provoke him in the public channel again.

Lin Jingyan ignored him. This kind of trash talk could no longer affect him. He wasn't some new generation player or a rising talent. At the time when Ye Xiu was unparalleled, he was already part of the Alliance. He had a better understanding of Ye Xiu's strength than other people. After all these years, they had encountered each other more than just a few times. Lin Jingyan didn't want to tally their battle record though because he knew that it would just make him unhappy.

He wasn't arrogant or overbearing; he had been called a God for many years, but he was never one of those at the peak. Neither rising nor falling, it made people feel as if he was a little muddleheaded. He had thought that his professional career would come to an end like this, slowly heading to its boring end, but then he was released from his team.

After accepting Team Tyranny's invitation, three players at the twilight of their professional careers had gathered in the most hot-blooded of all the Alliance's teams. Champions?

Lin Jingyan didn't think he would be in over his head so quickly, unexpectedly wanting to aim for this height again. In this team, with these players next to him, his once-dwindling passion was suddenly re-ignited.

They had fought vigorously for an entire season, but tragically fell short at the last step. Countless people felt great pity for them, and at that moment, Lin Jingyan had thoughts of retiring. But at his side was a player even older than him, who, right after losing the championship, had straightened his back at the press conference and said, "We'll be back next year."

Han Wenqing was even older than him, but he still hadn't given up!

Zhang Jiale had placed second four times, but he still hadn't given up!

And then there was that Ye Xiu, who had dug out an entire team from an Internet cafe before stubbornly triumphing over Excellent Era and imposingly slaughtering his way back into the Alliance.

All of them hadn't given up, how could he be the first to give up?

Lin Jingyan stayed on, holding on to the dream of becoming a champion and starting his efforts anew.

Dark Thunder walked out of the respawn point, strategically moving towards the middle of the map. Lin Jingyan didn't want to fight Ye Xiu head-on. It had already been more than half a season, but the unspecialized Lord Grim wasn't something that could be adapted to in half a season. This was simply because they didn't have the necessary conditions to practice for him. Aside from the actual competition, they could only rely on their theorycrafting, but without putting it into practice, their grasp over the unspecialized was still unsatisfactory.

So Lin Jingyan decided to use tactics, taking a roundabout route to advance. After walking halfway, he saw another message from Ye Xiu in the public channel, "Old Lin, could you hurry up, I've been waiting for half a day."

Lin Jingyan ignored him, continuing to move at his own pace. If talking more could help you win, Huang Shaotian would already have won six championship titles.

After going in a roundabout fashion for a while more, Lin Jingyan finally saw Lord Grim, who had been waiting for him in the center of the map. The guy was just

standing there, gripping his umbrella in a self-satisfied way! Why didn't it seem like he was here to compete! For a moment, the old general, Lin Jingyan, had gotten infuriated. It had passed in a moment, but he still had to control himself from getting irritated.

After fighting against each other for so many years, could he still be unaware? Ye Xiu's arrogant self-confidence was something he did for show, if one were to think he was actually arrogant and fight him under these false impressions, they would truly have been duped. This guy was truly dirty! Lin Jingyan couldn't help but think of the blood and tears that he had shed in the past, before frantically dispelling these thoughts from his mind.

How could he think of such things now, it was too hurtful to his morale!

Lin Jingyan directed Dark Thunder to hide at one corner, carefully watching Lord Grim's actions. Upon closer observation, the guy looked like he was taking a stroll in a self-satisfied manner, but he was actually moving towards a few places where one could sneak attack from, blocking them completely without leaving any openings.

"Old Lin, you've arrived, right? How long have you been squatting for? You'll eat a yellow card, you know!" Ye Xiu started talking again.

"I've arrived, I'm observing you now!" Lin Jingyan replied.

"Really? Do you need me to make a few relaxed-looking poses for you?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Sure, you can start posing," Lin Jingyan said.

"Alright!" Ye Xiu replied, and Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella quickly transformed into its gun form.

Gatling Gun!

Lord Grim's body turned, sending the bullets flying out in a horizontal arc and causing the surrounding dirt to fly into the air. Unexpectedly, he completed a full 360 degree turn, and a bullet exploded just to Dark Thunder's side. Lin Jingyan's judgement in having his character stay completely still was truly incredible.

"How was it?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Nice gunplay," Lin Jingyan replied.

"Let me show you another trick," Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?"

Poof!

A cloud of purple smoke up as Lord Grim threw out a smoke bomb, concealing his entire body before disappearing without a trace.

"This isn't nice to look at," Lin Jingyan said, but he was already frantically adjusting his camera angle, afraid that Ye Xiu would use the smokescreen to have Lord Grim quietly creep over.

But according to reason, he shouldn't have been exposed yet, right?

Lin Jingyan had some hesitation in his heart, and in that moment, his judgements weren't as resolute as before.

This guy, what was he planning on doing?

Lin Jingyan didn't see Lord Grim quietly creeping over, and he didn't want to act blindly and expose Dark Thunder's location, so he continued to endure, waiting for the purple smoke to disperse.

"Look at this trick now." Suddenly, Ye Xiu sent another message into the public chat. At the same time, in the midst of the purple smoke, a blinding white light suddenly flashed.

"Fuck!" Lin Jingyan swore, but his screen was already filled with white.

Flash Bullet, a Spitfire skill. But by now, everyone knew that Lord Grim's perverse Myriad Manifestations Umbrella could add a different skill to each of its forms, and this time, Ye Xiu had evidently added Flash Bullet to the gun form of his weapon. Borrowing the smoke screen of the Ninja skill, Smoke Bomb, he had waited until the smoke had gradually thinned out before throwing a Flash Bullet. The light pierced through the smoke, finally dazzling Lin Jingyan.

"I can't move! He still doesn't know where I am, I'm not that easy to find," Lin Jingyan

thought.

"Haha, you don't dare to move now, right? Why don't you guess whether or not I can find you?" At that moment, Ye Xiu sent another message in the public chat. After being dazzled by Flash Bullet, he couldn't see anything, but he could still talk without any impediments.

Chapter 1310

Backfire

Lin Jingyan wanted to cry.

This is exactly why they hadn't figured out Lord Grim's unspecialized class after half a season. Apart from possessing all the low level skills from all 24 classes, he could also equip different skills to his weapon. That meant that Lord Grim had the chance of knowing any skill that wasn't a classing or awakening skill, so long as Happy had enough skill scrolls.

Under such circumstances, how many different combos could Lord Grim execute? That wasn't something a human mind could calculate. Especially since they didn't know what skills would be set into the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, how would they know what to look out for?

Looking at his whited out screen, Lin Jingyan didn't know if he should act or if he should wait it out. In the end, he made a decision: he'd endure it!

Skills added to a weapon would be at most rank 1. The effects of Lord Grim's Flash Bullet wouldn't last long, and Lin Jingyan refused to believe that this guy could figure out his whereabouts in such a short time.

That's what Lin Jingyan thought, thus, Cold Thunder stayed there, unmoving and calm.

The audience, as well as Tyranny's players, were just about close to crying.

Lord Grim was already standing in front of Cold Thunder. If he moved the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella forward just by a bit, he would hit the other's forehead.

Old Lin, you've been tricked!

The spectators with their omniscient view actually all knew that Ye Xiu had probably caught sight of Dark Thunder when Lin Jingyan had first crept into the center of the map.

The TV broadcast chose a shot of Lord Grim's view. There was a split-second where a figure flashed by in the corner of the screen.

Yes, just a shadow, just a split second. Pan Lin and Li Yibo had even had a very long and enthusiastic discussion as to if Ye Xiu had seen it or not. Back then, no one could be certain if Ye Xiu noticed or not and how far he could go in determining Dark Thunder's position from that.

It wasn't until a Flash Bullet blinded Dark Thunder and Lord Grim's form appeared from the dispersed purple smoke, accurately darting towards Lin Jingyan that everyone was certain that Ye Xiu had noticed that split-second incident and accurately determined Dark Thunder's position.

Then, Gatling Gun swept forth, Smoke Bomb, he really put on quite the act. It wasn't until the Flash Bullet was used that Ye Xiu managed to close in without Lin Jingyan's notice.

Victory had already been decided...

Lin Jingyan's sight came back while he was being attacked, and then received a head-on beat down from Lord Grim. There had yet to be anyone who could counter Ye Xiu's unspecialized blitz. Lin Jingyan tried and tried and tried, but still lost in the end.

The first individual competition ended and Ye Xiu left the stage with a victory to thunderous cursing. Things like how fake, how deceitful, how treacherous, what a showoff!

No matter what, that's how it was like for Ye Xiu at Tyranny. If he lost, there would be endless mockery, and if he won, it wasn't much better. No matter how he won, the Tyranny fans would still find it dirty, unhonorable, low end.

The passionate, open Tyranny fans would all become mean and petty when Ye Xiu was concerned, nit picking at everything and not seeing anything good in him.

However, Ye Xiu was completely unmoved, calmly returning to his seat.

"Tyranny's home game atmosphere doesn't seem to be affecting Ye Xiu at all!" Commentator Pan Lin exclaimed.

Li Yibo, sitting to the side, gave a strained smile. He was from Tyranny and though it

had been a long time, he had personally seen this scene before, shaking his head and saying, "It's not affecting Ye Xiu, but instead it's affecting Lin Jingyan's performance. The atmosphere Tyranny's fans created has backfired."

"Ah?" Pan Lin was stunned.

"This atmosphere is something Lin Jingyan has yet to experience, having been on the team for half a year. When the match started, everyone was yelling about ending Ye Xiu's consecutive wins. It's easy to yell, but what about for Lin Jingyan, who is actually going up against Ye Xiu? In the end, this is only giving him more pressure," Li Yibo explained.

"Oh... so that was why he had accidentally revealed his shadow while moving to the center of the map, giving his position away to Ye Xiu," Pan Lin said.

"Yeah..." Li Yibo sighed again.

Pan Lin didn't continue the conversation. This saying wasn't illogical, but how could you be certain that Lin Jingyan's mistake was because of this pressure? Pan Lin felt a little incredulous, so he couldn't really bring himself to agree so fervently. By then, the second players on each team were heading towards the stage...

Happy, Mo Fan, Deception.

Tyranny, Song Qiying, Sunset River.

"Hey, the second round is a clash between two newcomers," Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Indeed!" Li Yibo confirmed, looking interested. There were quite a few talented rookies this season. Tyranny's Song Qiying was definitely one of them. As for Happy, they had a particularly large number of rookies. Tang Rou, Bao Rongxing, and this Mo Fan, then there was their Cleric An Wenyi. However, if you wanted to say whether or not they were talented, that was a bit of a problem over here.

People originally had high expectations for Tang Rou, but then there were some conflicts with her character and her popularity plummeted. Though this had some effect, Tang Rou's performance in the field continued to be outstanding. The Alliance was very conflicted. The selection for the Best Rookie award wasn't like the All-Stars voting; popularity wasn't considered. From pure performance, Tang Rou was the most outstanding rookie this season.

In addition, her position in the team was something no other rookie could hope for. She was the last line of defense for the arena, and no other rookie was taking such an important position in their team. She also performed extremely well in her position, scoring consecutive victories. Her performance in the team competition was rather amazing as well. In typical circumstances, Tang Rou would be a steady first in both popularity and skill. Even if her popularity was low, Tang Rou's performance would be enough to convince people.

But the problem was that Tang Rou's popularity wasn't just a little low, it was practically in the negatives. Award Tang Rou with Best Rookie under these circumstances? The Alliance really felt that they didn't have enough support to do that. They had never experienced such a situation. They were burning brain cells trying to figure out what to do. They just hoped that an even more outstanding rookie would appear.

But, there were none.

In this era, even if rookies had talent, they needed their teams to give them a chance to shine. Many mature teams had talented rookies, but they weren't as reliable as veterans due to their lack of experience. Each team had their own way of cultivating young talents. Some did throw their rookies into the thick of things directly, like Lu Hanwen who became a core member of the team at 14 and successfully took the title of Best Rookie. On one hand, he truly had talent, and on the other hand, he had enough chances to show his talent. Diamonds will shine, but this will wasn't the same for everyone.

This season's Tang Rou was like last season's Lu Hanwen; she had plenty of chances to shine, and she made good use of them, become a unique talent amongst the rookies.

The Alliance hoped for some new rookies. They didn't have to be better than Tang Rou, just being on par with her was good enough, and it would solve all their problems. Now there was still half a season. After the first half of the season, would there be any teams that felt their rookies were settling in well and could take on more responsibilities.

Li Yibo knew of the Alliance's attitude, so when he saw a match between rookies, his interest was peaked. Would there be any rookies that'd make a good final run and get to Tang Rou's level?

"Heh, this pair of rookies is pretty interesting!" Li Yibo opened up a discussion with this topic. "This Mo Fan used to be a notorious scrap-picker in game before getting pulled into the team by Ye Xiu and attending the Challenger's League with Happy. He's a rare self-taught talent these days. As for Tyranny's Song Qiyong, he's a talented product of Tyranny's training camp. He grew under professional training, coming from a very orthodox background. What's interesting is that this Striker player did not inherit the style of Tyranny's Han Wenqing, but instead, from what we've observed, took after the Tyranny vice-captain Zhang Xinjie. His style is very meticulous."

"That's true indeed. This match will truly be interesting!" Pan Lin commented.

"Let's see which rookie will perform better!" Li Yibo exclaimed.

The silent Mo Fan and serious-as-Zhang Xinjie Song Qiyong were both the kind of player that didn't make conversation. After the match started, there were no communications in the chat. The two met and opened combat directly.

A wild, self-taught style and a meticulous, academic style clashed. In this battle, Song Qiyong attempted to break through Mo Fan's barrage in a frontal confrontation. However, Mo Fan's peak performance was enough to suppress Sun Xiang. Song Qiyong was really struggling to deal with it. Every time he felt that an opening was imminent, Mo Fan would always swiftly pull a full retreat.

Song Qiyong really didn't like this sort of pace. This was way too abrupt; who even fought like this?

However, this was the exact kind of opponent he had trouble dealing with, and fell to a disadvantage in the match.

"What do you think?" At Tyranny's bench, Han Wenqing posed this question to the others as they watched the match.

"It seems like that Mo Fan can only use five to six skills at a time well. He'll always break off his offense after these few skills and won't follow up with a new offensive afterwards, but instead clearly slows his pace down. It really does look like Cooldown Play," Zhang Xinjie analyzed.

"However, his execution of those few skills of his is truly very high," Zhang Jiale commented.

"Compared to before, he's improved immensely and his style has become more varied. However, he really has yet to solve the problem of continuity in his offense," Lin Jingyan added.

"If he can really solve that problem, then he'll become even more scary!" Zhang Jiale exclaimed.

"Yes," Lin Jingyan agreed.

"However, the current skill combos seem very complete and mature already. They don't hold much to continuity," Zhang Xinjie brought the topic down for deeper analysis.

"Could it be that he plans on persisting in his use of this style?" Zhang Jiale wondered aloud.

"He can clearly do better, so why doesn't he try?" Lin Jingyan voiced his confusion.

"What if he can't try?" Han Wenqing suddenly cut in.

Chapter 1311

Improvement

"If he can't try?"

Han Wenqing's words stunned everyone.

"Then... he can only endure and perfect this style," Zhang Xinjie completed Han Wenqing's analysis.

Thus, everyone fell silent. As for why he can't try, that was a problem gossips would definitely be interested in. However, as Happy's opponent, it wasn't necessarily important. They only valued the consequence: what kind of player would Mo Fan grow into?

"When we go back, we should take another look at this player's battles!" Zhang Xinjie decided.

As for the match, it was Mo Fan who claimed the final victory. Just as the match finished, Song Qiying charged out of the booth and rapidly approached Happy's player booth.

"Is this little guy so persistent post-match? That's even worse than Zhang Xinjie!" Fang Rui commented.

"You think Mo Fan will pay him any attention?" Wei Chen asked.

"Uh... that'll depend on if Mo Fan can understand his intentions or not. If he does, then I don't think he'll refuse?" Fang Rui guessed.

Just as he said this, Mo Fan also came out from the Happy player booth. He didn't even look at the other side, walking directly towards the steps that led off the stage.

"Hey!" Seeing this, Song Qiying called out, breaking into a run and eventually catching up with Mo Fan.

Mo Fan looked at him strangely, confused.

Song Qiying didn't have the sturdiest of constitutions. After sprinting for a few steps, he was left panting for breath.

"I... How can you play like that?" Song Qiying said.

Mo Fan frowned, clearly not understanding what Song Qiying was trying to express. Thus, he ignored the other and turned to leave.

Song Qiying didn't block his way, panting as he hurried over to Mo Fan's side. "What on earth was that tempo of yours? Why don't you continue with your offensive? With your skill level, isn't that better?" Song Qiying said.

This time, Mo fan understood him. He didn't stop walking, turning his head to look at Song Qiying, saying, "I can't."

"Why can't you?" Song Qiying persisted.

Why couldn't he?

This question had Mo Fan deep in contemplation, but he wasn't able to formulate a response to that. In the end, he gave Song Qiying an infuriating answer: "Because I can't."

"What do you mean, because you can't? Hey hey, everything has to happen for a reason, no? Is it because you have to use such a tempo? What is forcing you to maintain it?" Song Qiying continued to pursue the question.

Mo Fan's frown deepened, but he didn't know how to answer. He wanted to get rid of this annoying person as soon as possible, and his footsteps subconsciously quickened.

"How come you're not speaking anymore? Oh, is it a team secret? Uh, we're opponents, so I really shouldn't ask so much, but I think there's a lot of improvements and adjustments that are worth making to your style!" Song Qiying exclaimed.

By then, they had arrived at Happy's player bench. Mo Fan quickly walked to his own seat. Song Qiying had followed him here, but, helpless, he knew that he couldn't go and sit at Happy's bench. Plus, his last words had been heard by everyone in Happy, all of them looking back at him with no idea what to do. They had been joking that

Song Qiying was chasing after Mo Fan for the chance to touch his hand, that he was even more strict and formal than Zhang Xinjie! They hadn't expected that he had been clinging to Mo Fan, trying to talk about something like this.

"Kid," Ye Xiu spoke up, "You're right in saying that his style needs improvement. However, you're the same, hm? You have much to improve, too."

"I'll do my best, but he..." Song Qiying didn't seem like he was willing to give up.

"He'll also do his best. I look forward to your next match against one another," Ye Xiu smiled.

"Thank you, senior, for your guidance." Then, Song Qiying actually bowed to Ye Xiu.

"Ah, there's no need for that..." Ye Xiu hurriedly went to stop him, but there was no way he would make it on time. The entire venue exploded at once, whistling, jeering.

"Look... That's why I didn't want you to do that!" Ye Xiu said helplessly. No matter what reason Song Qiying had for bowing to Ye Xiu, the Tyranny fans would immediately be pissed off!

"It was deserved." Song Qiying refused to be swayed. The reactions of the audience didn't make him regret his actions at all. Once he had said that, he returned to Tyranny's player bench. It was, instead, the veterans of Tyranny who were nervous.

"What happened? What did Ye Xiu say to you?" Zhang Xinjie asked.

"Don't take anything that guy says to heart; it's all trash talk, got it?" Zhang Jiale said in absolute seriousness.

"He only said that I had much to improve on," Song Qiying explained.

"Huh? How come it sounds so... nice?" Zhang Jiale was confused and glanced over at Happy. He saw Ye Xiu looking over, too, and smile, waving, when he saw Zhang Jiale look around.

Zhang Jiale decisively turned his head away, face dark as he said, "Try to not interact with him, alright? Look at how sly and evil his smile is."

Song Qiying looked back, puzzled. How come he couldn't see anything that resembled

slyness or evil?

"Alright, go and rest. Don't worry too much about the result of the loss," Zhang Xinjie said to Song Qiying.

Song Qiying nodded, returning to his seat, yet his mind was still on the loss just now. How come he absolutely had to use such a tempo? That was the question that had caught his curiosity.

By then, the third player on both sides had gone up already. For Happy, it was as always, Su Mucheng and her Dancing Rain, while Tyranny sent Zhang Jiale and his Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

"It's time for us to get a point!" The two Gunners attacked as Zhang Jiale made his proclamation. In the end, Zhang Jiale achieved his goal of gaining a point, defeating Su Mucheng and gaining a point in the individual competition for Tyranny.

Afterwards, Happy sent out Fang Rui, Steamed Bun and Tang Rou for the group arena. As for Tyranny, it was Qin Muyun, Bai Yanfei and Han Wenqing. The two sides exchanged blows, fighting all the way until the fifth round where Tyranny, eventually, claimed victory.

"The instability of this Bao Rongxing is truly quite the headache! When he's in his element, he can accomplish miracles, but when he's not, it's like he's sleepwalking." The determinant of the group arena was clear as day: Steamed Bun. His performance wasn't so good this time, and he was defeated easily by Bai Yanfei. Tang Rou was unable to turn the tides against one and some players and Tyranny gained another two points.

The one on one portion of the match came to a close, and Tyranny was, for now, in the lead 3 to 2. The team competition was decided today's victor.

"You can take careful note of Zhang Xinjie's playstyle in the team competition. If I recall correctly, he's your idol, right?" Ye Xiu told An Wenyi while they prepared for the next match.

This young person, standing in the line of fire, was still holding Happy's health up match by match. In the previous round, Happy had beaten their opponents 10 to 0, but the team competition had been focused on a vicious, relentless offensive. As a healer, he was more on the defensive end, so An Wenyi had limited space to perform last

round. But now, the time for battle had come once more. Tyranny... An Wenyi was once a fan of this team. But after joining Happy, he had slowly begun to see Happy as home, while his feeling for Tyranny cooled. In the first half of the season, when they fought Tyranny, An Wenyi had felt a little weird, but this time he was very calm.

Zhang Xinjie? An Wenyi glanced over at Tyranny's player bench. Zhang Xinjie sat there, posture straight, as he rested his mind with closed eyes.

"I've seen plenty of his matches," An Wenyi replied. There was no way he wouldn't have thought of looking to a God for ways to improve. An Wenyi was well acquainted with watching Zhang Xinjie's matches to learn from him.

"Watching recordings and learning through actual battle are very different. Remember to pay attention!" Ye Xiu said.

"I will." An Wenyi would've loved nothing more than to become the ultimate healer overnight, and he wouldn't miss any chance to improve. Being able to personally experience the skill of the number one Cleric Zhang Xinjie was a rare chance, something that only happened twice per season.

Soon enough, it was time to start the match.

For Happy, it was Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi with Tang Rou as the sixth player, the same line up they had used against Samsara.

As for Tyranny, it was Han Wenqing, Lin Jingyan, Bai Yanfei, Qin Muyun and Zhang Xinjie, with Song Qiying as the sixth player.

"Tyranny is still persisting in their rotation. Zhang Jiale only participated in the individual match and isn't in the team competition lineup," Pan Lin noted after seeing Tyranny's lineup. In this season for Tyranny, even Han Wenqing was no longer a set feature of the core team. The three veterans, he, Lin Jingyan and Zhang Jiale, hadn't appeared in the team competition together for a long time.

Other teams rotated in order to counter their opponent. However, Tyranny's rotation seemed to just be for rotation itself. They had persisted like this for half a season. At first, their performance was subpar, and people had been uncertain about them. However, their performance slowly stabilized, and the doubtful voices petered out. Even so, Tyranny's performance this season was nothing compared to last season. As for this rotation, it was less like strategy and more like reducing strain on their older

players so that they could keep up. After realizing this, all that was left were sighs and mourning.

The team competition ended in Tyranny's victory.

Though Zhang Jiale hadn't been fielded, their team was experienced and cunning enough. The flaws of Happy's An Wenyi were magnified whenever they met a strong team, especially since they were against Tyranny and their number one Cleric. In the data for the two Cleric's performances, An Wenyi had lost humiliatingly.

"Ay..." An Wenyi sighed. He was rather numb to defeat now, and going against Zhang Xinjie directly this match, the other's performance had An Wenyi's self-doubt multiplying.

When the two teams shook hands post-match, An Wenyi's head was bowed low. Now, every defeat of Happy's had his hand in it. He was probably that "useless teammate"* in the eyes of his opponents. He didn't want to face that sort of judgement.

"You have a very good grasp of timing." It wasn't until he heard someone say this to him when they shook hands that he lifted his head.

"I finally understand why Happy insists on keeping you," Zhang Xinjie, the number one Cleric that he had idolized for so long, was saying to him in person.

Chapter 1312

Another Target to Research

An Wenyi was stunned. Just as he wanted to reply, Zhang Xinjie was already leaving to shake hands with the next member of Happy.

It sounded like a casually spoken formality, but if it came from Zhang Xinjie, then it wasn't just a courtesy. This strict Tyranny vice captain would only say something like this if there was enough proof to back it up.

Happy hadn't been stingy in the support and trust they gave him. An Wenyi was incredibly moved by this and had worked hard to repay them. However, there was always that voice of doubt. That voice of doubt grew louder and louder with each defeat.

He was too rational, to the point where the care his team showed him couldn't penetrate the darkness in his heart.

However, Zhang Xinjie, the player he idolized, one known for his meticulousness, had said the words he had most needed to hear at a time he needed them most.

The darkness in his heart cleared as easily as that. This was, perhaps, so-called serendipity.

He could do it! Because if even Zhang Xinjie thought so, then there was no way it could be otherwise!

An Wenyi's mind was filled with these voices. He raised his head, facing each member of Tyranny with a smile, shaking their hands.

Happy had been defeated by Tyranny 2 to 8. This live broadcasted match didn't have many spectacular scenes to savor. The broadcasters regretted their decisions because the other Blue Rain versus Samsara match was unusually fierce, eventually ending in Blue Rain's victory of 7 to 3. After Samsara had lost to Hundred Blossoms, they had another loss added to their score. Additionally, the lead they had on the second ranked team had been reduced to under twenty points. Samsara's image of invincibility had

finally loosened after their second loss.

However, though this match was spectacular, the most unexpected match was the Thunderclap's home game against 301 Degrees. The score ended in 1 to 9, Thunderclap being crushed. More importantly, their team, one that rivaled Samsara in strength, had been defeated once again.

The reason?

Yang Cong of 301 Degrees had used Life-Risking Strike again to take out Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher.

From Happy to Tyranny and now Thunderclap, this was the third time Yang Cong had struck with Life-Risking Strike, taking out a vital member of the opposing team and giving his team the victory.

Yang Cong, who originally didn't play such a style, had used it so crazily after switching styles. In five rounds, he had used Life-Risking Strike three times, and even more terrifyingly, he had succeeded all three times. This use rate and success rate was suffocatingly impressive.

Something else that should be taken note of was that apart from Round 19, where the assassination of Little Cold Hands had been all up to Yang Cong, in Round 20 against Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock and this round against Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher, Bai Shu had been critical in both situations.

What style did this guy have, and how was he so good at cooperating with 301 Degrees' players? No one in the Alliance had the answer, and each team had all looked towards England's Super League for reconnaissance on Bai Shu's ability. Everyone had sensed that 301 Degrees was on the rise. Don't just look at how they were only ninth on the current rankings, but 301 Degrees had recently all been pitted against strong teams, yet were still rising through the ranks. On the other hand, teams like Wind Howl were against mid-lower tier teams, and only then did they seem unstoppable. If they were to meet a strong team and fall, then they might be tossed out of the top eight with a pursuer like 301 Degrees behind them.

301 Degrees...

Suddenly, they had become an unknown enemy. All the teams were researching them, including Happy. However, at Happy's current strength, it was difficult to obtain

information from England's Super League. There was pitifully little videos they could find from searching the web. In the end, after looking all over, using VPN and cracking their devices, they had finally managed to connect to a video hosting service over in England and found info on the team Bai Shu was once a part of: the England Super League team, Sprout.

Then, watching this team's videos, they were rather shocked.

In that team, Bai Shu used a Knight called Bough. Apart from this Knight, there were two Assassins in this team. In the team competition, these two Assassins appeared together, and not in rotation. However, these team competitions were different from the Glory Pro Alliance. In the England Super League, team competitions were a 6v6.

The style Sprout employed was the one 301 Degrees was currently using: Assassin's Life-Risking Strike. Bai Shu's Bough had an important role in this team, covering for the two Assassins and ensuring that their Life-Risking Strike would hit. After watching the battle recordings, it was clear that Bai Shu wasn't only an expert at covering and supporting, but also doing all sorts of CC on the target when the Assassins were preparing to use Life-Risking Strike. In addition, he'd even help deal the finishing blow to a weakened opponent when the Life-Risking Strike wasn't enough.

His awareness, methods, habits, none of it was something that could be summarized easily and quickly. They had to spend a lot of time to research. The big teams all felt depressed! Wasn't there enough to research from scratch this season?

Ye Xiu's unspecialized Lord Grim, Fang Rui's dirty Qi Master, and now 301 Degrees was joining in, too, bringing in an expert that no one understood.

There was nothing that could be done. No matter how troublesome, they still had to do it. However, Team Happy's luck could be considered the best. The next time they'd meet 301 Degrees would be Round 38, the last match of the season. They had plenty of time to research Bai Shu and 301 Degrees, after Bai Shu's recruitment and Yang Cong's switch in playstyle.

For Happy, what was more of a headache, was the problem of their healer. After losing to Tyranny in the twenty-third round, the hate against An Wenyi continued. Even Chang Xian, who always supported Happy, was expressing concern.

"He has talent. We believe in him." These words were no longer enough. The people

needed to see proof in their performance.

In Round 24, Happy's away game was against Team Parade.

With Happy's current performance, no one thought that a lower ranked team like Parade would be enough to test An Wenyi's skills. It'll probably be just like when they beat Radiant 10 to 0, covering their healer's weakness with powerful offensive.

But in this team competition, Happy was met with trouble.

"Did you think you could crush us like you did with Radiant? Don't be so arrogant!" Parade's captain, Grappler player Wu Shuai yelled imposingly into the chat.

Around eight minutes after the battle started, Team Parade's formation was still very whole, but Team Happy's One Inch Ash had already been wiped out. Happy was currently at a one player disadvantage and Parade was launching a fierce offense, trying to defeat another of Happy's members before their sixth player arrived.

It was all that guy's fault!

The match wasn't being live broadcasted on TV, so the fans were mostly watching on TV. Previously, in the 1v1s, Happy had lost a point in the individual matches, taking a lead of 4 to 1. However, from the start of the team competition, they hadn't been able to grasp the initiative. Parade was very accurately aiming for Happy's weakness: Little Cold Hands.

Strategy, class, map choice, all of it was precisely planned. In the end, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had fallen to Parade, desperately trying to cover for Little Cold Hands. When they saw this scene, Happy's supporters felt a ball of rage burn in their hearts.

If it wasn't for him, the team wouldn't have had to retreat and fall to a disadvantage.

If it wasn't for him, Qiao Yifan would've been better able to set up his Ghost Boundaries!

If it wasn't for him, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash wouldn't have lost so much health.

It was him, it was all him!

"Even I can do better than him!!" Many fans slammed their keyboard in rage. And now,

after killing One Inch Ash, Parade was targeting Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

"Fuck! They might as well not have a Cleric!" In the online stream, the comment section was filled with such jeers.

This was something none of Happy's members could see. All they knew was that the situation wasn't looking good for them at all. They also knew that if they lost this round, the last barrier protecting An Wenyi from criticism would fall. Though the team could have faith in him as usual, what about himself? After defeat after defeat, each a blow to his self confidence. If this time, they lost to Parade because of his mistakes, then it would probably be a critical strike. Could he still hold on after something like that?

"Hey, great healer An! We're attacking your Boundless Sea, you know? Can you still manage to keep him alive?" The captain of Team Parade continued to trash talk in the chat, unafraid of revealing their intentions. They had planned it this way anyways.

"Don't panic, it's not as bad as he says," Ye Xiu sent into the team chat.

"Understood." Surprisingly, he gained such a reply.

Ye Xiu was stunned.

This was a simple reply, but if An Wenyi could still type, then that means he hadn't panicked at all. He had kept his calm, observing the battlefield and waiting for the time when he would be needed. Meanwhile, he could easily find time to respond to Ye Xiu when he wasn't needed.

"Very good!" Ye Xiu, based on this conjecture, had given a response to An Wenyi's reply.

The audience all thought that it was An Wenyi who had dragged the entire team down. However, in Ye Xiu's eyes, An Wenyi hadn't made any serious mistakes this match. The one who had performed poorly was Qiao Yifan. He was too nervous, too set on covering Little Cold Hands that he had worked himself into a mess, desynchronizing with the pacing of the team.

"Is there any need to heal Boundless Sea?" Ye Xiu mocked back in the public chat as he charged forward.

Chapter 1313

Just in Time

"He's coming!" Wu Shuai yelled into the Parade chat. Their focused offense on Boundless Sea was just because they wanted to lure Lord Grim over.

Wiping out Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash? This result wasn't something that satisfied them. Though they acted confident, in reality, Happy - even lacking one player - still threatened them greatly. However, if they could send Lord Grim out of the running, then their victory would be certain.

Their encirclement of Boundless Sea was to lure Ye Xiu over into trying to save him: their true target was Lord Grim.

"Prepare!" Wu Shuai ordered. Parade's team members clearly weren't properly trying to beat Boundless Sea, all waiting for a chance to lunge in the other direction!

"There's a plot!" This naturally wouldn't escape the Master of Dirty Play, Fang Rui, and he quickly sent a warning in the Happy chat.

"Worry not!" Ye Xiu replied as Lord Grim continued his advance.

"Switch!" Wu Shuai ordered, and Team Parade surrounded their target.

In an instant, it wasn't Boundless Sea in the encirclement, but Lord Grim.

"Scared yet?" Fang Rui hollered in the chat. This time, it fell to him to save Lord Grim. However, Team Parade hadn't truly formed an encirclement around him, but they did around Lord Grim, and it seemed much stronger.

Would they be alright?

Fang Rui wondered in his heart, observing Team Parade's formation and trying to find a chance to team-up with and break Ye Xiu out. That was when, with a boom, someone was sent flying out of Parade's sturdy encirclement with a Falling Flower Palm from Lord Grim, and the latter broke out easily.

"Haha, a paper mache encirclement?" Fang Rui would never miss out on a chance to mock his opponents.

"What happened?" Wu Shuai yelled angrily into the team chat. He naturally wouldn't send this into the public chat and draw jeers from his opponents.

"How come my skills are on cooldown!?" the one sent flying by Lord Grim yelped.

"No, not cooldown, they've been sealed! Sacred Fire? When?" that person added.

Sacred Fire?

The people watching the live stream all froze. When was Sacred Fire used?

The Parade members on the battlefield had already turned their gazes to Little Cold Hands. Their teammate naturally wouldn't lie to them. Did Little Cold Hands strike just now?

No one knew...

In that moment, they had completely ignored Little Cold hands, as if the Cleric were nothing but air.

"It was probably Lord Grim!" Someone suddenly called out.

"You're right!" The entire team suddenly seemed to realize something. Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella could have all sorts of skills set into its different forms. He must have set a Sacred Fire into the weapon's Priest class form. That guy was a sly bastard like that, always switching the skills he had on his weapon so that he could mess with everyone.

"Good job!" Ye Xiu sent that praise into the team chat, because this Sacred Fire really did come from Little Cold Hands. It was just that he had timed the activation so well that just as Ye Xiu struck out, when his opponent was about to defend, a Sacred Fire began to burn under Ye Xiu's surprised gaze, sealing that member of Parade's skills. The skill he was about to use to block Lord Grim never came, allowing him to break through with a simple Falling Flower Palm.

"Again!" Team Parade, believing that they had already found the crux of the problem, turned and pursued Lord Grim.

Sky-Piercing Strike!

However, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea had already arrived to help, pushing his palms out and shooting forth a blast of qi. Parade's membered rushed to dodge it, their formation completely destroyed by now. Then, a missile descended, mushroom cloud rising. The Parade characters in each area getting blasted off their feet. Their offensive had been shattered.

With their offensive gone, Happy was free to launch their own. They might be one head short for now, but they wouldn't let this opportunity pass them by.

Shining Cut, Slide Kick, Knee Strike!

Lord Grim activated three skills in rapid succession, arriving in front of a character in the blink of an eye and sending them flying.

Pulse Break: Break Strength! Break Intelligence!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea shot by, jabbing the character twice. The target's stats immediately plummeted. At the same time, a ring of light descended and Little Cold Hands' Holy Commandment blanketed them just in time.

With all these damage increasing statuses, if they didn't attack now, then when should they?

Ye Xiu, Fang Rui, and Su Mucheng all used their own methods to deal as much damage as they could to this poor character. Their target had no way to stop their remaining health from decreasing, and it dropped like a rock.

Having been knocked completely out of it, the members of Parade hurriedly adjusted themselves to counterattack and save their teammate. However, the three members of Happy didn't seem to be able to take their eyes off their target, ignoring all the attacks that came their way and continuing their crazed barrage of attacks.

Were they planning on wiping him out first?

They would choose to do that with a numbers disadvantage? That was a huge challenge for their own healer! However, wasn't Happy's healer the worst in the Alliance? Could he really hold this situation steady?

Parade had planned on simply ignoring An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands, but with the current situation, they couldn't just let the guy heal as much as he wanted - even if his healing was crap!

"Interrupt!" Wu Shuai yelled.

"Interrupt what?" The team members were confused.

"Their healer!" Wu Shuai was vexed. They needed him to explain such a simple arrangement?

"Where... is the healer?" The members of Parade continued to voice their confusion.

"Huh?" Wu Shuai turned his view in a full circle, but he really couldn't find Little Cold Hands.

"Where'd he hide?" Just now, everyone had been so focused on dodging the blasts. Plus, they hadn't thought much of Little Cold Hands either, to the extent that no one had noticed where the guy had hid.

"Fuck!" Wu Shuai yelled in rage. If he sent someone to search, then that would just be wasting time. It would be better if they didn't bother for now.

"Save him first!" Wu Shuai ordered. They continued to launch their attacks at the three attackers, but those three really were stubborn, persisting with their offense.

Their attacks struck that poor character while Team Parade's attacks struck them.

"Focus on Lord Grim!" Wu Shuai hollered. If they successfully made such a trade, then it was really worth it! Don't run, please don't run!

Lord Grim really didn't run. He simply made sure that Parade's attacks wouldn't disrupt his own. Damage? He just took it. Parade instantly became more enthusiastic. They had finally taken out a significant chunk of Lord Grim's health, when a light suddenly washed over him and erupted, turning all of their screen white.

This was a Great Heal, a Great Heal that crit. Instantly, Lord Grim's health skyrocketed. Though it didn't completely negate all of Parade's efforts, what it healed made Parade feel powerless.

"Where's that damn Cleric!?" Wu Shuai roared. Their underestimation of Little Cold Hands was destroying them.

"Did no one notice? Open your eyes wider!" Wu Shuai demanded.

Thus, when Little Cold Hands' heal came over once more, someone finally noticed where the holy light of the cross was coming from.

"Nine o'clock!" The member of Parade that had found Little Cold Hands yelled.

"Go and grab him!" Wu Shuai said, finally sending someone to deal with Little Cold Hands.

Seeing that he had been exposed, An Wenyi had Little Cold Hands run without hesitation.

However, the current garb that Little Cold Hands had on wasn't the movement speed equipment he had during the Challengers League. After focusing all his stats on healing, Little Cold Hands' movement speed began to display the weakness that was typical to healers. Run, where could he run to?

An Wenyi had barely ran anywhere, when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps. His pursuer was using skills to catch up to him, and it didn't take long before the other had caught up.

"I've caught him!" The Parade member excitedly reported. Yet that was when Little Cold Hands suddenly came to a halt and turned around, as if having given up.

What the hell was this? The Parade member felt a moment of suspicion rise in his heart when, boom! His character was sent flying.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Happy's sixth player, Soft Mist, had arrived.

"Just in time." An Wenyi even had the time to type!

"Nice train driving," Tang Rou complimented back. A train was a gaming term that referred to luring a large group of mobs into a specified position for attack. The more precise the positioning, the better the train.

"Let's go!!" Tang Rou, having finally arrived at the scene of battle, was in high spirits. She ignored the person she had knocked flying and charged towards the battlefield over yonder.

Shattering the Lands!

Soft Mist announced her arrival with a high-level skill, jumping high into the air. Her spear Dancing Fire Flowing Flame making a red trail through the air as it fell with its wielder, a blazing Soft Mist.

Boom!

Shattering the Lands, shaking the very foundations of the earth, Soft Mist's appearance was too sudden, her attacks swiftly finding a new target. She knocked someone into the air and then, in the blink of an eye, had landed with a Shattering the Lands over here. Parade's members fumbled to respond, dodging out of sync. This strike had once again destroyed their formation.

"Wipe out this one first!" Ye Xiu called out. Tang Rou didn't bother with a typed response, using her actions to show that she understood. Dancing Fire Flowing Flame swinging at its target's weak points.

"Interrupt the healer!" Ye Xiu gave another order. Currently, they had completely taken the upper hand. If they didn't wipe this guy out of the game, then they'd have wasted this chance.

Then, Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng repeatedly switched targets in synchronization, using ranged attacks to interrupt the healer's support. Tang Rou and Fang Rui focused completely on DPS and An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands had run over too, regrouping with the others.

Finally... their target fell, and Happy dismantled Parade's lead.

"The healer!" Ye Xiu made a swift decision. Currently, it was Happy that had the advantage in numbers on the field.

The entire team lunged for their opponent's healer at once.

Wipe him out!

Happy's members surrounded Parade's healer, tossing attacks over in rapid succession. At the same time, they paid careful attention to Team Parade's attempts at support. Parade struck left and right but couldn't rescue their healer. With the healer under siege, they couldn't recover health, and the characters that came to try and provide support took heavy damage.

At first, everyone thought that Happy was trying to wipe out the other's healer, but looking closer, they realized that they had actually kidnapped their healer and were slowly chipping away at the health of the rest of their members.

"Attack their healer!" Realizing that they couldn't continue like this, Wu Shuai hurriedly gave new orders. Parade's members immediately charged at Little Cold Hands.

"Heh, didn't you say our healer was useless? Is this trade worth it?" Ye Xiu mocked.

Chapter 1314

Team MVP

Ye Xiu's mockery caused Parade's Captain Wu Shuai feel his heart skip a beat.

This exchange really was imbalanced. Happy's healer was such trash! But aside from this, what else could they do right now?

You couldn't afford to hesitate in a match! Wu Shuai was very decisive when he needed to be, so even though his heart jolted, he didn't waver. He continued to lead his team members to charge towards Little Cold Hands.

An Wenyi didn't waste any time. As soon as he saw people rushing toward him, he cast a Great Cure on his own Little Cold Hands, pulling his health very high. Then, Parade began their attack. But when Wu Shuai looked over at Happy's progress on the other side, he wanted to cry.

This wasn't a problem of whether this trade was balanced! This trade might not even be completed in the first place! Happy was progressing much faster in killing off their target.

"Bring him away!" Wu Shuai hurried to direct. As they attacked, they tried to pull Little Cold Hands away, to buy themselves more time to kill him off.

"Not fast enough." An Wenyi, the one who couldn't control a situation even when putting his all into a battle, actually found the time to type words right now, even when he was being surrounded and attacked from all sides.

Indeed... they weren't fast enough.

Wu Shuai didn't lack judgment, he just wanted to put his all into striving for this goal. But when An Wenyi said this, he understood that Happy had calculated everything. Anything that he did was futile.

It ends here.

Wu Shuai understood very clearly that this match was going to be decided right here.

Wu Shuai sighed and watched as their team's healer finally fell. And Little Cold Hands? Even after being surrounded, the character still had a third of her health left!

What if we copied them?

Wu Shuai suddenly had another thought, to try and learn from the way Happy had surrounded Parade's healer. But before he could give any orders, a Satellite Beam was already falling from the sky, a spinning pillar of light that expanded. Parade's members instinctively began to dodge, and their encirclement was broken just like that.

There was no way. They had no healer anymore.

Wu Shuai discovered what the difference was between their current situation and that of Happy earlier. At that time, Happy had their healer helping out, while Parade's healer had been cut off in the encirclement. That was why they could play to wear them out. But now, even if they locked Little Cold Hands in an encirclement, they didn't have a healer to support them anymore, and stubbornly trying to maintain this encirclement would only use up even more of their health.

There was really no way.

Wu Shuai once again felt that they were at the end, and this time he finally didn't experience any new breakthroughs. By the time Parade's sixth player arrived, they were at a disadvantage in terms of numbers, and they still didn't have a healer. They couldn't turn the situation around. Wu Shuai actually began to feel a sense of longing for that Little Cold Hands, the one deemed by the entirety of Glory to be worst pro Cleric.

Right now, even if they only had a Cleric like that, would they lose? Absolutely not!

They were unwilling, but they could only fall. In the end, Parade couldn't defeat Happy in the team competition and lost in a bitter 1-9.

In the post-match press conference, the reporters asked Wu Shuai for his feelings about this match. He said the standard polite words, but as he talked and talked, he gradually began to think seriously.

Where was the match point of this team battle?

The beginning had gone so smoothly, they'd easily killed off one of the opponents. With that kind of lead, how come they fell over like a toppled mountain by the end?

Wu Shuai pulled himself back to the match, in that moment when they had killed off Happy's Phantom Demon One Inch Ash, pretended to surround Boundless Sea, lured in Lord Grim, surrounded him. But then Lord Grim, with a thrust of his palm, casually escaped from the encirclement that they had prepared so carefully. And the reason was that the character supposed to intercept him was unexpectedly hit by a Heavenly Fire and became unable to use any skills.

It had happened so quickly during the match, there wasn't any time to analyze it. Parade just thought that it was a skill that Lord Grim had put on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, but was that really the case?

Wu Shuai recalled that moment in detail. Lord Grim was surrounded, and then he immediately tried to rush outwards. Sacred Fire was a skill that required reciting lines. Where did he have the time to stop and cast?

It was Little Cold Hands.

It was An Wenyi.

Yes, that was correct, that was exactly how it happened...

And then Happy counterattacked, scattering their formation, and the match situation was instantly flipped around.

The match point was when Lord Grim instantly broke through their encirclement. And that had been the result of that Cleric, who'd been looked down upon by them - no, looked down upon by the entire Glory circle! If it weren't for his move then, no matter how high Ye Xiu's skill was, he couldn't have immediately pushed open a road with one palm. Parade's brothers weren't noobs, after all!

That guy was really lucky.

When Wu Shuai thought this problem through, this was his final conclusion. Ultimately, he still didn't believe that An Wenyi had such ability. He still felt that that player was just a blind cat that'd run into a dead mouse. But since he'd already thought to this point, he couldn't help but think more about Little Cold Hands' performance this match. And after doing so, he discovered that that player had appeared again and

again at the crucial points of the match.

We... lost to that Cleric?

"Impossible!" Wu Shuai suddenly said aloud.

"What's impossible? What did you say was impossible just now?" The reporters had been listening to another player from Parade answer a question, but when they suddenly heard this word from Wu Shuai's mouth, they immediately turned their attention toward him.

"Happy's Cleric isn't so simple," Wu Shuai said.

"Hehehe," the reporters all snickered. What was he saying? He couldn't beat Happy, so he didn't even agree what Happy's weak point was anymore? How petty! With your strength, it was no big surprise that you weren't able to beat Happy, do you really need to make excuses like this?

Wu Shuai's words didn't incite any excitement from the reporters. They continued their interviews, until Parade's conference was over and Happy's began. And then, the first sentence they heard from Ye Xiu's lips was praise for An Wenyi.

"Today's victory was all thanks to An Wenyi's outstanding performance."

An Wenyi?

Outstanding performance?

Putting these two phrases together, how come it felt so conflicting? Could they really be written together? The reporters felt a bit dizzy.

"What? Did no one notice?" Ye Xiu asked, extremely surprised, as he watched all the reporters exchange glances. He added, "Did you watch the match?"

"Of course," the reporters all answered.

"Did the stats for this match come out yet?" Ye Xiu suddenly asked the Alliance worker at the side.

"They're out," that person answered.

"Who was the team competition MVP?" Ye Xiu asked.

"An Wenyi." The Alliance employee gave the answer from the stats.

"Huh?" The gathered reporters were shocked.

Ye Xiu grinned. "I'm glad that the Alliance was watching the match seriously."

The reporters were greatly embarrassed. An Wenyi was the MVP of this match? The reporters forgot the interview and all began discussing with each other, but everyone only had a fuzzy impression of An Wenyi's performance in the match. Before they watched the match, they were already in a certain mindset. Matches should be enjoyed, but they didn't have that mindset toward An Wenyi, so much so that even though they were Glory specialists, they hadn't even realized the MVP of this team competition.

Without being able to figure out the why, this press conference couldn't continue. The reporters could only bring out a few scripted questions, like asking An Wenyi about his view of his performance today.

"I did the right things at the right times," An Wenyi said.

"Oh? Could you give us some detail?" the reporters asked.

"You... you should just rewatch the match!" An Wenyi was a bit speechless. They wanted him to use words to describe his performance? It wasn't that he was disdainful, he was... rather embarrassed, because those were all his highlights. He couldn't just open his mouth and say "at that most critical moment, good thing I used my Sacred Fire" or whatnot. He was An Wenyi, not Wei Chen.

The press conference ended inconclusively like this. By the end, the reporters still had questions in their hearts. They didn't understand how An Wenyi became the hero of this match. After the conference finished, they all immediately revisited the match, and now that they were in the mindset of looking for highlights, these specialists quickly realized what they had missed during this match. This was too unprofessional.

"An Wenyi found his footing?" the reporters wondered.

An Wenyi, whom the entire Glory circle viewed as dragging down his team, suddenly became the team MVP. Wasn't this change just too dramatic?

The reporters of the various media were all already imagining the articles to write about An Wenyi. The match between Happy and Parade originally wasn't anything interesting to report on. But now that An Wenyi had become the MVP of this match, this topic was really quite incredible.

As for those looking for thrilling headlines in this round, Samsara's home game against Tiny Herb and Tyranny's home game against Blue Rain were both top-level confrontations.

In the end, both matches ended with the home team's victory, both 7-3. Tiny Herb's win streak in the group arena was finally broken in this round. Of all the consecutive win records in this season, only Ye Xiu's individual win streak had yet to be sniped.

In this round, Wind Howl, who'd been swaggering with their recent win streak against weak teams, finally ate a loss. And this time, their opponent absolutely couldn't be called a strong team.

Miracle!

One of the new teams this season played their home game against Wind Howl and ultimately defeated them 7-3. In the confrontation between previous Excellent Era players, it was actually the seemingly lower, lagging members of Miracle that obtained victory.

Wind Howl was the team that defeated many weak teams to appear strong. But after this loss, their standing on the rankings immediately changed. Right now, they were seventh place with 148 points, followed by Hundred Blossoms only one point behind them. After that, ninth place was the recently-strong 301. After defeating Royal Style 8-2 in their home game this round, there were now only 7 points between them and the playoff zone.

But this time, 301 didn't use the fierce Life-Risking Strike again.

Chapter 1315

Terror and Despair

Team Wind Howl, after failing to complete a transfer during the winter transfer window that would solve their problems, entered the second half of the season.

Even though they had sustained repeated losses against strong teams in the first half of the season, Wind Howl was still firmly strong against the mid and low-tier teams. This allowed people to maintain a thread of faith in them.

But now, Team Miracle.

Even if this team did better than expected, that only meant that they had a certain amount of strength. With a score of 102 points halfway through the season in 12th place, they couldn't really be called strong. This was the typical score of a mid-tier team.

But now, Wind Howl had lost to this mid-tier team.

This was tantamount to tearing away their last piece of clothing. Could Wind Howl get results? That question mark was becoming bigger and bigger. In the post-match press conference, Wind Howl's Captain Tang Hao was furious, severely reprimanding his team for not working hard enough.

But could Wind Howl's problems really be solved just with hard work?

Things weren't that simple! Hard work couldn't solve everything in Glory. Aside from hard work, you have to have the correct method, and today's Wind Howl lacked not hard work, nor the determination to pursue victory, but rather the method for obtaining victory, especially in the team competition.

Originally, Wind Howl's key to victory was their dirty playing. Now, they had thrown away this key, but they hadn't found a new key that could continue to open locks. All the locksmiths were struggling away, but no matter how they tried, they just couldn't unlock that door to victory.

"Come on, work hard, get your spirits up, we can't lose!" These sort of morale-boosting sentiments couldn't solve the problem at the core.

What should Wind Howl do?

In this week's edition of the Esports Weekly, Wind Howl actually became the subject of the headline. After everyone finished discussing how weak An Wenyi was and how strong Bai Shu was, Wind Howl's strength as a team became the new topic everyone cared about.

Wind Howl themselves were suffering nonstop the protests of their fans. Wind Howl urgently needed a match where they could prove their strength. And so, their chance arrived in Round 25, with their home game against Samsara.

Was it a bit too extreme... aiming for them as a proof of strength?

Wind Howl's players felt the urge to eat their account cards.

"This is our best chance." Their captain Tang Hao, however, appeared fearless before them.

"What could prove our strength better than defeating Samsara?" said Tang Hao.

"Get your spirits up everyone, use this battle to show everyone who we Wind Howl really are." In the prep room before the match, Tang Hao mobilized his teammates.

But Wind Howl's players were truly somewhat numb to these sort of words by now.

Onstage, individual competition, three battles, loss loss loss.

The stadium resounded with boos. This was only the individual competition, and they were already getting wrecked?

Tang Hao's face turned livid. But what else could he do? He didn't know anymore...

Soon enough, the group arena ended. Now, not only were there boos, members of the crowd were already leaving the stadium early. They didn't even want to watch the important team competition anymore, and used their early departure as their strongest form of protest against the team.

After the individual competition was over, Wind Howl was 0-5.

Following that match with Happy, would they be swept 0-10 again this match? That time, at least, was Happy's home game. But this time, they were being swept by the away team. It was truly a slap to the face.

After the team competition, the cheers and shouts for Samsara were already louder than those for Wind Howl. What made Wind Howl lose even more face was that some of the cheers for Samsara were actually from Wind Howl's fangroup. What kind of disappointment and anger was this? The team competition finally began...

Meanwhile, on another battlefield...

"Again..." The audience members were dumbfounded as they watched Radiant's healer, 2 minutes and 34 seconds in the team round, slain by one knife of 301's Assassin Scene Killer.

Life-Risking Strike!

Even more fearsome was that this time, Scene Killer didn't die right after using Life-Risking Strike. He was actually protected by Bai Shu's Knight Tide. After that, 301's healer, the Paladin 007 piled on a series of healing skills, instantly pulling Scene Killer's health back...

An Assassin that had successfully used Life-Risking Strike to kill the target, actually didn't die?

Everyone was stunned. This was absolutely the first time this had ever happened in Glory history.

This Team 301 Degrees, to what extent would they perfect this assassination style?

Radiant's strength couldn't match 301's. After losing their healer, the rest of the team fell like a mountain toppled over, and the match was quickly decided. 301 earned a large victory this round, full points with a 10-0.

Shortly after, the match between Wind Howl and Samsara was also decided. Samsara lived up to expectations and defeated Wind Howl, sweeping them in a 10-0.

301 and Wind Howl had only had a difference of 8 points between them, and with this,

they instantly swapped positions on the leaderboard. Would Wind Howl be able to remain in the top 8? That would be determined by the final result of another team's match.

Hundred Blossoms faced Lightly this round.

This confrontation caused Wind Howl to fall into despair.

In the end, Hundred Blossoms defeated Lightly 8-2, rising to seventh place. 301 rose one place to eighth, finally entering the playoff zone. All of this had arrived terrifyingly quickly. At the halfway mark of the season, Round 19, 301 still only had 98 points, but after six rounds, they had already risen to 150 points. 52 points in six rounds, that was an average of 8.7 points per match, far surpassing the number one team Samsara's match average of 8.3 points.

In Round 19, 301 defeated Happy in the team round because Yang Cong used Life-Risking Strike to take out Happy's Little Cold Hands. But they had really gotten strong starting from Round 20. The arrival of the player Bai Shu truly gave 301 something that that Alliance had never seen before, a strategic playstyle revolving around the Assassin's Life-Risking Strike. Bai Shu had integrated into the team very quickly, making it obvious that he was a player with an extremely high Glory IQ. And the new system that he brought hadn't even reached its full potential yet. 301 was still testing things out, still getting used to everything. But even so, they had already earned a terrifying point-scoring rate. Once this strategy was perfected, what kind of fearsome and deadly power would it have?

Now, people were realizing that Bai Shu's arrival didn't just bring an unknown expert, but an unknown strategy, ultimately raising an unknown team.

"What a headache!" everyone complained. But at this moment, some people didn't even have the time to complain about this.

"What a headache, how long are we planning to play for?" Ye Xiu said.

"You guys already lost long ago, if not for your disgustingly dirty hide-and-seek this match would already be over! Is there a point is there a point? Just come out and 1v1 me! A good and honest match to decide victory, do you dare, huh, do you dare?" Huang Shaotian raged.

Just as all the various matches were ending, Blue Rain's home game against Happy had

already lasted over forty minutes. Right now, Blue Rain had lost one player, and the five others were all on the field. Happy, meanwhile, only had two players left. But even in this situation, Happy's two players still didn't GG, nor did they come out to end this faster. They were actually very patiently dealing with Blue Rain.

"What bastards!" Seeing this scene, a number of elite guild members felt their hearts sour.

Once upon a time, in the Heavenly Domain, they sent out large armies, only for them to be cruelly teased by these two guys! Seeing how even Blue Rain was now dragged around by them for so long, everyone suddenly felt a bit gratified.

Lord Grim, Deception.

These were the two players still alive from Happy. Without a doubt, Happy didn't have any chance of victory against Blue Rain, who still had an intact roster. But these two people still refused to give up, ducking and hiding all over, dragging out what should have been a 31-minute match over the current 42-minute mark.

"Before the last moment, the match isn't considered over," Ye Xiu lectured Huang Shaotian very seriously. "1v1? Is that a battle method that belongs in the team competition?"

"You... What kind of method is your hide-and-seek then?" Huang Shaotian used a powerful self-control to turn his swearing into ellipses.

"This is training, do you understand? The playoffs give points by number of players remaining. We Happy are already adjusting to the rhythm of the playoffs. Are you convinced now?"

"Convinced you....." The powerful self-control was once again exercised. "You two, you're still trying to earn some player points?"

"Not necessarily! If you're skilled, then come and 1v2 us!" Ye Xiu called.

"Alright! I'll fight you two by myself!" Huang Shaotian said.

"Everyone else, back off by a hundred body-lengths," said Ye Xiu.

"They've backed off, backed off."

"That fast?" Ye Xiu was doubtful.

"Backing off right now."

"Alright, let me take a look."

Blue Rain's players were instantly on full alert. Between the five of them, they had a 360-degree view of their surroundings. Even the slightest silhouette wouldn't escape their notice.

"You didn't back off! Liars!" Ye Xiu said angrily.

"You didn't even look! You're the liar!" Huang Shaotian was also furious. They hadn't seen anyone poking their head up to look. This guy wasn't even over here.

"I guessed!" Ye Xiu said.

"You sneak!" Huang Shaotian shouted.

"Stop wasting time, come find us already, this match is already so long, aren't you all annoyed?" Ye Xiu called.

Everyone felt tears streaming down their faces. You're the ones at fault here!

"Not too far off. They should be in this area." In Blue Rain's team chat, Yu Wenzhou had already made this judgment.

"Split up. Shaotian and I will take the channel on the left. Song Xiao, you and Zheng Xuan take the right, around that large boulder." Yu Wenzhou continued to lay out plans.

"Huh? What about me?" The Paladin player Xu Jingxi was confused. His name hadn't been listed in the split.

"Mm, left and right are both ambushes. You just walk directly forward, serve as the bait," said Yu Wenzhou.

"Too cruel..." Xu Jingxi felt like crying.

Chapter 1316

Pointless Move

A hide-and-seek match that had lasted for over ten minutes now. If this were Happy's home game, Happy's fans might still find this interesting. But this was Blue Rain's home game. Seeing these two people with no chance of reversal but still shamelessly dragging this on, they'd started booing early on.

But just then, when Ye Xiu expressed that this was training for the playoffs, the boos were actually interrupted for a second. In that instant, everyone actually agreed with this sentiment, but soon enough, as Huang Shaotian sent a series of messages, everyone woke up. This was just a fabricated excuse, right? The boos suddenly grew even louder.

Then why did they still want to drag this out?

To be honest, not even Happy's players were sure. Even if it was for a reason like accumulating match experience, this right now was nowhere near the rhythm of an ordinary match. What kind of experience could they get?

Only Ye Xiu knew the real reason.

If it were just himself, he probably would have directly said "GG" by now. But he still had Mo Fan beside him. With only two people left, Ye Xiu was already prepared to give up, but Mo Fan's Deception still went on the rhythm of escape.

"This guy..." Ye Xiu was surprised, but he quickly followed.

Mo Fan had played a number of professional matches now. He should understand the situation they were currently facing, he should be able to judge that they didn't have much of a chance with a 2v5. But he didn't give up, he only temporarily avoided facing the opponent head-on, as though waiting for an opportunity to counterattack. Ye Xiu couldn't bring himself to quell his enthusiasm, and could only follow along, running and hiding for over ten whole minutes.

In over ten minutes, the two just ran away. They hadn't found the chance to take out a

single target. But Mo Fan was very patient and very persistent. Ye Xiu, too, was never someone who gave up easily. He wasn't as bullheaded as Mo Fan, but since he was being stubborn with this guy right now, he might as well play to his fullest, and put effort into his running around.

Until now.

"This is probably it." After studying his surroundings, Ye Xiu said this to Mo Fan in the chat.

Mo Fan's Deception also looked around and didn't object. He was an expert at running away. Although they faced fewer pursuers now than they would in the crowded in-game world, the pressure here was much higher. Professionals were no trivial matter, after all. Fortunately, Mo Fan had improved greatly, otherwise he certainly wouldn't have been able to evade the enemy team's pursuit for these ten minutes.

Right now, they had finally reached a situation where there was no more path to take.

There was no road of retreat, they could only go forward. Now, if they wanted to run, they could only forcibly break through the encirclement. Ye Xiu carefully studied the surroundings, but he saw Deception's hand moved, lifting the ninjato in front of him. Following Deception's gaze, he also saw Blue Rain's Paladin, Soul Speaker, slowly wandering toward them.

Deception was just about to jump forward, but a string of words from Ye Xiu jumped out in the chat. "It's bait."

Mo Fan paused, and then responded with his own string of words. "Then what do we do?"

"Just wait, ignore them," Ye Xiu answered.

And so Soul Speaker walked closer and closer, until he didn't dare walk any closer, but he still saw no sign of the two targets. Xu Jingxi couldn't do anything, and could only ask in the team chat.

After a while, a message from Yu Wenzhou appeared in the match chat. "This is meaningless! We've already stepped on the stairs for you, just come down already!"

"So that's what this is about! I was just wondering why you were looking down on us

so much," Ye Xiu answered.

"Right, then just come out!" Yu Wenzhou said.

"Can't. If I fell for such a crude trick, how embarrassing would that be?" said Ye Xiu.

"Then what do you want to do?" Yu Wenzhou asked.

"I can already tell the positions where you guys are lying in wait, I'll try forcibly breaking through from here," Ye Xiu said.

"Left or right?" Yu Wenzhou asked.

"Either."

As soon as this message appeared in the chat, Lord Grim's silhouette immediately appeared in Swoksaar's field of view.

"Oh hey, what a coincidence," Ye Xiu greeted in the chat.

"Perfect timing!" Huang Shaotian shouted, and Troubling Rain immediately swung his sword to meet him.

"Now you're the one in charge of the chat?" Ye Xiu laughed. Lord Grim rushed forward without any sign of weakness.

The two characters were fighting in earnest. Huang Shaotian wasn't an opponent that Ye Xiu could get rid of so quickly. Yu Wenzhou had already controlled Swoksaar to support him, and the rest of Blue Rain had already run up to surround him.

Yu Wenzhou immediately realized something was wrong.

"Where's Deception?" He stopped his controls and shouted in the chat.

A silhouette charged forward!

Blue Rain's arrangement had originally locked down this area, but because of how Lord Grim had suddenly jumped forward with a powerful attack, he'd drawn everyone's attention and Blue Rain had suddenly left openings. Mo Fan was extremely precise at choosing positions, and Deception rushed toward these openings. Before

Blue Rain's players could react, Deception had already escaped from the area they controlled.

"Let's see where you can run!" Huang Shaotian shouted as Troubling Rain slashed ferociously.

"Who said I wanted to run?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"Then this is?" Yu Wenzhou didn't understand.

"Decoy! Threaten the east and strike to the west!" Ye Xiu said.

"What's the point in his running away?" Yu Wenzhou asked.

"Run for another ten minutes?" Ye Xiu offered.

"..." Blue Rain was truly, completely speechless. This is an official match! Are you guys seriously just playing hide-and-seek here?

"Go die!" Troubling Rain's attacks became even more frantic. Zheng Xuan and Song Xiao's characters had also arrived, beginning to surround and attack Lord Grim, while Swoksaar restarted his curse casting. Lord Grim's health plummeted.

But at this moment, behind Swoksaar, a silhouette appeared. Deception had circled around and suddenly came into sight over here, and the Shurikens in his hand flew outward toward Swoksaar. Yu Wenzhou heard the warning from his teammates and quickly dodged. But after Deception used the Shurikens, he instantly arrived before him, jumped up, and slashed downward toward Swoksaar.

Ding!

The sound of metal colliding with metal resounded. Troubling Rain used a Triple Slash, instantly flashing in front of Swoksaar and blocking this attack from Deception. The next two slashes smoothly continued to push Deception back.

But because Troubling Rain had come over here, the encirclement around Lord Grim suddenly had an opening. With a toss of a grenade, and a Shining Cut, Lord Grim split through to arrive in front of Swoksaar, but the attack failed to land - he twisted into a Charge and once again crashed toward Troubling Rain.

Huang Shaotian knew that if he were passed through again, this guy would definitely escape.

Formless Phantom Blade!

Huang Shaotian directly used an ultimate attack. In front of Troubling Rain, the swordlight formed a net, flying toward Lord Grim.

But in the chat, a message from his teammate suddenly popped out. "Behind you!"

Behind Troubling Rain was Deception, who had just been forced away by his Triple Slash.

He returned so quickly?

Huang Shaotian was shocked. This was to say, he hadn't actually driven this guy back earlier, this guy had voluntarily chosen to back off. Only then could he so calmly execute this sudden swing around.

Body Bind Technique!

Mo Fan's sudden explosion of hand speed and control was incredibly powerful. Huang Shaotian truly hadn't expected that he would return so quickly, and any warning from his teammates was too late. No matter how powerful Formless Phantom Blade was from the front, the back was filled with openings. Deception stuck right to him and directly interrupted his powerful attack. However, he didn't use his skill until the end, he actually once again took the initiative to retreat.

But Huang Shaotian didn't feel fortunate at all. Deception had retreated, but Lord Grim's Charge had now arrived right before him.

Boom!

Troubling Rain was blown to the side. Deception had already thrown out a Smoke Bomb, filling the area with purple fog. Lord Grim continued to move and instantly vanished within. The skill that Yu Wenzhou had prepared could now only rely on luck as he threw it in there, and nothing came of it in the end. By the time Blue Rain passed through the purple fog, those two from Happy had already run far off.

"Is there a point to this, is there??" His slashes couldn't reach them anymore, so Huang

Shaotian could only vent his anger through the chat.

"Haha, I think it's pretty interesting!" Ye Xiu answered.

"Referee, a guy like this should be directly disqualified!" Huang Shaotian complained to the judge. But this was an official League match, not the All-Stars. Even though the current situation was infuriating, they hadn't broken any rules, and the judge couldn't directly decide the outcome. He could only ignore Huang Shaotian. Blue Rain's five players were truly depressed as they had no other choice but to regroup and continue the chase.

After another ten minutes of struggle, Blue Rain caught up to Lord Grim and Deception, resulting in another intense battle. This time, Blue Rain finally didn't miss their opportunity, and killed the two off very ferociously. In the short amount of time between the end of the match and all the players logging off, Huang Shaotian and Zheng Xuan actually flogged the deceased corpses of Lord Grim and Deception.

This was an extreme way of humiliating the opponent and incredibly rude. It would be no surprise for such behavior to incite a war of words. But at this time, seeing the extremely agitated actions of these two Blue Rain players, all of the audience members felt a pleasure welling up within them.

These two guys had unnecessarily dragged on this battle for a full 23 minutes.

If you drag this on and actually accomplish something, then fine. But these two didn't manage to do anything, they were just running and hiding, all the way until they had nowhere else to run or hide. Was this purely just to sicken everyone?

But in the post-match press conference, Ye Xiu didn't see it like this at all.

"A pointless move? Of course not. We were searching for an opportunity the entire time! But Blue Rain simply did too well today. Overall, very strong. We couldn't find our chance, and regretfully lost the match in the end. Alas!" Ye Xiu lamented.

The reporters were in a daze. Motherfucker, what's there to regret about losing a 2v5? How come from your tone it sounded like you were doing a 2v5 and then messed up, allowing the five to defeat you?

"Next time, we'll continue to work hard!" After the gloom, Ye Xiu eagerly expressed his stance.

Still work hard?!

He's just saying that, he's not serious, is he?

The reporters, who were ready to flip a table after those 23 minutes of useless struggle, felt like collapsing.

Chapter 1317

Concentrated Hot Topics

Even though Blue Rain won this match 8-2, their spirits were low because of those last 23 minutes.

But Yu Wenzhou, who could normally analyze any problem, was completely perplexed this time. He truly could not see the reason why Ye Xiu and Mo Fan had dragged on the battle for those 23 minutes. Were they really looking for an opportunity to defeat the five of them? Yu Wenzhou didn't think Ye Xiu was that naive. Were they really just trying to screw with everyone on purpose? Yu Wenzhou didn't think Ye Xiu was that childish.

Then what was the reason?

In fact, Yu Wenzhou had thought about this the entire time after the battle ended, and when the players shook hands at the end, he actually asked Ye Xiu. But Ye Xiu had merely given him an inscrutable smile.

Now, when the reporters asked him about his opinion on those extra 23 minutes, Yu Wenzhou was very honest as he shook his head. "I was thinking about this the whole time, but I could not think of what their goal was in doing this."

"What kind of goal could there be? He was just doing this to screw with us!" Huang Shaotian said immediately.

Yu Wenzhou smiled wryly and shook his head, expressing his disagreement with that sentiment.

"You can't always think of him as so high and profound," said Huang Shaotian.

"But at the very least, there has to be logic," said Yu Wenzhou.

"Screwing with people, isn't that a very logical thing for him?" Huang Shaotian said.

"Normally, perhaps. But not during a match," said Yu Wenzhou.

These two Gods of Blue Rain just directly discussed in front of the reporters, but in the end they still didn't reach a conclusion. Those 23 infuriating minutes had become an unsolvable riddle.

What kind of secret was hidden within?

Some of the less serious media just reported like this, garnering a sizable reaction in the circle and provoking all sorts of incredible theories.

Countless people were stuck on these 23 minutes. But Happy itself wasn't too concerned about it at all. The 23 minutes came and went, and Ye Xiu hadn't said anything about this to Mo Fan. He'd just been helping Mo Fan, with his personality, do what he wanted to.

But Ye Xiu very much appreciated how, after he'd created a diversion to help Mo Fan escape the encirclement, that kid had doubled back to try and help out Ye Xiu. In reality, Ye Xiu hadn't planned for that to happen; he'd been prepared to sacrifice himself and then let Mo Fan to continue to hide for as long as he was able. But Mo Fan had actually returned after escaping to save Ye Xiu. It looked like this guy finally knew what it meant to be teammates. And in that moment, when he'd been helping Ye Xiu break free, the two of them had coordinated quite well.

Watching each of Happy's rookies grow and develop put Ye Xiu in a very good mood. But Happy's scores weren't nearly as crazy as they'd been during that one period. From their loss in Round 19 to 301, to their loss to Blue Rain today, in those seven rounds, Happy had lost five matches.

Right now, Happy was in sixth place. In terms of placement, that only seemed slightly worse than the fifth place they'd been able to maintain earlier. But back in Round 18, Happy had been earning points even faster than Samsara, whereas now, Samsara's lead was unchanged and the only two teams in the second tier, above 180 points, were Blue Rain and Tiny Herb. After that, Tyranny, Thunderclap, and Happy were in the 160-point tier, and Hundred Blossoms and 301 were in the 150-point tier, which wasn't far off at all from the 160-point tier.

The situation of the top 8 instantly became more complex. 301 was shooting up after the winter transfers, increasing the competition. For now, Wind Howl had become the sacrifice for 301 and were kicked out of the top 8.

Still, the differences weren't too large right now, and Wind Howl certainly wasn't done for. Although their current situation was so bad that their home fans were cheering for the away team, they still maintained the strength of their individual members. Even if they still couldn't find a suitable system for the team competition, as long as they played the individual battles well and earned points from the weaker teams, Wind Howl still had a chance at top 8.

After them, Void couldn't be ignored either. Misty Rain, still struggling to solve their strategic problems, seemed to be a bit weaker. And then Royal Style, Miracle, and such teams were now a solid 40-50 points behind. They didn't have much of a chance at the top 8. As for the teams that were to be relegated, Bright Green and Seaside, their chances of survival had basically dwindled away.

The situation with the top 8 was still the event to watch. Who would rise to here? Who would fall from here? This was the topic most nerve-wracking and thrilling about the regular season.

In the blink of an eye, Round 26 began. The teams near the eighth-place cutoff all became important subjects for the media to report on.

Among them, Wind Howl, who'd just been thrown out of the top 8 after Round 25, desperately needed to return to their place. For a team that'd claimed that their goal was to obtain the championship, it'd just be too embarrassing if they couldn't even make it to the playoffs. But Wind Howl's luck with their match schedule was reaching an end. After easily abusing a series of weak teams, it was finally time for them to face their demonic match schedule.

Round 26, away game against Tyranny.

Round 27, home game against Blue Rain.

Round 28, home game against 301.

Two powerhouses and a competitor for the top 8. Those who didn't have much faith left in Wind Howl were already predicting what place they'd fall to after these three rounds. Even Wind Howl themselves expressed their nervousness during team meetings. But to the outside world, they still had to maintain appearances, repeatedly expressing how their condition was improving.

And so, they faced Team Tyranny. As the two teams shook hands before the match

began, Lin Jingyan stared at this unfamiliar Wind Howl and felt overcome with emotion.

When he'd left, he had already been past his prime. His condition had slipped, and he no longer had the ability to serve as the core of a team. This could be considered a normal replacement of the old with the new. But after this, Wind Howl also let go of Fang Rui and a whole host of old "officials," instead digging up new face after new face from outside.

Lin Jingyan was now already completely unfamiliar with this Wind Howl. Unfamiliar with the players, unfamiliar with their playstyles, and unfamiliar with the atmosphere this team now expressed.

Lin Jingyan didn't know what he should be feeling.

In terms of results, it was true that Wind Howl last season had done far better than it had while he'd been on the team. This season, even though they'd fallen to ninth, that was about the same score they'd had while Lin Jingyan was still there. Their team had always hovered around eighth.

From this it could be seen that these new Wind Howl players were quite strong. They'd done what the old Wind Howl had never managed to do, but the outside world viewed them as being in poor condition. Reading between the lines, this showed just how high everyone's expectations toward Wind Howl were.

Playoffs? No. The people in Wind Howl now were all hoping to charge for the championship victory. And this was a height to which Lin Jingyan had never managed to lead Wind Howl. From this point, he wasn't as strong as this new generation of Wind Howl players.

It looked like Lin Jingyan was in no position to criticize this Wind Howl. But he was somewhat saddened by this new Wind Howl.

Elite player after elite player had gathered in this team, but in the end, they had molded together into an unremarkable whole. Even now, they didn't have a mature strategic system.

"What in the world are you guys doing?"

As he shook hands with these current Wind Howl players, Lin Jingyan truly wished he

could ask them all this question.

He was now gone from Wind Howl. But after so many years with them, how could his feelings disappear so quickly?

Seeing Wind Howl's fans leave the stadium early, cheering for the opposite team, Lin Jingyan could imagine just how disappointed they were. He was someone who understood these fans the best.

When he turned around and looked, in the seats reserved for the guest team fans, the audience members were sitting all scattered about. Was Wind Howl's fan group dispersing because of their disappointment?

But Wind Howl's flag was still flying as high as ever.

It was Old Lu.

Lin Jingyan saw the fan who was raising that flag high up. It was a fan who had followed Wind Howl for a whole nine years - he'd been with this team longer than any of the players currently in Wind Howl. Accurately speaking, he'd been with them even longer than Lin Jingyan had. After all, Lin Jingyan had said farewell to Wind Howl after Season 8, leaving his experience with the team capped at seven years.

He had left.

But Old Lu was still here, lifting Wind Howl's flag just like before, occasionally giving it a strong wave.

Lin Jingyan waved his hand at him, and Old Lu nodded toward him.

They'd known each other for nine years now, growing alongside Wind Howl as this team was established.

Did Old Lu still remember what the old Wind Howl was like? Lin Jingyan couldn't help but wonder.

Very soon, the first individual competition was beginning, and Lin Jingyan stood from his seat. For this match, he was the first to go on in the individual match.

The applause from the crowd now was from Tyranny's fans, but Lin Jingyan couldn't

help but look toward the away team's audience section. Old Lu wasn't waving the flag right now. It looked like he was saying something to the seemingly bleak Wind Howl fans beside him.

Lin Jingyan didn't worry about it any more; this wasn't something that he should worry about. He walked steadily toward the stage, at the same time glancing at the electronic display to see who his opponent would be.

Tang Hao?

When the name was displayed, Lin Jingyan hesitated for just the barest moment.

He turned his head to look toward Wind Howl's player area, and indeed, it was Tang Hao coming onstage.

Wind Howl wasn't letting their powerful general anchor the group arena? They were sending him to the individual round?

What were they trying to do? Get a head start? The team's spirits were low, so they wanted to get everyone energized with a strong opening?

Even as Lin Jingyan made guesses, his footsteps were steady as he stepped onto the stage.

Ever since that time he'd been defeated by Tang Hao at the All-Star Weekend, Lin Jingyan had never met Tang Hao in an individual battle. Now, his skill level was likely even worse than it'd been at that All-Stars.

But...

"Would he be any more difficult to fight than Lord Grim?" Lin Jingyan said to himself.

Chapter 1318

Only Victory

As soon as he was onstage, Lin Jingyan set aside all his feelings toward Wind Howl. Right now, he was a member of Team Tyranny. No matter who his opponent was, victory was his number one priority.

He entered the match. His character loaded in and moved forward toward the center of the map. But when the Brawler Demon Subduer appeared in his field of view, Lin Jingyan couldn't help but feel a sharp pang of sadness.

Sometimes, he envied Zhang Jiale.

He had transferred to Tyranny, but at least he hadn't separated from his character.

The character belonged to the team. Lin Jingyan understood this, of course. But after seven years of partnership, he felt that he and Demon Subduer were one. The Brawler character that Tyranny had made for him, Dark Thunder, wasn't bad at all, no worse than Demon Subduer. In fact, in order to fit his style, this Dark Thunder might be more similar to the old Demon Subduer than Demon Subduer itself currently was.

But still, it wasn't the same...

It wasn't just the name. All of the feelings that had accumulated after so many years of partnership with his character, they couldn't just be transferred to a new character so easily, even if the stats were almost the same. This was perhaps something that rookies could never understand - probably they would all happily change to a stronger and more suitable character if given the chance.

In the end, this day had finally arrived.

Lin Jingyan sighed to himself. Ever since leaving Wind Howl, he had always wondered what it had be like if he had to face Demon Subduer one day. But before, he had only ever met his old character in the team competition, where the situation was so chaotic that the feeling wasn't particularly sharp. But now, the individual round, it was as though he and Demon Subduer were the last ones on Earth, and Lin Jingyan's feelings

were tumultuous.

Demon Subduer was circling around his spawn point. It seemed that Tang Hao had guessed that Lin Jingyan would choose to move strategically, and so he was currently studying his surroundings very carefully.

Lin Jingyan watched him, and, slowly and carefully, he controlled his Dark Thunder to follow Demon Subduer's turning, finely adjusting his position.

Right there!

With Lin Jingyan's thought, Dark Thunder swept his hand and threw a Paralysis Needle.

What a simple ambush, everyone thought.

But it hit!

Even though a Paralysis Needle was silent, Tang Hao had been turning Demon Subduer's field of view the whole time. How could a top God like him make the naive mistake of leaving a blind spot?

But he hadn't discovered this Paralysis Needle, and this simple ambush actually succeeded in hitting Demon Subduer's body.

Dark Thunder jumped out from his hiding spot.

This was a map with very good weather. The sunlight shone in mottled patterns on the ground, and as Dark Thunder rushed toward Demon Subduer, the chaotic shadows swayed.

Demon Subduer couldn't move after being hit by the Paralysis Needle, and Dark Thunder tossed a handful of sand right onto his face.

After Paralysis, Blind...

Consecutive status effects. No matter how skilled Tang Hao was, in a situation like this, he couldn't withstand the attacks of an old and experienced expert like Lin Jingyan.

Lin Jingyan had calculated the duration of Blind very precisely. Right when it was

about to wear off, a Brick hit Demon Subduer's head from behind.

After Blind, Dizzy.

And so a new offensive began. When he fought until he had no way of continuing, Lin Jingyan wasn't greedy. He knocked Demon Subduer over and then quickly hid himself again.

Tang Hao almost felt like he was going crazy. This series of attacks had really come out of nowhere. How had that Paralysis Needle managed to hit him? With that barrage, he had lost a fourth of his health, while his head was still filled with fog.

Poor Tang Hao lacked the multi-angle view or the replay ability of the broadcasters.

At first, the audience had also been confused as to how Tang Hao hadn't seen the needle, but Tang Hao's point of view was replayed several times, and people realized that in that moment, there truly had been no Paralysis Needle in his view.

Where had the Paralysis Needle gone?

After analysis from all different angles, the crowd finally realized what was strange.

It was the light!

It was the shadow!

It was Lin Jingyan's choice of position. When he had controlled Dark Thunder to throw the needle, it had passed through an area where the light and shadows interlaced. And so, in that instant, the needle truly seemed to vanish.

This was something that could be done in Glory?

The crowd was dumbfounded.

Using descriptors like extensive and profound to describe an online game was somewhat excessive. Even the creators of this game couldn't have thought of so many details. It was this group of pro players, those standing at the top of Glory, who were constantly digging up the subtle quirks of this game, and then finding uses for them in a match that could shock even the game's creators.

Did Tang Hao know about this sort of thing?

Seeing how off-balance Demon Subduer seemed as he flipped up from the ground, everyone felt a bit sympathetic for him. To be beaten down like this in the very first moments of a match, he must be very alarmed.

Demon Subduer moved around frantically. He couldn't figure out how he had just been hit by that needle, and so he no longer dared to let Demon Subduer to just stand waiting in one place. He leapt around the area, but he couldn't find any trace of Dark Thunder.

Playing dirty. Again, it was the dirty playstyle.

Tang Hao grit his teeth. Because Wind Howl was in a bad situation right now, the outside world had all sorts of criticism for their decision to give up on playing dirty. Tang Hao just hoped that soon, they could prove that their current style was much stronger than playing dirty. But now, on the individual battlefield, he was knocked over by dirty playing until he couldn't find north. And this person was Lin Jingyan, the former user of Demon Subduer, the old man that Tang Hao had already surpassed at that All-Stars with the "junior succeeds senior."

"Hiding and sneaking!" Tang Hao said in the chat, with some irritation. He wasn't someone who really liked chatting with the opponent during a match, as he preferred to use his fists to talk. But now, he couldn't even find his target. What frustration!

"Hiding and sneaking is another method of obtaining victory," Lin Jingyan answered.

"We'll see how long you can hide for," Tang Hao said.

"You just be more careful," Lin Jingyan replied.

Demon Subduer continued to move, turning and searching nonstop. What about Lin Jingyan's Dark Thunder? Under Tang Hao's intense scrutiny, he couldn't hide too comfortably anymore. But clearly, he was extremely familiar with this map. To be able to create that incredible situation with the light earlier, did Lin Jingyan's understanding of and skill in using this map need to be mentioned?

Tang Hao searched and searched, but he couldn't find him. Lin Jingyan, however, had already finished another round of adjustments. Dark Thunder once again withdrew a Paralysis Needle, and now just waited for the right chance! Now that Tang Hao was

controlling Demon Subduer to run around nonstop, it really was more difficult to find an opening.

But Lin Jingyan's view wasn't fixed on Demon Subduer's body. Instead, he was waiting for Demon Subduer to enter his field of view.

Throw!

A Paralysis Needle flew outward again. Demon Subduer's view was turning, clearly toward this direction.

But...

The entire crowd lifted their heads to look at the display screen. Even though Tang Hao's view was turned in the direction of the needle, there was a wall positioned just there. When Tang Hao glanced over, the needle was still flying behind the wall, and he couldn't see it! By the time the needle passed the wall and was in sight, Demon Subduer's view had already turned away, and then, hit...

A repeat of the match's beginning.

Tang Hao was going crazy, but what could he do? His mood had no way of dispelling the status effects his character suffered. Lin Jingyan very steadily reused the earlier series of attacks, forming a seamless combo that the opponent had absolutely no way of breaking.

Demon Subduer's health plummeted another 25%. He now had only half health remaining, while Lin Jingyan's Dark Thunder had yet to be injured. Everyone watching felt as though their eyes would fall out of their heads.

Even if Wind Howl's results in the team competition were poor, their individual members were still quite strong. Tang Hao against Lin Jingyan, this conflict between old and new Brawlers had already been decided at the All-Star Weekend two years ago with the victory of the new. Everyone could see that Tang Hao's skill level was indeed above that of Lin Jingyan.

But that "skill level," in reality, only referred to technical skill. In terms of this, the old general really couldn't keep up with the new and cutting-edge. But in this battle, had Tang Hao had the opportunity to display his superior technical skill?

No. Not at all.

Both times, he had suffered a sneak attack from a Paralysis Needle. With one attack, his character was completely out of his control. What kind of technique could he display?

Using the map, Lin Jingyan could knock away half of Demon Subduer's health without losing any of his own. If this weren't happening before everyone's eyes right now, who could believe this match would play out like this?

Demon Subduer was once again knocked to the ground. But this time, when he jumped back up in a rage, he discovered that Dark Thunder hadn't vanished, but was instead right in front of him.

"How come you're not running?" Tang Hao said through clenched teeth, immediately preparing to attack. But Dark Thunder had already rushed toward him first. He hadn't run away, he had stayed here to continue launching his offensive!

"Perfect timing!" Tang Hao's spirits rose. The two unexplained ambushes earlier had made him depressed and frustrated beyond belief. But now, seeing that Lin Jingyan actually planned to fight him directly now, he grew incomparably excited.

Would a fight like this scare me?

The two Brawlers swung their fists and began a frenzied fight.

In terms of technical skill, Tang Hao was indeed superior. In this sort of direct battle, Lin Jingyan was at a disadvantage.

But in the end, the one who fell first was still Demon Subduer, and this time, he could not stand back up. His health had already reached zero.

"If I couldn't even take care of you when you were at 50% health, then I really should just retire." Lin Jingyan left this final message as he stared down at the fallen Demon Subduer. His Dark Thunder still had 17% health left.

Using 50% of his own health, Tang Hao knocked away 83%. It was powerful, it was domineering, as expected of the number one Brawler. But, he lost.

The crowd's applause was sent to Lin Jingyan.

Even though he was no longer the number one Brawler, even though he had fallen out of the All-Star rankings, even though the radiance of a God had already left him, he won.

On this arena, what fame or skill could compare to the simple truth of victory?

Only victory was the most real. What use was skill if it couldn't achieve victory?

The current Team Wind Howl included many such players with high skill. But they lacked victory, and thus they lost the faith of their supporters.

When Lin Jingyan came offstage, he looked at the audience section for the guest team fans. The seats, already somewhat empty, were quiet and still. Old Lu was holding Wind Howl's flag and just standing there...

Chapter 1319

Victory

1-0.

Tyranny took the lead in their home game.

This shouldn't have been anything surprising, but the one who lost was Wind Howl's current core player, Tang Hao, while the one who won had been Wind Howl's former core player, Ling Jingyan. The circumstances behind the outcome completely changed the flavor of it.

The cheers from the Tyranny fans in the stadium weren't too crazy, though. After all, the importance of this confrontation revolved around Wind Howl's past and present. The Tyranny fans weren't able to understand it. As for Wind Howl's fans? There were a few places where the away team fans sat, and right now, Wind Howl's fans looked very dispirited. The first individual round had just finished, and some of them had already gotten up and left.

Lin Jingyan returned to his seat, and his teammates congratulated him on his win. In many people's eyes, beating Tang Hao should be a joyous event.

However, Lin Jingyan didn't seem that excited. He was a gentle and polite player. He simply smiled as he sat down.

As for Wind Howl's side?

He didn't even look at them.

Even though he harbored some nostalgia for his character Demon Subduer and Wind Howl, the past was the past. He was in his declining years, but as long as there was still a path forward, there would always be a future.

His future was here... Lin Jingyan clutched Dark Thunder's account card in his hands.

Meanwhile, in another stadium, another individual round was about to be completed.

Blue Rain vs Tiny Herb.

Lu Hanwen vs Gao Yingjie.

The two most eye-catching players of the new generation, one directly being thrown into the main roster, climbing his way through the cruel competition, while the other was carefully protected, adapting to the environment step by step.

Two different methods, but both for the purpose of training the two into outstanding pro players. Right now, the two were no longer inexperienced greenhorns. The two symbols of the new generation were fighting 1 on 1 for their respective teams.

Formless Phantom Blade!

Lu Hanwen's Flowing Clouds let loose a high-level skill. Flowing Clouds was a rarely seen Greatsword Blade Master. Although his attack speed was slow, the area of effect range was greater. His Silver weapon, Flame Shadow, drew a clear arc in the air in an attempt to knock down the airborne Kind Tree.

"There's nowhere to run!" Lu Hanwen excitedly typed into the public chat. This youth seemed to have endless energy. Everyone could always feel the passion flowing through him.

In comparison, Gao Yingjie wasn't as flashy as him, but having been sheltered by the team, he had a more thorough understanding of his team's expectations for him. His thirst for victory was no less than Lu Hanwen's, and his playing on stage always appeared meticulous.

Despite being caught by Flowing Cloud's Formless Phantom Blade, Gao Yingjie wasn't flustered. Attacks from Greatsword Blade Masters were more powerful, but that was at the sacrifice of speed. Speed was the weakness of Greatsword users, and an area that could be exploited!

Disperse Powder!

Kind Tree threw a handful of Disperse Powder. It dispelled debuffs, but more importantly, it also reduced the target's attack speed. Although it was a low-level skill and its debuff effect wasn't too strong, for an already slow Flowing Clouds, it only exacerbated the wound.

Hit!

Under the effects of Disperse Powder, Flowing Cloud's offensive instantly turned sluggish. Still, in order to land the Disperse Powder, Gao Yingjie had been prepared for Kind Tree to take a hit. But at that moment...

Immortal Guides the Way!

Lu Hanwen cancelled Formless Phantom Blade and switched to Immortal Guides the Way.

Also a hit!

The powerful blow-away effect instantly sent Kind Tree flying. Flowing Cloud didn't give chase. Disperse Powder was difficult to handle for a Greatsword Blade Master. He had wanted to buy himself more distance, so he quickly put the effects of the skill to use.

This low-level skill with a blow-away effect had a very long ending lag, up to 10 seconds.

10 seconds!

Immortal Guides the Way didn't send the target flying far enough to take 10 seconds to return. Gao Yingjie wasn't willing to waste these 10 seconds. After being blown away, Kind Tree quickly recovered as he landed, but he didn't get up after rolling. He swept up his broom and started flying through the air.

10 seconds?

It wouldn't even take 2 seconds for him to get back!

Frost Powder!

Another magic powder sprinkled down. This skill wasn't a direct attack though, instead it imbued his weapon with an ice element.

Morning Dew!

This was the name of the Silver broom in Kind Tree's hands. After applying Frost

Powder, the broom glowed with a blue light. Fine ice crystals rained down everywhere it passed.

Attack!

Witches had strong close combat abilities.

Even though they mainly relied on normal attacks, through the application of magic powders and their ability to jump six times in the air with the mastery of their brooms, the "normal" attacks from Witches weren't normal in the slightest.

"You're not going to win like this!" A message from Lu Hanwen popped up in the chat.

Earthquake Sword!

Flowing Cloud's greatsword flung out a Spellblade skill. Closely following it was a flash of sword light, another Sword Draw.

A vertical Earthquake Sword and a horizontal Sword Draw, in addition to Flowing Cloud's abnormal attack range, crisscrossed into a gigantic cross as it soared towards Kind Tree. The attack came out of nowhere, and the intertwining skills complemented each other perfectly.

But...

"Attack speed..." Yu Wenzhou sighed from off stage.

Slow... this flaw was deeply etched into Yu Wenzhou's heart. And Flowing Cloud's beautiful attack had a few openings because of his slow attack speed.

There might be openings, but could the other side seize them?

Some openings required strong perception and high skill to grasp. For example, Yu Wenzhou noticed the current openings formed by Flowing Cloud's two skills, but if he were in Kind Heart's position, he would have a very difficult time taking advantage of them.

Would Gao Yingjie be able to do it?

No problem.

On Tiny Herb's side, Wang Jiexi quietly made this prediction when he saw this attack.

Gao Yingjie should be able to see and grasp these openings.

However, should be able to and actually doing it were two very different things.

Gao Yingjie didn't disappoint Wang Jiexi though.

Bearing the weight of Tiny Herb's future, Gao Yingjie seized the opportunity. Kind Heart swayed gently in the air, dodging the two intersecting skills.

Whoosh!

Morning Dew swung down, hitting Flowing Cloud.

Magic powders could not be stacked, but Ice Powder's effect reduced the speed of the target and had a chance to freeze. Both effects deadly for Flowing Cloud.

Victory had been decided...

The audience could already tell.

Afterwards, there were sighs, and there were cheers.

The feelings stemming from victory always came from the two extremes.

The outcome of the battle between the two new generation stars had been decided. With Gao Yingjie's victory, Tiny Herb took the lead in their away game. On another stage, the two seniors of the old generation were still fighting it out.

Bang!

A deafening sound.

The collision between weapons carried the momentum and visual effects from skills. The two characters bounced back and fell to the ground.

"How fierce! You're putting your life on the line. Aren't you afraid of breaking your hands?" Lord Grim stood back up with blood dripping from his mouth. A message leaped out into the public chat.

"Your record's going to end here." Another Summer of Sleep pointed his sword at Lord Grim. Sun Zheping replied ruthlessly.

"Stop talking big. Last round, Old Lin said the exact same thing. And do you know what the outcome was?" Ye Xiu said.

"Old Lin? Didn't you guys fight Blue Rain last round?"

"Last last last round," Ye Xiu said.

Wild Blood Strike!

Sun Zheping ended the talk there. Another Summer of Sleep forced his way over. A bloody shadow formed around his sword and then flew towards Lord Grim.

Lord Grim immediately dodged it. The blood shadow hacked into the ground. The shattered earth suddenly shot towards Lord Grim.

Whirlwind Strike!

Another Summer of Sleep's sword released a whirlwind. The broken stones caught up in it smashed towards Lord Grim.

This was Happy's home game and Ye Xiu's chosen map, so it was naturally a very simple one. But who would have thought that his opponent's frenzy of attacks would pressure Ye Xiu to the point of helplessness. The unspecialized blitz that no one in the Alliance could block wasn't being allowed to show up.

Retreat!

Another retreat!

Under these fierce attacks, Lord Grim continued to retreat up until he was no longer able to. Another Summer of Sleep's greatsword finally smashed into him. But in this instant, Lord Grim's body suddenly dispersed like petals. Another Summer of Sleep had only hit a fake illusion.

Shadow Clone Technique?

No, this wasn't it.

It was Shadow Steps!

Four Lord Grims surrounded Another Summer of Sleep. Which one was the real one? At this point, it didn't seem to matter. What was most important was that Lord Grim could finally start attacking.

In the end, victory went to Ye Xiu.

The moment he took his hands off the mouse, he let out a long sigh of relief. This match had been too close for comfort. He had nearly lost. It was really hard to imagine how an opponent with a hand injury as serious as Sun Zheping fought more and more without regard for anything else. Had the second half of the season ignited his spirit?

But it was truly a pity. Every round, he could only fight a single time in the individual competition. Sometimes, he even needed to rest one round. The amount of competition he got every time probably wasn't enough to satisfy him at all.

Yeah...

Not enough at all!

Sun Zheping stared at the fallen Another Summer of Sleep, who was looking up into the sky. His character probably wasn't willing either!

If only... if only I could play a few more minutes every time...

Chapter 1320

A New Point to Pick At

The curtains closed on Round 26.

Happy won against Heavenly Swords 9-1. Although their relationship was good, it didn't affect Happy's ruthlessness on stage.

Blue Rain versus Tiny Herb. The away team Tiny Herb utilized their strong momentum from Gao Yingjie beating Lu Hanwen, winning the following two individual competition rounds and the group arena. They went into the team competition With a 5-0 lead. However, in the end, the home team Blue Rain won and the round ended with a 5-5 tie.

Wind Howl versus Tyranny. Tang Hao losing to Lin Jingyan was undoubtedly the highlight of the match. However, they were still able to win 2 points, ending the round 2-8.

This sort of outcome did little to help their placements on the rankings. Team 301 beat Parade 8-2. Hundred Blossoms beat Bright Green 10-0. The distance between Wind Howl and the top eight was growing wider and wider, and in their next round, Wind Howl would be facing Blue Rain.

Wind Howl had the home game advantage, but the community did not think highly of their chances. In their eyes, Wind Howl was becoming more and more lackluster. Would they be able to win back their reputation? Everyone was already numb to this question, though, so not many people paid any attention to them.

Round 27. The highlight match was the home Team Tiny Herb welcoming the challengers Team Happy.

After several rounds during the second half of the season, the Happy haters finally found a point to pick at.

In the second half of the season, the teams played in the first half of the season would play again but with the home and away teams switched. Happy had started the first

half of the season poorly, and while the second half of the season was a large improvement, it couldn't compare to their previous win streak. These haters compared the results from both halves of the season and quickly found the teams that had won against Happy in both their home and away games.

Samsara, Blue Rain, Tyranny...

These three teams had won in a dominating fashion twice.

As a result, an article titled "What Looks to Be Beautiful" was published in the Esports Time. The author was the Esports Time writer Ruan Cheng, who had been attacking Happy ever since Tang Rou's 1v3 challenge.

In the article, Ruan Cheng detailed the relationship between Happy's ups and downs and their season schedule. In the first half of the season, Happy had met many strong teams at the beginning, so their first few steps had been difficult. But after passing through this bump, Happy started finding their confidence through Beating weak teams. But this sort of confidence could not last. Because of the competitive format, where each team played the other twice, Happy once again faced these unbeatable opponents. And this time, whether it was home or away game, Happy still wouldn't beat these opponents.

"Those who hold hopes for Happy should give up," Ruan Chen wrote at the end of the article, "This team is not able to reach the top. If you think they can win the championships, you might as well just buy a lottery ticket. Being able to make the playoffs would be a joke with their strength. And in the latter half of the season, teams will muster everything they have to make it through the door to playoffs. If Happy falls behind, no need to feel disappointed. Relying on luck to make it to the end of the season is impossible."

"This Ruan Cheng is always out to get us!" Reading the Esports Time, Chen Guo suddenly shouted furiously.

"If you know, then why do you still buy the Esports Time!" Ye Xiu laughed at her.

"..."

Chen Guo was speechless. Why did she pick up an issue? Wasn't it because she was still hoping to prove these haters wrong with their outstanding performance? And the result? Nothing. Instead, any time Happy messed up even the tiniest bit, those guys

would target it and talk about it endlessly. This time, they had actually labelled Happy as a fake powerhouse just because they had been double killed by a few top teams.

Shouldn't this label be given to Wind Howl! Why was it given to Happy instead? Chen Guo was absolutely furious.

"Don't be angry with these people. No matter what we achieve, as long as someone wants to paint us black, they'll always be able to find something to pick at," Ye Xiu said.

"Wind Howl went from a top team to their current stage, but he didn't say a single word about them. He's completely fixated on us," Chen Guo said.

"Next match, he'll probably be even more heated," Ye Xiu said.

Round 27, Happy would be challenging Tiny Herb. In Round 8, Happy lost to Tiny Herb 2-8, and Tang Rou had failed to keep her 1v3 promise, destroying her image at the end of the round. It was at this point that Ruan Cheng had started walking the hateful path towards Happy.

Right now, the league had cycled back. Happy would be facing Tiny Herb in an away game. This time, the match would be even more difficult. Ruan Cheng probably had an article written already and ready to be published. If Happy lost again, Tiny Herb would become another team that had double killed them. There would be even more proof that Happy really was just a fake powerhouse. Who knew how much ridicule would come their way?

Chen Guo was suddenly deeply worried.

Do like Ye Xiu said and just ignore these haters? Chen Guo just couldn't do it. Even if they couldn't persuade them to switch sides through action, Chen Guo hoped to at least give them a hard slap in the face. The problem was that they would be facing a top team like Tiny Herb in an away game. Saying something like "you have to win" would be unreasonable and put too much pressure on the team.

"In short, we just have to try our best," Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo sighed. She really envied Ye Xiu's calmness.

Sure enough, Ruan Cheng was very excited about Round 27 to an unprecedented extent too. This time, he had actually received an invitation to the TV station to be a

guest, commentating the match together with Li Yibo. The highlight match chosen to be broadcast was Happy versus Tiny Herb.

"This time, we have a new face for our broadcast, however, I don't think anyone is a stranger to him. Please welcome Esports Time's special column reviewer Ruan Cheng! I'm sure many of you viewers out there have read an article by Teacher Ruan, especially the latest issue of Esports Time. Teacher Ruan's 'What Looks to Be Beautiful' had a loud reaction! Teacher Ruan has always had a different viewpoint towards Team Happy. I figured that Teacher Ruan would definitely be paying particular attention to the match today, so I invited him to the broadcast to discuss this match together with us. Thank you Teacher Ruan for coming today," Pan Lin introduced today's guest before the match officially began.

"Haha, you're welcome. Hello Pan Lin, hello Coach Li," Ruan Cheng greeted Pan Lin and Li Yibo confidently.

"Should we start off by listening to Teacher Ruan's thoughts on today's match?" Pan Lin asked.

"Haha, I still stand by the viewpoint I detailed before in the past. There is still quite a gap between Team Happy and the top teams. And today, Happy is facing a top team like Tiny Herb, who also has the home game advantage. I think the chances of Tiny Herb winning should be very high," Ruan Cheng didn't mind predicting the outcome of the match. Compared to the cautious Li Yibo, it was truly too big of a difference.

"Gotcha. What about you Coach Li? What are your thoughts? You seem to think highly of Happy these days," Pan Lin didn't forget about his old partner Coach Li just because they had a new invited guest today.

"Haha, Happy is a new team, so their potential is huge. In the past half season, their growth has been very obvious. I think that this team has a chance at beating anyone, so I wouldn't be too surprised if they won or lost," Li Yibo's remarks were still as sly as ever. However, compared to Ruan Cheng's clear-cut position, his evasiveness seemed to show that he still stood by Happy.

"Okay, we've heard the opinions of our two guests. Let's take a look at the stage. The two teams have entered the venue," Pan Lin said.

The camera cut to the stadium. The players on both teams were waving their hands to

the crowd as they walked in.

"I wonder who Tiny Herb will be sending out first." Pan Lin asked. What he was really asking was, who would be fighting Ye Xiu today? Would Ye Xiu's winning streak finally end here?

"Most teams put their best players into the group arena to win those 2 points. Figuring out who will be playing in the individual competition truly isn't an easy matter," Ruan Cheng sighed, but the implications within his words were clear. He was saying that Ye Xiu was only able to reach his win streak because Happy's opponents rarely placed their core players in the individual competitions.

If he had said these words a few rounds ago, the reasoning would still hold up. But right now, Ye Xiu had won 26 matches in a row, an incredible achievement. Even if he had never encountered a top God, just being able to win 26 matches in a row was an achievement that seemed possible only by pro players competing in the online game's arena. The difference in skill between pro players wasn't so large that anyone could be casually beaten. Those top Gods had stumbled against countless non-Gods, but Ye Xiu had never faltered in 26 matches. Indeed, not meeting any top Gods was a reason, but using it to try and persuade people was purely for the purpose of denouncing him.

Ruan Cheng seemed to also know that focusing on this topic wasn't reasonable, so he stayed within the appropriate boundaries and didn't directly say these implications out loud. He simply mentioned it in the passing.

"Okay, the players on both teams are coming down from the stage. Ha, Ye Xiu is just staying there. The big screen hasn't even released the lineups yet!" Pan Lin said.

"Let's see who Tiny Herb will send up," Li Yibo said plainly.

Xu Bin!

Finally, the two players competing in the first round of the individual competition were displayed on the screen. Happy had sent Ye Xiu. Tiny Herb had sent Xu Bin and his Knight character Angelica.

"It's Xu Bin. What are your thoughts on this arrangement?" Pan Lin asked.

"Ye Xiu's unspecialized plays fast, but the Grind King Xu Bin made his name through his ability to slow down the pace. This matchup will depend on who is better at

controlling the pace. Whichever side is able to drag the other into their pace will have a better chance at winning," Li Yibo said.

"It sounds like it'll be a very interesting match. What are your thoughts, Teacher Ruan?" Pan Lin said.

"Yes..." Ruan Cheng simply replied with a nod. Even though he really wanted to hate on Happy, he didn't like to be slapped in the face either. Ye Xiu had already won 26 matches in a row. He didn't dare casually favor Ye Xiu's opponent.

Chapter 1321

Flash Past That Shield

A 26 round win streak was crazy.

When that win streak would end was undoubtedly on everyone's mind. The outstanding player who could break that win streak would look extremely amazing too. As a result, as long as it was Happy's away game, the home crowd would always hold high expectations for their home team, hoping that they would be the ones to end this legendary record.

Tiny Herb's fans were no exception. After Xu Bin's name showed up on the big screen, the crowd immediately let out wild cheers. It was truly rare to have such excitement for the individual competition. The excitement was all because of Ye Xiu and that ridiculous win streak of his.

Amidst the cheers, Xu Bin stood up and walked onto the stage. On the other side, his opponent Ye Xiu had already entered his player booth.

The home team Tiny Herb held the right to choose the map, and they naturally wouldn't give Ye Xiu the simple maps that he liked.

Corrupt Flower Garden.

Flowers, plants, rock gardens, fountains, pavilions, and winding corridors, a map with plenty of substance. Tiny Herb had chosen this map to counter Ye Xiu's playstyle.

The match began, and the two characters spawned.

Having chosen this map, Xu Bin had a strategic opening planned out. Xu Bin had Angelica take a roundabout route along the left path. He borrowed the rocks in the rock garden as footing and jumped a few times onto the top of a pavilion.

The map wasn't very large. This high point allowed him to oversee the entire map. Xu Bin looked around and easily found Lord Grim's whereabouts. It looked like Ye Xiu didn't mind playing tactics on this map with his opponent. Lord Grim was also taking

a roundabout path at the opposite end of the map. When Xu Bin located him, Ye Xiu also noticed Angelica on top of a pavilion.

The two sides had both found each other, making their next moves more difficult to figure out. Xu Bin had Angelica continue standing on top of the pavilion and observed Ye Xiu's movements. Then, he saw Ye Xiu have Lord Grim run towards him.

We're just going to end up fighting like this?

Wouldn't that mean their strategic movements had been for nothing? Neither player would hold any advantage.

In the broadcast room, the caster and two commentators were starting to discuss this question.

"Xu Bin holds the initiative. There's no way he didn't think that his actions would also expose himself. Perhaps that was even his goal," Ruan Cheng expressed.

"Lord Grim is closing in. Right now, Angelica is already in Lord Grim's attack range. It's just that Lord Grim hasn't started attacking yet," Pan Lin said.

Lord Grim rushed towards Angelica, but Angelica just stood there and didn't run. Lord Grim wasn't just charging in blindly. He suddenly stopped. And at that instant, Angelica's feet had started shifting slightly. But after he saw Lord Grim stop, he also stopped.

"This distance..." The three in the broadcast room began analyzing Lord Grim's sudden halt.

"He's outside the range of a Knight's Heroic Leap," The three looked over the two characters' skills and quickly came to that conclusion.

"Oh? Heroic Leap is that much of a threat?" Pan Lin said.

"For a player who can seize opportunities, it's quite a threat," Ruan Cheng said.

"However, Ye Xiu seems to have noticed this point," Li Yibo said.

"The two really aren't budging an inch!" Pan Lin sighed. At this moment, Lord Grim stood just outside of Angelica's maximum range and confidently started casting a

spell.

Angelica still didn't move.

This distance wasn't too close for a magic spell, and Xu Bin figured he would have time to react when the spell came out.

Blizzard!

Lord Grim casted a Blizzard. Hail and snowflakes crashed down.

Angelica stepped to the side and dodged it. He wouldn't be hit by this sort of skill.

Lord Grim casted two more spells, a magic one and a curse. Xu Bin simply had Angelica dodge them without any intentions of counter attacking.

"Xu Bin is starting his grind..." Li Yibo said.

Pan Lin had a headache. Xu Bin's slow grind was difficult to cast. He was just dodging Lord Grim's low-threat spells right now, but no one knew what his purpose was.

"You're not planning on coming down?" Ye Xiu spoke.

"There's no rush," Xu Bin replied.

"Then I'll come up?" Ye Xiu said.

"Sure!" Xu Bin happily accepted.

As a result, Lord Grim opened up his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. The umbrella's ribs flipped outwards and started whirring. Lord Grim floated up with a Rotor Wings.

Fly!

Lord Grim suddenly rose to the skies. Ye Xiu watched Angelica's movements closely.

He moved!

Ye Xiu said he would come up, and he really did, but suddenly, Angelica came down.

Heroic Leap!

Xu Bin had Angelica use Heroic Leap. As Angelica jumped up, he slashed down with his knight sword. However, there was still some distance between him and Lord Grim! Ye Xiu was using Rotor Wings, and he wasn't going to crash into the attack.

Angelica crashed to the ground. The shockwaves from Heroic Leap carried a force that flattened the surroundings.

Angelica suddenly waved his hands towards Lord Grim, Taunt!

Lord Grim wasn't able to control himself and headed straight for Angelica. However, he had already let out an attack. Taunt didn't stop the target from attacking.

Angelica lifted his left hand. The Sighing Wall, the sturdiest shield in all of Glory, welcomed Lord Grim's incoming attack.

"Defend to attack!" Ruan Cheng said.

"Defense is the offense!" Li Yibo remarked.

Having been Taunted, Lord Grim didn't seem to have any choices. He could only crash into the shield.

Shields didn't fear attacks. After blocking Lord Grim, Angelica could immediately counterattack.

Chance!

Countless people shouted.

But Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella also opened.

Shield versus shield.

Suddenly, everyone was uncertain.

Shield against shield. Neither side would take much damage, and the advantage of attacking after shielding no longer belonged to just Xu Bin. Everything had been reset to zero.

The two shields crashed against each other. Lord Grim had come from the air, so he had plenty of momentum. But in terms of shield strength, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was just a light shield. It couldn't compare at all to Glory's number one shield, Sighing Wall!

Shield Attack!

Angelica also used an attack.

The umbrella shield was no match. Lord Grim crashed into the shield and hung in the air, but then he immediately poofed into a cloud of smoke.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Angelica only hit a fake clone. The real body had flashed past the shield and was now in front of Angelica.

Ye Xiu didn't care about the control effects of Taunt. He actually wanted to get closer to the target. As a result, he just took advantage of Angelica Taunting him.

Falling Light Blade!

The sword was placed besides his feet, falling directly onto Angelica. The attack forced him back.

However, the knockdown from Falling Light Blade wasn't enforced. It could be teched with a Quick Recover.

However, Xu Bin unexpectedly did not Quick Recover and just fell to the ground.

"Beautiful! What precise judgement!" Ruan Cheng sighed. After Lord Grim's Falling Light Blade, a Sword Draw followed. If Angelica had Quick Recovered, the Sword Draw would have perfectly hit him. Who would have thought that Angelica would just fall like a corpse. The sword light from the Sword Draw brushed past him. After dodging the attack, Angelica immediately rolled to the side, his shield in front of him.

"Too slow!" Li Yibo shouted. Xu Bin's judgement had been accurate, but his reaction had been a tad slow. Even with the shield protecting him, Ye Xiu still held the initiative! After rolling to the side, Xu Bin should have immediately counter attacked.

But Lord Grim didn't seize this opportunity to attack.

A cold light streaked across Angelica's Sighing Wall.

"He activated Maelstrom Counterattack!" Li Yibo suddenly understood. No wonder he didn't counter attack. No wonder Lord Grim didn't continue attacking.

Angelica had activated Maelstrom Attack, which reflected all incoming attacks back to the opponent.

"Slow has always been Xu Bin's strength!" Ruan Cheng smiled.

Li Yibo felt his face turn red. He couldn't dispute that. Xu Bin's previous two responses had displayed his slow characteristic.

"Ye Xiu's offense has been interrupted," Pan Lin noted.

"Correct. By not Quick Recovering and then activating Maelstrom Counterattack, he's forced the pace to slow down. Ye Xiu couldn't even start his offense before being pressed down!" Ruan Cheng said. He was overjoyed at Happy with the disadvantage. However, he couldn't go overboard on the surface! Even though he had showed his bias, he had to display calmness. He couldn't be like "Haha, it turns out you couldn't do it". Instead, it should be "Haha, I knew you couldn't do it."

"Is that so?" Li Yibo suddenly chuckled.

The Lord Grim in front of Angelica suddenly disappeared!

No, not disappear. To be more precise, he had disappeared from Angelica's view. Lord Grim flickered and hid using Angelica's Sighing Wall as cover.

Xu Bin hastily lowered Angelica's Sighing Wall, but he still couldn't see Lord Grim. Lord Grim had crouched down along with his shield's movements.

Xu Bin had Sighing Wall move horizontally, but in that instant, Lord Grim flashed in the opposite direction of Sighing Wall's movement.

Movement skill!

"He's passed!" Pan Lin shouted.

Lord Grim circled behind Sighing Wall and started sending attacks towards Angelica.

"Lord Grim juked Sighing Wall like a football player," Pan Lin called out.

"Haha, Little Pan, that's an interesting comparison. According to you, Lord Grim hiding using the shield and crouching were all feints?" Li Yibo laughed.

"Haha, that's an interesting way to put it," Pan Lin praised back.

The two old partners commentated excitedly. On the other hand, Ruan Cheng was feeling gloomy.

Even though he hadn't dared to favor Ye Xiu's opponent in this match, he had truly hoped someone could bring down this record. Happy having such a show-off achievement was truly annoying.

But it's probably not going to be this one...

After Lord Grim flashed past Sighing Wall, Angelica was now completely exposed in front of Lord Grim. The unspecialized blitz began. Countless skills poured down on him, and Sighing Wall was unable to protect him.

"This situation... it looks like even Xu Bin isn't able to slow it down..." Pan Lin said.

"He can't." Li Yibo didn't speak at first. He saw as Angelica tried to slow things down, but Lord Grim used a movement skill to directly move behind the attack and then dealt the final blow.

The win streak continued.

Chapter 1322

Together on the Battlefield for the First Time

1-0!

26 consecutive victories.

Ye Xiu's record, still yet to be broken, reached a new high. Pan Lin and Li Yibo relished in the feeling as they discussed. To the side, Ruan Cheng chuckled along once or twice, in a sour mood.

The second battle of the individual round.

Happy, Qiao Yifan, One Inch Ash.

Tiny Herb, Gao Yingjie, Kind Tree.

When the screen displayed the names of the next two players, these players preparing to go onstage were both stunned, and each instinctively turned to look toward the opposing team's player area.

In Team Tiny Herb, they had been the closest of partners. But one was in the sky, and one remained on the ground.

Qiao Yifan had always looked up to Gao Yingjie, admiring his talent, envying the attention and hope he received from the team. In comparison, Qiao Yifan had never been clear what kind of player he himself would turn out to be.

Gao Yingjie had always known Qiao Yifan's situation, and he very much wanted to help him, but he didn't know how. When the team announced that the team was letting go of Qiao Yifan, Gao Yingjie mustered his courage to find Captain Wang Jiexi, but the answer he received was "the team doesn't need him."

The answer was somewhat cold, but very honest. Gao Yingjie understood that this wasn't a game of house. The team didn't need him: there was no reason better than this. In Tiny Herb, the team was everything. If the team didn't have the need, then even

someone with hundreds of talents and thousands of skills wouldn't have any reason to remain. Even Wang Jiexi, with all his strength, had to change his own style for the sake of his team. What player had the right to place themselves above the team?

And so, this pair of good friends went their separate ways, each taking their own road to Glory.

In the next season, Gao Yingjie became part of Tiny Herb's main force and was voted into the All-Stars. His stardom was immeasurable.

Qiao Yifan, meanwhile, joined Happy, this Internet cafe team and charged through the obstacles of the Challenger League.

They both paid attention to the other's performance, noticed the other's growth, and felt joy when the other achieved results.

In the end, Happy won the the Challenger League and made it to the Professional Alliance. They once again met. But this time, they were no longer teammates, but opponents.

In Round 8, Happy played their home game against Tiny Herb. Qiao Yifan had played in the individual competition against Tiny Herb's Ghostblade player Zhou Yebai. He'd won that match and proved himself, and with his new technique, he'd earned a lot of attention.

Gao Yingjie's feelings were complicated. On one hand, he was extremely happy to see Qiao Yifan's current strength, but on the other, Qiao Yifan was now an opponent, and his success had brought failure to Tiny Herb.

And now, they themselves were about to decide who would win and who would lose.

After they shared a glance, the two of them turned away, each taking firm steps onto the stage.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were also introducing these two with great interest.

"Qiao Yifan is a former player of Tiny Herb, entering the team at the same time as Gao Yingjie. I heard their relationship at the time was very good," Pan Lin said.

"Compared to Gao Yingjie's, Qiao Yifan's professional career has been much bumpier.

In only three years, he's probably tasted warmth and coldness that many people haven't. A benchwarmer, eventually let go, joining the Internet cafe team Happy when he had nowhere else to go, taking on the Challenger League, then returning to the Pro Alliance, and it looks like he might even make it into the playoffs. Who knows, maybe he'll even play in the finals!" Li Yibo said.

"Haha, I agree with everything else, but maybe his luck was joining the internet cafe team Happy when he had nowhere else to go!" Pan Lin said.

"Ha, who would have thought that this Internet cafe team could get results like this?" Li Yibo laughed.

"Ahaha..." Ruan Cheng continued to laugh dryly to the side. Happy's current 1-0 lead prevented him from expressing his opinions. He was looking forward to Happy losing a match quickly, so that he could talk about the reasons why Happy wasn't a good team.

Qiao Yifan, Gao Yingjie, Ruan Cheng felt that his chance was here. Gao Yingjie had always been called a prodigy, and now he was already an All-Star-level player. And Qiao Yifan? A player that had been let go by Tiny Herb, he'd found a position for himself with his own strength, but the natural difference between him and Gao Yingjie perhaps couldn't be closed by just hard work. After all, the prodigy Gao Yingjie had also been working hard all this time.

The match began, and the two characters loaded in on opposite corners of the map.

"We finally have the chance to stand on stage together." A message soon appeared in the match chat. The first to speak was Gao Yingjie.

"Yes," Qiao Yifan answered. The last time their teams had fought, both of them had appeared in the individual competition, but they'd missed each other. In the team competition after, Qiao Yifan hadn't been on the roster. This was indeed the first time the two of them had met onstage.

"But it's a shame, we're standing as opponents now," Gao Yingjie said. Before, when Qiao Yifan had still been part of Tiny Herb, these two friends often talked about how they'd coordinate if they were ever onstage together, and they'd even done quite a bit of practice for it. But because Qiao Yifan never had the chance to appear onstage, the two had never been able to partner during an official match. And today, the two finally

stood together onstage, but unfortunately people changed, and the combinations they'd practiced could no longer be used. The two were now opponents. Only one would be allowed to remain standing here.

"Good luck, go all out," Qiao Yifan said.

"I will," Gao Yingjie said solemnly. He was no longer that timid youth from before. His two hands controlled the keyboard and mouse without hesitation, and Kind Tree rushed forward.

Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had already advanced as well. This map choice leaned toward Ye Xiu's preferences - it didn't have too many complex features.

Soon, the two sides appeared in each other's views. In this situation where there was no cover and they were meeting directly, a Phantom Demon couldn't let the opponent get too close. Setting Ghost Boundaries required casting, and if someone was fighting them at close range there would be no time to cast. The power of the Ghostblade would shrink at least 70%.

Of course Gao Yingjie would know this piece of Glory common sense. As soon as he spotted One Inch Ash, he was already preparing to attack. A Phantom Demon prevented the opponent from closing in by using Ghost Boundaries, but a Witch had mid-range attacks, and to a certain extent could disrupt the opponent's casting.

But...

"So early?" Commentator Pan Lin shouted.

At this moment, although both sides had appeared in each other's view, they were still far from from being within attack range. But Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had already stopped moving forward and begun the casting for Ghost Boundaries.

"Isn't he being a bit too careful?" Pan Lin said.

By now, the casting was complete. Kind Tree was still relatively far away, so of course he wasn't affected. One Inch Ash had cast a Dark Boundary, which would put a Blind effect with 100% probability on anyone who entered it. This boundary wasn't placed at the limit of One Inch Ash's range, but slightly closer to himself. Once he set this boundary, One Inch Ash continued to charge forward.

In the blink of an eye, he had taken a few more steps, but then he stopped again and once again began to summon a Ghost Boundary.

"Whoa!" When Li Yibo saw how Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree had to circle around the Dark Boundary, he suddenly understood the meaning behind Qiao Yifan's placing the Ghost Boundary early.

Even though a Witch could ride a broom to fly, a Ghost Boundary's effects extended to the air above it. The area covered by this Dark Boundary instantly became a forbidden zone. By setting one here, Kind Tree was forced to go around, which increased the distance he needed to travel. And at this moment, One Inch Ash set his second Ghost Boundary.

Ice Boundary!

Another Ghost Boundary blocked Kind Tree's way. This new boundary bordered the edge of the Dark Boundary. There was no overlap, so the total area that these two boundaries could restrict was maximized.

Was the third Ghost Boundary on its way as well?

Seeing One Inch Ash's begin the movements of another cast, Kind Tree swept his sleeve and sent stars flying out.

Star Ray!

The stars became a ray of light shooting toward One Inch Ash, who dodged to the side. At last, his third Ghost Boundary summon was interrupted.

Lightning Chain!

Kind Tree once again waved his hand in the air, and a chain of flashing lightning fell towards One Inch Ash. Many of a Witch's skills used all sorts of strange magic items, and so most skills didn't have cast times. This was a big advantage for this class, and it was for this reason that Wang Jiexi could have his fast-paced, volatile, illusory Magician style. Gao Yingjie hadn't copied Wang Jiexi's style, but he took advantage of this speciality of the Witch class.

Two magic items in a row, both mid-range attacks, prevented One Inch Ash from finding the time to cast boundaries. Kind Tree, attacking and running at the same time,

was already almost past the boundaries. But One Inch Ash wasn't just waiting where he stood, either. As he dodged these attacks, he was also changing position, and as Kind Tree circled around counterclockwise, One Inch Ash headed counterclockwise as well. The Ghost Boundary between them prevented Kind Tree from rushing toward him directly.

But a Ghost Boundary had a set duration, it couldn't last forever. Gao Yingjie paid close attention to One Inch Ash's movements - he couldn't let him have another chance to cast. But the issue was, even though Witches had the great advantage of not having to cast, they were also limited in range with their attacks from magic items.

One Inch Ash suddenly jumped back a few steps. As soon as Gao Yingjie saw this, he knew that he had retreated out of Kind Tree's attack range. And then, he calmly began another cast.

Yet another Ghost Boundary appeared in front of Kind Tree. Helpless, Gao Yingjie could only control his character to stop in his tracks.

Silence Boundary.

A character within this boundary would have all of their skills sealed. This effect was undoubtedly deadly in a high-level professional match. Kind Tree was again forced to go around the boundary.

"Qiao Yifan's control is excellent, but if he's playing like this, he's putting himself on the defensive side from the start!" Ruan Cheng finally found the opportunity to give some critique, and of course as soon as he opened his mouth he pointed out Happy's shortcomings.

"Hm, he might first want to establish the balance of the match, and then find an opportunity? Otherwise, how would he fight? If Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree directly got into close range, then he'd lose this match immediately! The current situation is pretty good. Given the characteristics of these two classes, it's not a surprise that the Phantom Demon is more on the defensive, no?"

"So that's to say, the plan of putting the Phantom Demon in the individual round is a bit hard to understand!" Ruan Cheng said.

Li Yibo was speechless. At this point, he was just using whatever he could find to criticize Happy! Everyone in Glory knew that Ruan Cheng was a stubborn Happy hater.

Chapter 1323

A Taste of Victory that Can't Be Shared

It was true that a Phantom Demon had greater use in the team competition, but using that to say that their 1v1 strength was weak was just nonsense. Perhaps many ordinary players would think this way, but that was only because it was harder to play Phantom Demon in a 1v1. Also, the map that Tiny Herb had chosen for this individual battle wasn't good for a Phantom Demon to reach full potential.

Yet even under these conditions, Qiao Yifan was still able to place his Ghost Boundaries very well, preventing Gao Yingjie from launching effective attacks. This was something that should be acknowledged with certainty. To emphasize losing the initiative, that was very much nitpicking.

Ruan Cheng of course knew all of this, but right now, he was going to point out Happy's flaws no matter what. In his opinion, the chances of Happy winning this match were very low.

A skill level that couldn't compete with the opposing talent.

The difficulty of playing Phantom Demon in a 1v1.

The map disadvantages.

With so many weaknesses, how could Happy not lose?

Qiao Yifan's performance right now was much stronger than Ruan Cheng had anticipated. But just to maintain the balance of the situation, Qiao Yifan had already sacrificed a lot. And Gao Yingjie? He was merely saving his strength and biding his time. As soon as Qiao Yifan left an opening, he would instantly launch a powerful offensive.

Hurry, hurry and make a mistake!

Ruan Cheng shouted in his heart.

But as he shouted, he watched as the Ghost Boundaries bloomed on the battlefield, like an endless river blocking the way between One Inch Ash and Kind Tree.

Ruan Cheng was beginning to pale.

Saving strength and biding time?

Things weren't that simple. In order to force Qiao Yifan to move so carefully and meticulously, Gao Yingjie couldn't be careless with his own movements either. He too needed to make decisions and plays with care and precision.

Kind Tree's positioning, Kind Tree's long-range attacks, they were all trying to break Qiao Yifan's rhythm. Even though Qiao Yifan was on the defensive, he used his defense to attack. The rhythm of this battle was firmly in his control.

"I've always thought that Happy's Qiao Yifan is a player that has been underestimated," Li Yibo exclaimed.

"But if he just continues to defend like this, will he be able to win this match?" Pan Lin brought up the key question. Even though Qiao Yifan could use his defense offensively, controlling the battle tempo, his One Inch Ash hadn't used any attacks at all. There was no way he could win this match if he continued like this.

Li Yibo furrowed his brow. Qiao Yifan himself must realize this issue, right? But he was still working hard to maintain this current situation. What was his plan?

At this moment, Ruan Cheng suddenly shouted, "A mistake!"

For Ruan Cheng to become this excited, of course it was a mistake from Qiao Yifan. Because he was just a hair slower in setting them this time, there was a gap in the seamlessly linked Ghost Boundaries, and Gao Yingjie immediately seized this opening. Before the Ghost Boundaries could block him, Kind Tree called forth a Tornado and flew close to the ground toward One Inch Ash.

"Just like I said! Qiao Yifan's defensive strategy here isn't a method of victory! As soon as there's a slight opening, Gao Yingjie can seize it immediately," Ruan Cheng said gleefully, flapping his mouth without end. Pan Lin and Li Yibo felt sympathy for Qiao Yifan, but because Ruan Cheng wasn't without reason, they couldn't just begin arguing with him on air.

Kind Tree traversed the blockade of Ghost Boundaries, a handful of Frost Powder already scattered on his weapon. One Inch Ash, however, was rolling to the side.

This was a very simple map without many features, but it still had some. One Inch Ash's roll took him behind a crumbling stone pillar, and when he crouched down, the boulder shielded his entire body.

This is-

Gao Yingjie's heart jumped. After Qiao Yifan used the map features for cover, he instantly noticed something about this surrounding region.

Something's wrong!

Gao Yingjie immediately controlled Kind Tree to throw a Lava Flask.

The flask shattered against the ground, and the lava within burst forth to cover the area, including the area where One Inch Ash was hiding.

But just before the lava reached One Inch Ash, swordlight flashed from behind the pillar and a Ghost Boundary landed first.

As expected.

Seeing the Ghost Boundary land, Gao Yingjie didn't even need to think before controlling Kind Tree to rush in a specific direction.

"Beautiful!" Li Yibo shouted, but this shout wasn't praising Gao Yingjie's smart reaction. When that Ghost Boundary appeared, the situation on the battlefield suddenly became clear. One Inch Ash's earlier setup, along with this Ghost Boundary just now, was squeezing Kind Tree into a small area.

That Ghost Boundary that had been thought to be a blunder absolutely wasn't one. That had been bait! Qiao Yifan had seen that there was cover here and knew that he had the chance to cast a Ghost Boundary.

Gao Yingjie must have realized this after coming over from far away and seeing One Inch Ash's actions. But unfortunately, Kind Tree's Lava Flask had arrived just a bit too late. The Ghost Boundary landed first. Helpless, Gao Yingjie could only control Kind Tree to go to the position where Qiao Yifan wanted him. The damage that this Lava

Flask caused One Inch Ash now was negligible.

Li Yibo glanced at Ruan Cheng and felt delighted.

Faceslapping, what familiar faceslapping! But before, the one who had been hit over and over was himself. Today, it was finally someone else's turn. With this guy here as contrast, Li Yibo could appear extremely wise and insightful even if he said nothing. Initially, Li Yibo had been rather irritated at this extra invited guest commentator, but now, he was glad that Ruan Cheng was here, setting off all these traps so that Li Yibo didn't have to take any damage.

Ruan Cheng's expression was extremely ugly right now, but the battle still hadn't ended. What would happen next? Li Yibo and Ruan Cheng were both experts, and so now that the battle had reached this point, both could tell what was the crucial point. Now, Qiao Yifan needed to cast one more Ghost Boundary to completely trap Kind Tree within. But he was currently in the middle of an expanse of lava, and the sustained damage was preventing him from casting. If he tried to face Kind Tree directly, he would also be interrupted for sure.

Cover. One Inch Ash still needed some cover. And so everyone's gazes swept around these ruins, to another worn down pillar that was eight units away from One Inch Ash's current position.

"Qiao Yifan must have studied and prepared all this beforehand. He's really extremely thorough with his planning," Pan Lin said, when the television broadcast focused in on this critical position.

"His earlier usage of Ghost Boundaries to maintain the balance of the situation was probably to buy time so he could look for an area on the map where he could develop his strategy. This map definitely isn't an easy one for him," Li Yibo said neutrally. He then prompted Ruan Cheng with a look that said "what do you think?"

Ruan Cheng cursed in his heart. Li Yibo's words just now were basically faceslapping him!

"Seeing how Gao Yingjie so decisively avoided the Ghost Boundary, I think he's already seen through Qiao Yifan's strategy. Eight units... Will Gao Yingjie give him that opportunity?" Ruan Cheng still lifted up Gao Yingjie.

As the three of them were discussing, One Inch Ash suddenly rushed out, targeting

that pillar that stood eight body-lengths away.

But Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree was a step faster. He threw a floating blue cloud of something toward that broken pillar, and very quickly, dark clouds formed above the pillar and thin shards of blue rain drops emitting a cold energy began raining down.

Hail!

Gao Yingjie wasn't going to compete with One Inch Ash in a footrace, nor did he want to try and take him head-on. He just tossed out this skill. The pillar could still serve as cover, but because the Hail would cause sustained damage, One Inch Ash could no longer duck behind it and cast. But to everyone's surprise, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash only took three steps in that direction. Before those blue raindrops had even hit the ground, he had already turned back the way he came.

One Inch Ash actually returned to the pillar he'd been hiding behind earlier. The lava was right under his feet, but no skill's effects lasted forever. Just as One Inch Ash hid himself again, the crimson lava on the ground was already dimming, hardening into still rock.

Not good!

Gao Yingjie had only just finished casting Hail. He hadn't expected that Qiao Yifan had merely rushed out as a diversion. Panicking, he immediately controlled Kind Tree to use another attack. But even though the Witch class had many instant-cast skills, there was still a time delay between throwing a magic tool and its effect activation. This bit of time was enough for One Inch Ash to lay down another Ghost Boundary.

Star Refraction!

By the time Kind Tree reached an angle where he could hit his target with these star cards that turned into magic rays flying toward One Inch Ash, the new Ghost Boundary had already landed.

This time, Kind Tree had nowhere to run. The Ghost Boundaries that One Inch Ash had placed one after another now linked into a huge formation, trapping Kind Tree within.

One Inch Ash stood forward.

For a Phantom Demon, trapping the opponent within your own linked Ghost

Boundaries was already winning half the battle.

Qiao Yifan didn't hold back against his good friend. He meticulously controlled his character, summoning new Ghost Boundaries to perfect the arrangement. At this point, even though there were openings in his casting, he no longer needed to find some pathetic cover on this map. His own Ghost Boundaries finally became his most reliable and complete cover.

Qiao Yifan wouldn't let go of an opportunity like this.

His journey to this point hadn't been easy. If he hadn't met Ye Xiu, if he hadn't met and helped establish Team Happy, he likely wouldn't even be a pro player anymore.

And now, he'd grown from being an invisible presence let go by one team, to part of the main force of another team. And now, he had the chance to defeat the one whom his former team had labeled a prodigy.

How could he miss an opportunity like this?

What Qiao Yifan wanted was to prove himself to everyone, including the opponent in front of him now, his closest friend. But he still felt that it was a shame, that they had discussed this feeling of victory so often in the past, but had never had the chance to achieve it together. And now, the method of achieving it was to defeat the other side.

It's a shame, I can't share this taste of victory with you.

In the second battle of the individual competition Team Happy's Qiao Yifan won.

Chapter 1324

Trade

Happy had a 2-0 lead, which worried Ruan Cheng.

The entire Glory community knew that he didn't like Happy. If Happy were against some weak team, he definitely wouldn't have accepted the invitation for this event. But seeing that Happy would be playing an away game against Tiny Herb, Ruan Cheng felt like Happy would certainly lose, which was why he gladly ran over to slap their faces. Things weren't looking good, though.

He could tolerate Ye Xiu's win streak continuing, but a small-time figure like Qiao Yifan beating Tiny Herb's genius, Gao Yingjie?

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were discussing this round with great enthusiasm. Ruan Cheng listened unhappily on the side.

I'm not going to sit here and get slapped in the face, am I?

Ruan Cheng felt a bad premonition. Qiao Yifan's victory over Gao Yingjie made him uneasy.

The third players of the individual competition stepped onto the stage.

Happy's Mo Fan, Ninja Deception.

Tiny Herb, Liang Fang, Berserker Black Bamboo.

Seeing the matchup, Ruan Cheng felt his heart freeze.

After Mo Fan beat Samsara's Sun Xiang, the attention towards him grew. Happy had also given him more opportunities to go on stage, even so far as to include him in team competitions. His skill had received the approval of the community. It was just that people didn't understand his hit-and-run playstyle.

In this match, Mo Fan's opponent was Liang Fang, a very impatient player. Mo Fan's

hit-and-run playstyle was a disaster for this sort of player.

A 3-0?

Ruan Cheng didn't even want to watch anymore. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were analyzing their playstyles though and just had to ask him his opinion.

"Mm..." Ruan Cheng replied spiritlessly, "Liang Fang needs to firmly hold the initiative for this match. This is the only way can he restrict Mo Fan's playstyle."

There was some reasoning to his logic, but it was mostly just empty talk. Who wouldn't be trying their hardest to take the initiative? Whoever held the initiative had an easier chance of winning. Who needed someone to tell them that?

The match began. Liang Fang headed straight towards the center of the map, while Mo Fan moved strategically.

The map Tiny Herb chose wasn't simple, but it wasn't overly complex either. Moving strategically could be done, but when Deception circled around to the center, Mo Fan found that there weren't too many places to mount sneak attacks.

As for Liang Fang's Black Bamboo? His line of sight was directly towards that side. Having chosen this map, he knew beforehand what places Mo Fan could possibly come out from. Mo Fan didn't lack patience, but in this situation, patience would just lead to a yellow card.

As a result, this time, Mo Fan happily had Deception walk out. Without saying a word, he attacked.

Mo Fan was direct enough, but Liang Fang was faster. He had been paying close attention to those few spots, certain that Deception could only come from there. As soon as he saw Deception come out, he released his readied attack.

Crimson Storm!

Liang Fang opened up with a Level 70 skill, quite a shocking move. Mo Fan was a bit surprised that his opponent would be so bold. He immediately tried to dodge, but the surging force just barely hit him.

Shuriken!

Deception attacked, throwing a shuriken towards Black Bamboo.

This Crimson Storm carried incomparable force, and its ending lag was just as formidable. When the Shuriken came, Black Bamboo could not move and could only take the attack. Then, Deception closed in.

Backwards Slash!

Right when the ending lag finished, Black Bamboo used a knock-up skill towards Deception. Deception nimbly leaped back and dodged it.

Flame Cut!

Flames came down facing the wind. Who would have thought that Black Bamboo wouldn't dodge though? Instead, he brandished his sword and let out a Wild Blood Strike. This attack didn't collide with Flame Cut. It went straight for Deception.

Trade?

Everyone who thought of this word felt dumbfounded.

Trading was a common Berserker strategy, but no one ever traded at the start of a match. This was because the effects of Blood Awakening didn't trigger until the user was below 50% health. The initial 50% health was no different for Berserkers, so it was usually used to get a feel for the opponent's playstyle and condition. Once their health reached 50%, Blood Awakening would activate, and then trading became a good choice. However, trading from the very start was rarely seen.

Liang Fang wasn't trading for nothing though; he was trading blows. However, recklessly burning several high-level skills in a row was truly a bit crazy.

The attacks from each player hit their targets.

Black Bamboo ignited into a flame man, while Deception was sent tumbling from the heavy blow.

Again!

As soon as his feet touched the ground, Deception straightened up and started advancing again. But the opposing Black Bamboo didn't even wait for the fire to

extinguish. Half his body was still on fire as he also twisted that way and charged forward.

Dong!

This time, their weapons clashed, and the one to Guard was Deception.

Liang Fang wanted to trade damage, but Mo Fan didn't comply. It wasn't smart to keep up with a Berserker's frenzy. Once a Berserker reached a certain point, he would gain buffs. As a result, trading with a Berserker should only be done if he could gain an advantage from it. It couldn't be looked at purely in terms of numbers.

However, Liang Fang refused to let go and followed up with attack after attack. He let go of all defenses and traded. He didn't dodge any of Deception's attacks and ate every single attack.

"Liang Fang's playstyle..." Li Yibo was a bit shocked.

Liang Fang's playstyle seemed somewhat excessive. But the problem was that it was extremely effective against Mo Fan. Every move he did was a trade. No matter if Mo Fan retreated or attacked, his plans were always interrupted. His hit-and-run tactics couldn't be displayed properly. Liang Fang was using this sort of rough and crude method to entangle Mo Fan. They fought and fought, and while it didn't seem like Liang Fang was gaining any advantages, Mo Fan wasn't able to get into his own tempo.

"Liang Fang is playing well today!" Ruan Cheng's spirit suddenly shot up. Initiative? His words had actually been spot on. Right now, Liang Fang firmly held the initiative in this 1v1. Any attack Mo Fan made would end up as a trade to the extent that sometimes, Liang Fang would be on the losing end. Even so, he still held the initiative. Mo Fan could only slightly win the trades, but his tempo? His tactics? He couldn't display them at all!

"Tiny Herb has done a lot of targeted research on Mo Fan!" Ye Xiu commented from the sidelines. Liang Fang's unbridled playstyle wasn't because of his Berserker class. Tiny Herb had probably prepared this playstyle, specifically to counter Mo Fan. Berserkers could trade and so could other classes, but Mo Fan could not. As soon as he traded, his most threatening three axes* could not be displayed.

"He's being suppressed," Wei Chen said.

"It looks like there's nothing that can be done!" Fang Rui said

The difference in health between the two sides could clearly be seen. In terms of the numbers, Mo Fan had the advantage, after all, Liang Fang was recklessly trading away his health. However, everyone knew that Liang Fang held the initiative. The extra trickles of health lost in each trade weren't trading for Deception's health, but rather his tempo.

"Kill!!"

Liang Fang roared in the chat. The more he fought, the more spirited he became. The more spirited he became, the crazier he fought. His attacks became even faster and even more swift, biting onto Deception even more tightly.

Colliding Stab!

Liang Fang had Black Bamboo use Colliding Stab. Unable to avoid it, Mo Fan would usually try and use a strong attack to trade, but this time...

Poof!

A puff of smoke. Black Bamboo's greatsword had hit a substitute strawman.

Substitution Technique?

He... ran?

Liang Fang was a bit startled. Before, when they had been trading blows, Mo Fan had never forced an escape.

But after retreating, he returned!

Deception rushed forward. Liang Fang regained his composure and readied to trade blows, even if it would be a losing trade.

Poof poof!

The sounds of attacks landing were crisp and clear. This time, the trade was completed in a straight forward manner.

"Again!" Liang Fang was having fun and started talking more in the chat.

"Haha, he's playing so confidently!" Ruan Cheng was in a good mood. But after the trade, Deception stopped tangling with Black Bamboo and chose to retreat.

"Where are you going!" Liang Fang was surprised. He immediately readjusted his offense. When he rushed forward, Mo Fan suddenly turned back to receive his attacks.

Attack. Another trade. Deception once again ran away.

Liang Fang was furious.

It was a trade anyways. Running away and then coming back, was that really necessary?

He didn't understand, so he continued implementing his original strategy. But Mo Fan had thoroughly changed up his plans. His three axes were being suppressed by this crazy trading, so he either attacked then ran, ran without attacking, or went all out on the offensive without running.

What type of playstyle is this?

This Mo Fan really loved this sort of hit-and-run playstyle, hah. Was it possible for him not to be so patient?

The audience sighed. However, the pro players on the sidelines could see the purpose behind Mo Fan's repeated tussling.

"Mm, nice!" After seeing a completed trade, Fang Rui nodded his head in approval, "Has that idiot Liang Fang still not figured it out yet?"

"It should be soon," Ye Xiu smiled.

Yes, he figured it out. It wasn't just Liang Fang, but the viewers who were paying close attention to the match had also begun to notice it. After Mo Fan switched up his tactics, the disparity between the two characters' health bars was growing larger and larger.

Was it because of Liang Fang's unbridled trading? Of course, that was one reason, but more importantly, Mo Fan had started making meticulous calculations. Every time he traded, he would carefully think it through. Can I gain an advantage? Is the advantage

gained significant enough? If the answers to those questions weren't satisfactory, or he simply didn't know, he would immediately turn tail and run. This was why Deception would sometimes run away and not make the trade.

"If Liang Fang continues trading like this, he'll trade himself to his death," Li Yibo chuckled.

"He probably won't dare to keep trading now, will he?" Pan Lin said.

"Then how will he stop Mo Fan?" Li Yibo said.

The answer was that he couldn't stop Mo Fan.

Chapter 1325

Fluctuating APM

One skill, one step back. In the end, Mo Fan ended up setting this repetitive rhythm. Liang Fang's reckless health trade immediately became out of sync. By the time he realized this, he had already traded his health away for a disadvantage.

He lost.

In the individual competition, Happy ended with a 3 to 0. The entire stadium was speechless.

"Hahaha, Happy's performing well today!" Li Yibo commented.

"Do they plan on obtaining another perfect victory?" Pan Lin wondered.

Ruan Cheng heart thumped. If Happy really did destroy Tiny Herb in their away game, then it'd be like they had thrown him here naked - he'd be completely humiliated!

What the hell are you bastards doing!?

Ruan Cheng was even more desperate and worried than Tiny Herb's boss.

"Su Mucheng didn't go up for the individual competitions this round. Has Happy left her for the group arena?" Li Yibo said.

"Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou? Happy's group arena line-up is very impressive this round!" Pan Lin commented.

"In the eighth round, Happy's Tang Rou alone managed to wipe out two of Tiny Herb's members in the group arena and get to Wang Jiexi!" Li Yibo reminded them, "It's just unfortunate that the two players after Tang Rou didn't perform so well and were all defeated by Wang Jiexi in a 1v3 that turned the tides."

"However, it was after that round that Tang Rou stopped spearheading the group arena and switched to third position," Pan Lin lamented.

With that, the two side eyed Ruan Cheng together.

Yet, when Ruan Cheng had heard the two say that Happy had an unusually impressive line-up, his insides clenched. He didn't even register the discussion the two had afterwards.

"You think they'll have Tang Rou spearhead again?"

In the end, Ruan Cheng only heard that before the players for the group arena entered the stage.

Happy, Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou, as expected, an impressive line-up.

As for Tiny Herbm, they sent out Liu Xiaobie, Liu Fei, and Wang Jiexi.

"Seems like Tang Rou still isn't spearheading the round!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Yeah. Fang Rui leading and Tang Rou bringing up the rear, Happy hasn't changed that arrangement in a long time," Li Yibo noted.

"The match is about to start, let's see how the players perform!" Pan Lin announced. At the same time, the first player in each team were inserting their cards and loading into the first round of the match.

"Er, this map... It's a pretty rare sight in the group arena," the commentator and guests discussed upon seeing the map. The map Tiny Herb had chosen for their group arena was the same kind that Ye Xiu had set as his signature map choice this season: straight and simple. This kind of map often implied a test of mechanical skill. For individual matches, the maps could be chosen according to personal preference. However, in the group arena, there would be three people per team, and you needed to make sure that all three were comfortable with the map, thus, the map choice was rarely so extreme. Generally, maps with more varied content that could be useful in different situations would be chosen.

"This map choice... it'll probably negatively impact Happy's Fang Rui and Su Mucheng, but Tang Rou clearly prefers this sort of map," Li Yibo noted. "As for Tiny Herb... What do you think, Mr. Ruan?" Feeling that Ruan Cheng had gone silent for long enough, Li Yibo threw him a question helpfully.

"Ah... I guess they'll be alright since they're Tiny Herb?" Ruan Cheng guessed.

What on earth was he saying?

Li Yibo stared in shock and glanced at Pan Lin. Pan Lin seemed rather helpless as well. This Ruan Cheng really didn't have much mental fortitude! No matter if you're a fan or a hater, you should at least work hard to support your side! Even if its complete bullshit, that's better than this utterly defeated look after a 3 to 0!

Li Yibo and Pan Lin could only leave Ruan Cheng with his answer that wasn't really an answer. On the field, due to the simple map, the two sides soon met and clashed in an open fight.

Swoosh swoosh swoosh swoosh!

Flying Swords' sword was as fast as lightning.

Liu Xiaobie was feeling rather depressed this season. He had wanted to become an all-star this season through his ceaseless hard work and improvement. Yet, Happy and Excellent Era's players had returned and the competition for this season's All-Stars was much tighter all of a sudden. Unfortunately, Liu Xiaobie once again wasn't voted in.

Swoosh swoosh swoosh!

Liu Xiaobie vented his frustrations through his mechanics. Flying Sword's attacks were swift and his pacing was solid. This level of skill was definitely enough to be considered All-Star level. It was unfortunate that the All-Star voting wasn't just about skill.

On the other side, Fang Rui, was in a very different position from Liu Xiaobie. Liu Xiaobie was just unable to become an All-Stars, and he, on the other hand, had been consecutively voted into the All-Stars, only to fail this season.

He also made light of this failure, expressing to the media that he always got in so it was pretty good that he had finally managed to drop out.

That sort of attitude was just asking for a beating to Liu Xiaobie. Many other also thought Fang Rui was unreasonable.

It was probably a little of both, but Fang Rui's performance really hadn't been affected by any of it. His performance had improved slowly as he got more used to the Qi

Master, and his opponents, because of his chosen playstyle, often were unable to keep up.

However, Liu Xiaobie didn't fall into this disadvantage because he took the initiative to attack as soon as possible. His hand was speed rising dramatically.

Thus, the match progressed a little like Liang Fang and Mo Fan's match, both sides attacking fiercely and trying to prevent the other from using their preferred style.

However, compared to Liang Fang exchanging blows and blood, Liu Xiaobie had less to worry about with his offensive. For Liang Fang, he was also trading blood to win, and his defeat was because of it, too.

"This kid's mechanics is getting crazier and crazier," Wei Chen exclaimed with a hint of envy, observing the way Liu Xiaobie was displaying his hand speed.

"The point is that he isn't just fast, but also very steady. He has everything in his grasp," Ye Xiu added.

"Fang Rui's met trouble this time," Wei Chen noted.

"Yes. This isn't a good terrain for him," Ye Xiu commented.

Ye Xiu had used this kind of terrain to bully quite a few opponents himself, so he naturally understood what sort of foundation Liu Xiaobie's advantage was built upon. He also knew that it was because there was nothing that could be used on the map, thus Liu Xiaobie's rhythm would be very hard to break.

Perhaps he could find some openings in Flying Swords' attack, but Liu Xiaobie's mechanics were just too fast, so fast that these opens flashed by. When his opponent wanted to use them, they were already gone.

The only thing you couldn't counter was speed.* 1

In regards to Liu Xiaobie, this phrase was rather fitting.

"His APM is almost reaching 400..." The live broadcast gave a shot of Liu Xiaobie's APM data. Since the match was still ongoing, his mechanics were still ongoing, and thus the number wasn't stable, fluctuating at just under 400.

The system data wasn't smart enough to differentiate between effective APM and random keyboard mashing, but considering the situation on the field right now, there was little possibility for such noob mechanics to exist. Most, if not all, were effective.

For a single player game, even if Glory's mechanics were a little more complicated, an APM heading directly for 400 was still stunning. When the audience at the stadium noticed this data, sounds of awe rose from the crowd, and these voices were filled with pride. Liu Xiaobie was a player on their team, Tiny Herb.

For comparison, Fang Rui's APM data was quickly placed next to Liu Xiaobie's.

289, 290, 291...

The number kept rising.

"Fang Rui's APM is much faster than usual, too!" Pan Lin said, holding Fang Rui's previous match statistics.

"Of course. If he doesn't raise his hand speed under this sort of situation, he'd probably have been wiped out quickly," Li Yibo commented.

"However, there's still a 100 APM difference!" Ruan Cheng followed up.

Fuck!

Pan Lin and Li Yibo cursed to themselves simultaneously, glancing at Ruan Cheng.

Was this still that dispirited Ruan Cheng from after the individual matches? This kind of energy... Was Liu Xiaobie a Cleric or something? Had his near 400 APM healed this guy or something?

"Their hand speed has a gap, looking at the statistics, but from the situation, Fang Rui isn't at much of a disadvantage," Li Yibo noted.

"Heh. He's not at much of a disadvantage, but he's still at one," Ruan Cheng retorted.

"Fang Rui's current APM isn't his peak," Pan Lin added, looking through Fang Rui's info.

"His current APM is very steady," Li Yibo observed the APM stats on the screen. APM

was calculated by the minute, but what was usually shown in a match was calculated by the second. It showed what the mechanics done in this second would be if maintained for a minute.

Fang Rui's APM was fluctuating at around 290, which meant that his hand speed was very steady.

"If given the chance, he'll give himself a burst of speed," Li Yibo said.

"What about Liu Xiaobie? Is this his peak?" Ruan Cheng smirked. He was, in the end, an expert, and wasn't ignorant.

Pan Lin naturally also had Liu Xiaobie's match statistics and, after taking a look, shook his head. "It's not... but, not all of his actions are effective. A lot of these statistics came from him making a bunch of useless actions at the beginning of a match to drive his APM up."

Li Yibo was carefully watching the match.

Chance. Fang Rui was waiting for a chance. Waiting for a chance where he could strike and break Liu Xiaobie's rhythm. Otherwise, if this continued, he would lose.

When would a chance appear?

Li Yibo couldn't be bothered to discuss with the other two. The pace of the match was so fast, so this chance would only appear for a mere moment...

There!

Li Yibo's eyes lit up.

"Cha..."

He only managed to get out the first half of the word because his speech wasn't nearly as fast as the two player's on the stage.

The APM statistics skyrocketed.

Fang Rui, 372!

This was his chance to turn the tables.

However...

He failed.

Just as Fang Rui's hand speed rocketed, Liu Xiaobie's APM also rose alongside it.

442!

The peak APM of the match finally appeared.

Liu Xiaobie used his immense hand speed to crush Fang Rui's defense.

In the end, the first match of the group arena went to Tiny Herb's Liu Xiaobie.

Chapter 1326

Fly Forth

"What an intense match!"

Victory had been decided and Tiny Herb's stadium was naturally filled with applause. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were discussing excitedly and Ruan Cheng's smile filled his face.

Liu Xiaobie won and Flying Swords still had 52 percent of his health left. Tiny Herb had established a good lead in the group arena and Ruan Cheng was, naturally, delighted. In that moment, he seemed like a hopeless Tiny Herb fan.

"Liu Xiaobie's performance this round was amazing!" Li Yibo commented, "He managed such a stable performance under this continuous high hand speed, making no major mistakes. Truly impressive."

"Indeed, his grasp over this techniques has become more and more solid," Pan Lin noted.

"Let's see how he performs this next round," Li Yibo said.

"Heheheh," Ruan Cheng started laughing dryly again. Like a noob, he childishly started doing calculations in his head: 48% of health to take out Fang Rui, still 52% left. He totally still had a chance to defeat Su Mucheng. Then, there was still Wang Jiexi for Tiny Herb. Tang Rou 2v1? Haha, it was clear that Tiny Herb would win the group arena.

However, reality soon gave him a harsh awakening.

"Seems like Liu Xiaobie really exhausted himself last round..." Li Yibo observed, watching the match.

"Yeah, he's clearly making more mistakes," Pan Lin added.

"And no matter how powerful his offensives can be with that hand speed of his, he has to be able to close in on his opponent first," Li Yibo brought up.

"Su Mucheng is very carefully not giving him such a chance and even sacrificed a lot of damage for it," Pan Lin said.

"Yes. She's using a very clever playstyle. However, isn't she a little too careful? There's no chance of Liu Xiaobie replicating what he had managed yesterday. Perhaps Su Mucheng can play a little more offensively. What do you think, Mr. Ruan?" Li Yibo realized that Ruan Cheng had stopped speaking again.

Fucking useless!

Ruan Cheng was cursing Liu Xiaobie in his heart.

The possibility of defeating Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain with 52 percent of his health was rapidly approaching zero. Not only that, but Liu Xiaobie hadn't managed to find a single chance to close in on Su Mucheng. Ruan Cheng really was worried that he'd be wiped out without even dealing 1 percent damage.

Good thing was, Liu Xiaobie hadn't lost that badly. In the end, he still found a chance to close in. However...

Ten percent!

That was how much health Flying Swords ended up taking from Su Mucheng. Ruan Cheng's lips were trembling. He wanted to start cussing up a storm in this widely live streamed broadcast.

"Tiny Herb had started out well... But they didn't manage to maintain the advantage they had gained!" Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Liu Xiaobie might've done better in the second position with such a draining playstyle!" Li Yibo suggested.

"Mr. Ruan? Alright, let's continue to observe the match." Pan Lin had wanted to ask after Ruan Cheng's opinion, but seeing how he was barely holding back his anger, he was afraid that the other would pull the quality of the entire program down with his answer.

Tiny Herb's second player, Liu Fei, came onstage. She was another female , Sharpshooter player, ID, Tasselflower.

They were both female pros, both Gunner players, but Liu Fei's renown was nothing compared to Su Mucheng's. She wasn't even on the main roster for Tiny Herb and only had the chance to perform in rotation. In this round, she had been placed in the group arena, and had just happened to meet the number one Gunner amongst female pros.

"Though Dancing Rain is down to 90 percent of her health, there is a skill gap between the two. So long as Su Mucheng doesn't make any major mistakes, she should be able to win." Li Yibo, who was now uncertain about making predictions, was bold enough to make one now. It was clear that no one thought that there would be any suspense as to the result.

No suspense didn't necessarily mean no surprises, though.

The battle between the two female Gunners was spectacular. Liu Fei was no god, not even a member of their team's main roster, but if she could manage to stay in the two time championship team Tiny Herb, then she would definitely be rather skilled.

Her performance was unusually impressive this round. Li Yibo's saying of Su Mucheng being able to win so long as she didn't "make any major mistakes" was a bit of an exaggeration.

It was good that Su Mucheng didn't slap him in the face.

"Liu Fei performed very well, but unfortunately, she was met with an opponent that performed even better." When Li Yibo made such a analysis, there was a lingering fear in his heart. If Su Mucheng didn't perform better, then the tides may have turned.

When Su Mucheng won, Dancing Rain still had 21 percent of her health left. Tiny Herb had reached their third player, their last defense, their captain, Wang Jiexi.

From the 52 percent lead they had at first, until this 21 percent disadvantage, Ruan Cheng had the urge to run away. However, Tiny Herb's stadium was still filled with energy. The impact that being overtaken and falling behind should've had on these fans was nowhere to be seen. It was rather strange.

"This atmosphere really is annoying!" Chen Guo exclaimed.

"Oh?"

"Look at these people. They're falling behind but as soon as Wang Jiexi appears, it's

like they're fated to win or something." Chen Guo gazed over the audience in the venue, listening to their cheering.

Yes, that was the feeling the current Tiny Herb gave off. It wasn't like Tiny Herb was falling behind, but that victory was already in their grasp. Everyone was wearing an expression of utmost confidence. They completely ignored their future opponents, as if they were no more than bubbles that their captain Wang Jiexi could pop with a finger.

"Mucheng, crush him! Little Tang, crush him!!" Though she knew that the players in the booths couldn't hear her, Chen Guo still hollered.

Su Mucheng and Tang Rou, the two girls who were onstage on Happy's side were the two who were closest to Chen Guo. Seeing them ignored by the Tiny Herb fans like this, Chen Guo was exceptionally pissed off.

"It's not unreasonable that the Tiny Herb fans have such confidence," Ye Xiu chuckled.

"Who cares what reason they have." Chen Guo clearly wasn't looking for logic or explanations.

Ye Xiu smiled. The match was starting and everyone turned their attention back to the screens.

A simple and straightforward map naturally wouldn't have much of a build up. The two characters advanced, the chat remaining empty.

There was very little communication between players in today's match. Of course, there were some subjective reasons for that. For example, Fang Rui liked to trash talk, but he had been faced with Liu Xiaobie today, so there was no time to type in such an intense battle of hand speeds.

In this match, Wang Jiexi and Su Mucheng didn't seem to have any intentions to chat either. The two soon met in the center of the map and Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain unhesitatingly used her attack range advantage to fire the first shot.

Boom!

Missiles flew.

Vaccaria's movement speed didn't dip at all, even riding his broom directly towards the missile. Just as it was about to impact, he swerved and the missile flew past his shoulder. The movement was smooth. Was this missile really an attempt to stop him? Can't feel it!

Clap clap clap!

The stadium burst into applause. Just a dodge and the Tiny Herb fans acted like they had seen the climax of a match.

"Getting excited over nothing!" Chen Guo gritted her teeth.

"It really was rather impressive!" Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo didn't reply because that voice of truth at the bottom of her heart told her that when Vaccaria narrowly dodged the missile without slowing down, she had almost abandoned her loyalties and cheered with the Tiny Herb fans.

"A technique that can really fan their excitement," Wei Chen commented, but then added, "But he wasn't just showing off."

Of course he wasn't. Wang Jiexi's action was simply to dodge in the quickest, easiest way. He had maintained his character's advance, so how could it be a mere party trick?

Anti-Tank Missiles!

Dancing Rain jumped backwards, launching three anti-tank missiles in a tri-shot formation.

The three missiles came one after the other. Vaccaria once again didn't dodge, charging right forwards.

What was he going to do this time?

"Holy shit!!" As the stadium erupted into cheers, Wei Chen cursed.

Vaccaria had, somehow, flew forwards, spinning his body like a drill, and drilled right into the tri shot. Then, his spin managed to narrowly pull his body out of range of each of the three missiles.

Brilliantly fast, amazingly precise. The broadcast replayed this moment in slow motion over and over again, as if they'd rather play this than the rest of the match.

"He's truly skilled!" Even Ye Xiu couldn't help but praise. This was the one that had almost accomplished a consecutive three championships after he had made history.

Vaccaria charged towards Dancing Rain at top speed, seemingly unstoppable.

Of course, Su Mucheng wasn't that easy of an opponent. As Vaccaria advanced, Dancing Rain was naturally retreating. As she retreated, she attacked, it was just that this didn't do much to stop the other's momentum and the two were slowly getting closer.

Star Ray!

Vaccaria finally entered a range where his Witch could attack. As he flew, he began to throw out magic tools.

The Star Ray that was formed from a Star Card shot forwards faster than its user.

Dancing Rain dodged, and with the effect the movement had, Vaccaria continued to close in.

Stinger!

Su Mucheng attempted to use a large AoE to stop him.

Vaccaria flew a level higher and darted in and out of the falling Stinger missiles, as if the explosions had nothing to do with him.

However, the closer he got, the harder it was to dodge.

Laser Cannon!

This time, Vaccaria wasn't able to fully dodge the attack, and the Laser Cannon struck his side, causing Vaccaria to spin in the air. However, it wasn't able to completely stop his advance. As he adjusted his form, Wang Jiexi took note of the way Vaccaria was thrown; even if he fell, he'd fall as close to his target as possible.

"God fucking shit!" Wei Chen continued to curse. Though cursing wasn't a rare occurrence for him, watching Wang Jiexi's performance today, his cursing had been

elevated to a frequency it had never once reached in the past.

Only cursing could express his emotions, because he didn't know how else to express them.

Wang Jiexi and his Vaccaria flew forth, carrying Tiny Herb on their shoulders and unstoppable.

Chapter 1327

Reason

Dancing Rain fell.

Wang Jiexi was just this type of person. He never failed at crucial moments. He would lose, but he would never make anyone lose confidence in him. As a result, even if he was one against many, even if he were playing against three opponents from Happy like last time, Tiny Herb's players and fans would still put their faith in him.

That time, it was Happy's home game.

And this time, it was Tiny Herb's.

The moment Dancing Rain fell, Chen Guo could only see Wei Chen's lip moving. She reckoned that he was still cursing at something. As for the the actual contents? He probably couldn't even hear himself.

The cheers from the Tiny Herb crowd had drowned out all other noise, and this was just the reaction after killing off an opponent with only 21% health left. If Wang Jiexi was able to win this team competition, how excited would these Tiny Herb spectators become?

Chen Guo really hoped a bucket of cold water would splash onto the crowd and cool them down. At this moment, Tang Rou's Soft Mist spawned onto the field.

Wang Jiexi was able to beat Su Mucheng using only 8% of Vaccaria's health. Compared to his incredible skill, this loss of 8% wasn't even considered as anything by many. The 100% health Soft Mist and the 92% health Vaccaria stood together. Practically everyone favored the latter to win.

"Wang Jiexi! He truly deserves his reputation!!" After taking down Su Mucheng, who had beat Liu Xiaobie and Liu Fei, Ruan Cheng became ecstatic. His state of mind wasn't much different than that of the Tiny Herb fans. Pan Lin and Li Yibo looked at him, wondering whether this guy would pounce onto the table and hug the screen.

"As long as Wang Jiexi is here, Tiny Herb is unlikely to lose the group arena," Ruan Cheng continued to sigh. His tone was extremely similar to that of Xiang Linsao 1 *, when he said the words "I'm stupid, really stupid."

Pan Lin and Li Yibo was unable to respond to him. They were the official commentators of the match. Communicating with a brain-dead fan was impossible.

Fortunately, Soft Mist and Vaccaria had started fighting.

"Okay! Let's watch the match," Pan Lin's spirits rose.

"Dragon Breaks the Ranks!" Ruan Cheng shouted.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were stunned. Where'd Dragon Breaks the Ranks come from?

"Hahaha, she didn't use Dragon Breaks the Ranks?" Ruan Cheng sneered.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo continued to be stunned. Tang Rou indeed like to open with Dragon Breaks the Ranks, but this was an official match and the official commentary. Your way of explaining things was a bit too problematic, no?

The two didn't have the energy to complain. Tang Rou was very direct. Whether or not she used Dragon Breaks the Ranks didn't affect her style. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were listening to Ruan Cheng's nonsense as the two players fought. They had unexpectedly missed such a detail...

The commentators were suddenly at a roadblock. The two people glared angrily at Ruan Cheng. Ruan Cheng was watching the match closely with excited spirits. The two characters were going back and forth, but from the switches between offense and defends, Wang Jiexi held the initiative.

"Wang Jiexi is worthy of his reputation!" Ruan Cheng praised.

Tu tu tu!

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were feeling like Ruan Cheng was pulling aggro onto Wang Jiexi, but with his praise, the two started feeling more and more disgusted with Vaccaria.

However, Vaccaria having the advantage was a reality at the moment.

She's improved again.

After half a season, Wang Jiexi and Tang Rou fought once again. This was his first thought.

Especially in terms of rationality.

Tang Rou's eagerness to win was extremely high. Whether she won or lost, she would never compromise or retreat. However, there were always times where compromising and retreating were the better options. These weren't a part of Tang Rou's vocabulary though. She would always choose a single path and continue forward. This choice would sometimes surprise the opponent, but it would also sometimes backfire.

However, this time?

As he praised her improvement, Wang Jiexi could only force a smile.

Her choices becoming more rational wasn't because she chose to compromise or retreat. It was because her choices became more precise when she charged forward.

Her understanding of skills had become more thorough, and she had accumulated more experience. She used everything she had to strengthen her always-forward playstyle.

This girl would always press forward when improving her own style. Wang Jiexi could only give her praise.

However...

Not enough!

While Wang Jiexi praised Tang Rou's improvement, Tang Rou once again felt the disparity in skill. Perhaps a part of it was because of the difference in equipment, but Tang Rou would never regard these as reasons.

She only wanted to win. She didn't want to lose.

A skill gap didn't necessarily represent a certain win or loss. Competition was fought, not compared.

But Wang Jiexi knew this reasoning even more clearly than her. He wouldn't relax facing a less skilled opponent.

Bang!

When Soft Mist's Dancing Fire Flowing Flames swung, it hit the Lava Flask thrown by Vaccaria.

The flask shattered, and lava flew out.

If Lava Flask directly hit a target, the lava would deal bonus damage. Wang Jiexi had unexpectedly used Lava Flash as an attack.

Lava splattered along with Stardust Extermination.

Dong!

A parry. Soft Mist's Dancing Fire Flowing Flames blocked Stardust Extermination. However, the lava that splashed onto Soft Mist quickly dealt damage to her.

Sure enough, she didn't retreat.

Her offense had become more rational, more coherent, and more threatening, but what about her defense?

There were many ways to defend while attacking. Directly eating damage was very bold and aggressive, but the most optimal choice should be the most rational and the most effective. It wasn't single mindedly pursuing a certain direction.

Excessively using a brute force method might turn out like Liang Fang, who traded too much of his health away and lost because he was unable to get it back.

If she could fight Yu Wenzhou 1v1, she would probably have a clearer understanding of this point. Unfortunately, the chances of that happening were very low. It wasn't necessary though. Ye Xiu had probably noticed this point too.

Tang Rou didn't need to practice her offense excessively. She should be focusing her time on her defense. Maybe she didn't like to defend as a result of her personality, and she didn't like to spend too much thought on it. But the problem was that the more she improved on her offense, the greater the imbalance between offense and defense.

No matter how great you were, it wasn't possible to always be the one attacking. There would always be times when the opponent would force you to defend. When one had a big lead, using a brute force method like eating damage was fine, but what about when one had a small lead or did not have the lead? Such an irrational choice would be fatal.

Just like now!

A Star Symbol suddenly shot at Soft Mist's eyes. Tang Rou had Soft Mist twist her body to dodge it and then stepped forward to close she distance.

But with this step forward, Star Symbol pulled closer. The instant Star Symbol blossomed into Star Ray, the radiating light filled half of Tang Rou's screen.

The Star Ray didn't land on Soft Mist, but the following attack did...

Because half of Tang Rou's screen was blinded by Star Ray's light, she couldn't see the attack. It was just an instant, an instant that the viewers would only be able to understand if they watched the replay in slow motion. However, Vaccaria took advantage of this instant to land an attack...

Lost.

Tang Rou fell.

Tang Rou lost again to Wang Jiexi.

Losing to a top God in the Alliance shouldn't be anything strange, but Tang Rou wasn't willing. She was never content with losing to any opponent.

And this wasn't her first time losing to Wang Jiexi. If you counted their fights, she had never won once.

"Hahaha, Wang Jiexi. He truly deserves his reputation. This hand was too beautiful!" The commentary was overtaken by Ruan Cheng. This guy looked like he wanted to jump onto the table and dance. In particular, when Tang Rou walked down from the stage, disappointed and regretful, Ruan Cheng became even more excited.

"Tang Rou still has a long ways to go before she can reach a God! Do the viewers still remembers that 1v3 promise? I wonder if she still has such plans!" Ruan Cheng was

radiating with delight as he remarked.

"Ahem, it was a splendid match," Pan Lin couldn't bear letting this guy continue talking.

"Tang Rou performed well today, but Wang Jiexi was more shrewd," Li Yibo said.

"Yes, Tiny Herb has won back two points in the group arena. Wang Jiexi didn't disappoint his teammates, the stadium, and all of the Tiny Herb fans watching this broadcast," Pan Lin continued to stir up the crowd.

"LONG LIVE THE KING!!" The Tiny Herb fans at the stadium shouted out this proclamation. Their respect for Wang Jiexi had reached such a level. Wang Jiexi didn't immediately walk down from the stage like Tang Rou did, after all, this was Tiny Herb's home stadium and the break between the group arena and team competition was rather long. He stayed on stage for awhile longer, waving his hands at the fans all around him.

Tang Rou went back to Happy's player area and smiled at the players comforting her. She sat down to the side rather dejectedly.

"Your attacks weren't bad," Ye Xiu turned his head and said to her.

"Not bad?" Tang Rou forced a smile. If they weren't bad, then why could she still not suppress the opponent?

"However, in a match, you can't always be attacking. Do you really think your opponent won't be able use even a single skill?" Ye Xiu said.

"I understand," Tang Rou knew that Ye Xiu's words were reasonable.

"In this match, how many of Wang Jiexi's attacks were able to stop your offense?" Ye Xiu said.

Tang Rou stared at the replay on the big screens. From time to time, it would show her a depressing moment.

"How to maintain your offense without it being interrupted is something you need to be very very very mindful of. If not, your offense will always be stopped. Several times of that, and you'll be left wondering where your health went," Ye Xiu said.

Tang Rou continued to stare at the replay. Those sorts of moments flashed on screen again and again.

"Starting from next round, you'll be placed first," Ye Xiu said, "That way you'll have more opportunities for real combat practice."

"Okay," Tang Rou nodded her head. She understood the reasoning behind Ye Xiu's arrangements. Going third might be the important anchor for the group arena, but if the other two players before her performed spectacularly, there might not be much left for her to do. Only the person going first in the group arena had the most opportunities to gain 1v1 experience.

"That won't be a problem, right?" Ye Xiu saw that Tang Rou didn't mind and asked Fang Rui.

"Of course not," Fang Rui said.

Ye Xiu put on a helpless face: "I originally wanted you to go first, so you would have more chances to get used to the class change. I put her as third to be the anchor and now, everyone needs to go first to practice."

"Haha, this suits her the most!" Fang Rui laughed, "In fact, the person who goes first can also practice as the anchor if she still plans on a 1v3."

"It's too bad there's only one person who can go first," Ye Xiu sighed.

Chapter 1328

The Stage on Sky Arena

After the individual competitions, Happy temporarily held a 3-2 lead. But Wang Jiexi's performance during the group arena had completely changed the atmosphere of the entire stadium. Even if Team Tiny Herb had a 5-0 lead, the fans might not be as excited as they were now.

This kind of atmosphere once again put Chen Guo in a bad mood.

Clearly, Happy was still in the lead, and clearly, the team competition had yet to be played, but the fans of Tiny Herb looked as though they had already won the final victory match.

Was this because of Wang Jiexi?

Looking at the Tiny Herb fans around her, Chen Guo noticed that their gazes were indeed fixated on one point - their team's captain, Wang Jiexi. Because Wang Jiexi had appeared in the group arena, and because Wang Jiexi would definitely appear in the team competition, they immediately had a different level of confidence in their team. To Chen Guo, this was a kind of blind faith. Tiny Herb performed very well during the group arena, but it wasn't certain how strong their performance would be during the team competition.

With such a ruckus in the crowd, the downside was that it filled the entire break between the individual rounds and the group competition, making it extremely difficult for Team Happy's members to communicate. If this was always the case, it would almost be a necessity for the teams to have a separate room to prepare in.

"These guys are acting like they've already won, we need to make them shut up!" Fang Rui expressed, with everyone understanding what he was referring to.

"There's no need to be influenced by the atmosphere, think about how calm we were when playing at Tyranny's home stadium," Ye Xiu said.

"Do you have to say these kinds of things on our behalf?" Chen Guo said.

"It's an objective matter of fact! Isn't it the same no matter who says it?" Ye Xiu asked.

"But now that you say that, there's no motivation for anyone to learn. If you don't believe me, just ask them," Chen Guo said.

"None at all," Fang Rui replied.

"Haha," Tang Rou laughed.

"Steamed Bun you shut up!" Seeing that Steamed Bun was about to say something, Chen Guo hurriedly stopped him.

"Alright then, since everyone is so unhappy about their arrogance, let's strike them a ruthless blow during the team competition! We'll focus on Wang Jiexi," Ye Xiu replied.

"Have you also lost all your rationality!" Chen Guo yelled.

At this moment, Qiao Yifan meekly raised his hand and asked, "When we were preparing for this round, didn't we practice to focus on Wang Jiexi in the first place?"

"Ah?" Chen Guo was startled and realized that she had been tricked once again.....

"Let's get ready to go onstage!" Ye Xiu called.

Team Happy's away game against Team Tiny Herb had finally reached the deciding tiebreaker round. The participants in the team competition walked onto the stage in succession.

Team Happy: Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Tang Rou, An Wenyi, Qiao Yifan.

Team Tiny Herb: Wang Jiexi, Xu Bin, Gao Yingjie, Liu Xiaobie, Yuan Baiqing, Liang Fang.

"Ah, it seems that the lineup for both teams haven't changed very much, it's still the usual lineup for the team competition," commentator Pan Lin explained after seeing the list of names for both teams.

"Happy did make one change, Tang Rou is part of the original lineup, while Qiao Yifan is the sixth player," Li Yibo replied.

"This should indicate that they want to play a more aggressive style!" Pan Lin replied.

"It does seem to be the case," Li Yibo nodded his head.

"Hahaha, playing an aggressive style in their away game, how bold," Ruan Cheng laughed, but anyone could hear the mockery in his laughter, looking down on Happy for not knowing their own limits.

"On the side of Team Tiny Herb, Yuan Baiqing is playing his Cleric, Aweto, this should also mean that they want to play a more aggressive game!" Pan Lin said. Team Tiny Herb's healer was very unique, their player could play two different characters and could choose to use either the Cleric or the Paladin in different competitions, and from this decision, one could roughly tell what Tiny Herb wanted to do in the team battle.

"Tiny Herb is playing a home game, there's no reason for them to focus on defense." Ruan Cheng replied.

"Yes, it looks like this is going to be a very intense fight. I'm looking forward to it," Pan Lin said.

While the commentators were discussing, the players had already exchanged greetings, entered the player booths, and the timer was ticking down to the start of the team competition.

"Let's see what map Tiny Herb has picked for the team battle," Pan Lin remarked.

"Sky Arena!" Li Yibo was momentarily stunned when he saw the map that the players eventually loaded into.

"Selecting this map during the team battle... is really very rare!" Pan Lin was also shocked.

Sky Arena was a map that could be considered extremely simple for use in the team battle. The only change in terrain in the whole map were the stairs. At the outermost regions of the map were terraces that looked down on the stage from above, in the middle was the stage itself, which in turn was surrounded by steps.

"This map... there shouldn't be too many complex ways to use the map features strategically," Li Yibo said.

"Would Tiny Herb have put any special effort into researching how to use the height difference from the steps?" Pan Lin said.

"This..." Li Yibo searched his mind for the details of Tiny Herb's past matches, but for a while couldn't give a definite answer.

"It seems that Tiny Herb has been very thorough in their aggressive stance!" Ruan Cheng said.

"Let's take a look and see how they're going to play aggressively," Li Yibo said, obviously favouring Ruan Cheng's opinion in this case.

Very quickly, the characters from both sides finished loading in, each standing at opposite ends of the arena. Because of the high stage in the center of the map, the two teams couldn't see each other, but in reality, they were more or less at an equal distance from the stage, a special feature of the team battle.

"Sky Arena, hm, why don't we just go on the stage and determine the winner?" Ye Xiu asked in the global channel, but none of Happy's characters made any immediate moves.

"Or how about you just come up, Old Wang, and the two of us can fight it out, whoever loses will just have their whole team GG?" Seeing that there was no response from the other side, Ye Xiu provoked them once again.

Team Tiny Herb still had no reaction, but the entire stadium was already in uproar because of Ye Xiu's unbridled arrogance.

"I think I'm beginning to understand the hate that Tyranny has for him," Tang Rou said to the others with her. Losing three times in a row to Ye Xiu and Excellent Era was still bearable, but the crux of the issue was that they still lost after all the provocation and ridicule, making it truly unbearable. This kind of unbridled arrogance was something that was usually displayed by the villain, and afterwards, the hero would go and defeat him, slapping his face. But now, the hero couldn't win, instead losing to this kind of villain, how disgusted would the viewers be? And on top of that, this had happened for three years straight, Team Tyranny's hatred was indeed very scientific.

It looked as if the Team Tiny Herb fans in the crowd were already going insane, but the players in the field looked pretty calm, with no one bothering to respond in the global channel. Instead, the characters from Team Tiny Herb all followed their established paths and advanced tactically.

"It can't be that you want me to let you have the first move?" Ye Xiu was still talking.

"That's enough, what's the point of talking so much rubbish?" Wang Jiexi replied at long last, disapproving of Ye Xiu's trash talk.

At this time, Ye Xiu sent a "sigh of relief" emoticon and said, "And here I thought that all of you weren't here!"

"We're here!" Wang Jiexi once again replied and informed him. At this time, Tiny Herb's five players had already appeared at the edge of the stage, looking down from above and meeting Team Happy's five players face-to-face.

"No one move, let them come down here!" Ye Xiu simply issued his orders in the global channel.

Tiny Herb didn't hesitate and immediately charging down the flight of stairs from the stage.

"Damn, they really came, let's retreat!" Ye Xiu once again shouted in the global channel.

As such, Happy's characters started to turn around and ascend the stairs to the viewing terraces behind them, and the team that occupied the high ground abruptly changed again.

"Let's open fire!" As Ye Xiu issued his command, Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain launched the first attack of the match.

The artillery shells spat tongues of flame as they flew, but Tiny Herb's five members all scattered, with none of them being hit by the attack. But by their team composition, Team Tiny Herb didn't have any long-ranged attackers, with no one being able to directly engage in a firefight with a Launcher. Team Happy, who were now occupying the high ground, seemed to be in a superior position at the moment.

"Possessing the high ground means having a definite advantage. If we were to use control of the high ground as the deciding factor in victory, then this map could be considered very complex. Each set of stairs has many layers, and the map is filled with them, so to make use of the high ground requires awareness of the details of the entire map, unlike many other maps where controlling one focal point means establishing an absolute advantage," Li Yibo began discussing the current circumstances in the match.

'That's true, for now, Happy has the height advantage, but looking at the map, Tiny

Herb could just change their position and climb to the same height as Happy," Pan Lin replied.

"So in this map, the battles that occur won't be the vertical battles centered around the stairs, but instead horizontal battles," Li Yibo said.

"You're right, Tiny Herb has already made such arrangements. It seems that they aren't too worried about Happy's temporary control of the high ground."

"The lowground is the inner circle of the map, with a smaller circumference, so it's not possible for Happy to occupy a high position and continually suppress Tiny Herb," Li Yibo said.

"That's right, Tiny Herb has moved around the inner circle, and gained horizontal distance from Happy."

"Yes, with this position, they can more or less start their advance."

"Alright! Tiny Herb is advancing! When the two teams face off horizontally on the stairs, the difference in height created by each step will affect many minor details. Tiny Herb must have done some special practice in this area, which is probably why they picked this map. Tiny Herb has charged up! Fuck!" Li Yibo was excitedly explaining, but at the end, he let his mouth run for a moment, uttering a vulgarity during the broadcast and leaving the broadcasting team completely flustered. It was only one word, and it was too late now that it had been said, so Li Yibo had already covered his mouth.

Tiny Herb charged up the stairs, but Happy's members once again descended the stairs.....

And from the directions given out in Happy's team chat, everyone could see what Happy's intention was.

The stage in the center!

"The stage in the center... If we're talking about controlling the high ground, this would be the most appropriate spot. The difference with the viewing terraces on the edge of the map is that here, the inner circle is the high ground, while the outer circle is the low ground, so if they have the high ground here, Tiny Herb can't just pull away horizontally and create a breakthrough point that way," Pan Lin exclaimed.

"Ah! Tiny Herb has also reacted very quickly, they've immediately turned around and come down."

"The two sides have the same intentions! They're both rushing towards the stage now."

"Is this really going to be where the match is decided? The steps here aren't as numerous as at the viewing platforms, but it's still enough for ten people to battle it out."

"Oh! Without reaching the stage, the two sides have already started attacking!"

"This isn't just a race, the two sides are using their attacks to control and restrict their opponent's movements!"

The two teams finally began to fight in earnest.

Chapter 1329

Happy's Primary Target

Boom! Boom!

As always, Dancing Rain struck first with her longest attack range. However, the cannonfire did nothing to stop Tiny Herb's advance.

Xu Bin, Angelica, the Alliance's Number One Knight, with the so-called strongest shield Wall of Sigh, blocked Dancing Rain's line-of-sight cannonfire.

Team Tiny Herb advanced as a whole and soon enough, two star cards rose from behind the Wall of Sigh, one high, one low. Tiny Herb had two Witches in their midst.

Star Ray!

The two star cards cracked, releasing two rays of light right at Happy's formation.

However...

Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shield!

Lord Grim came to the head of the formation and opened up his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, blocking the attacks like Xu Bin's Angelica.

The two sides were now at mid-range of one another.

Stringer, Sky Piercing Strike!

Happy's Dancing Rain and Boundless Sea launched attacks simultaneously. This was clearly an AoE attack that Xu Bin's Angelica alone didn't have the ability to block. As for Tiny Herb? The two Witches once again struck as one.

Lava Flask, Acid Rain Flask!

The two flasks had only just been tossed when, with two bangs, Lord Grim's Myriad

Manifestations had already switched to gun form, smoke rising from the muzzle. The two flasks had barely gone anywhere before they were smashed, lava and acid rain spraying across Tiny Herb's formation. Naturally, it wouldn't harm them, but this skill was clearly useless against Happy too. Instead, Happy's Stinger had arrived above their heads.

Scatter!

Team Tiny Herb's characters scattered in all directions. Just as they dodged the Stinger, Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree was already charging up the stairs towards the arena. Their offensive might've been stopped, but utilizing their need to dodge Happy's offensive, they could gain the higher ground first.

Plus, on these steps, Happy didn't have anyone who could move as swiftly as a Witch, thus they had to attack to prevent this.

Laser Cannon!

A beam of light came roaring out from Dancing Rain's cannon, but it wasn't headed for Kind Tree.

Vaccaria!

Dancing Rain's target was, shockingly, Vaccaria. As they scattered to avoid the Stinger, Tiny Herb's members lost Xu Bin's Angelica's protection. Dancing Rain's attack was surprisingly sent towards Vaccaria.

What sort of decision was this?

Wasn't the crux of the current battle fighting for the high ground? Happy wasn't going to try and stop Kind Tree? Did they have other plans?

The three in the broadcasting room were puzzled. However, the pace of the battle didn't give them time to consider this problem carefully.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Soft Mist charged out from Happy's formation, yet her target was also Vaccaria.

Boundless Sea, Lord Grim, all of Happy's characters had begun to attack, but their

targets were all clear as day.

Wang Jiexi, Vaccaria.

Tiny Herb's best player, Tiny Herb's most powerful character. Happy actually decided to charge straight at this wall from the beginning of the match. They ignored Kind Tree who had charged towards the arena to gain the higher ground. Happy didn't seem to have any intentions to fight over this with Tiny Herb.

"No way! Happy's main target is Wang Jiexi?" Pan Lin yelled.

"Heh, what a joke," Ruan Cheng sneered.

"This..." Li Yibo fell silent, not sure what to think of this. He felt that Happy's strategy was irrational, so there must be something else to happy's plans. He'd wait before judging.

So this is your plan?

Wang Jiexi gazed at the attacks headed for him. Vaccaria side stepped the Laser Cannon, jumping on his broom and circling in the air, causing Soft Mist's Dragon Breaks the Ranks to miss and leaving her five body units behind. Wang Jiexi ignored these obvious attacks, attention fixed on the other two who were charging over. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim and Fang Rui's Boundless Sea. What were these two planning to do?

Wang Jiexi had seen through Happy's intentions, but he didn't try to avoid them, instead heading straight at them.

Qi Blade!

Boundless Sea struck first, sending out a knife-hand that escaped almost everyone's notice. However, it didn't escape Wang Jiexi's gaze. Vaccaria once again spun himself as he flew, dodging the wave of qi from the Qi Blade with alarming precision. Lord Grim and Boundless Sea were now right in front of him and he quickly gave them a Disperse Powder. However, there was no chance that these two would be struck so easily. One left and one right, they jumped to the side to avoid it.

Shadow Cloak!

Lord Grim flung a hand forwards, sending a grasping shadow at Vaccaria. Vaccaria

swerved at an incredibly strange angle in midair, managing to dart out of the shadow.

Shadow Cloak!

Vaccaria used the exact same skill in response. Lord Grim jumped back, but the Shadow Cloak continued to advance, unwilling to let him go. However, just as it was about to catch him, the shadows seemed to split and a figure darted through.

Dragon Tooth!

Lord Grim had went right through Vaccaria's Shadow Cloak with a Dragon Tooth. What bold judgement and mechanics!

Would countering be possible if they waited for their opponent to make the first move? Too many people were unable to make such a judgement, buty Wang Jiexi could. He could detect these miniscule timings, so he couldn't let Ye Xiu do as he wished. Vaccaria immediately retreated, dodging the attack, but tightly following this, a flash of cold light appeared in his view. Lord Grim had darted to his side with a Shining Cut.

Swerve!

Vaccaria once again swerved through the air, dodging Lord Grim's attack. His swift flight speed allowed him to pull away from Lord Grim by a full two body units. The other members of Tiny Herb didn't just stand and watch their captain get ganged up on. At a time like this, with Wang Jiexi luring in the opponent's offensive, the others did what any core player of a powerhouse team would do and took the chance to find opportunities to attack.

Charge!

As Vaccaria swerved elegantly through the air, Xu Bin's Angelica was already charging over.

Triple Slash!

Liu Xiaobie's Flying Swords had also rapidly approached Fang Rui's Boundless Sea, interrupting the attack he was about to launch at Vaccaria.

It was just that Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree seemed to be a little out of sync with the rest of the team. With Happy's strategic intentions exposed, his position made him seem

like he had been lured away. However, was Happy really trying to take out Vaccaria? Were they really going to kick this wall of Tiny Herb's from the get go? Gao Yingjie was suspicious. Should he really give up such a good position?

Shattering the Lands!

Gao Yingjie had yet to make a decision when Soft Mist, after her unsuccessful Dragon Breaks the Ranks, had already charged back. This level 75 skill had been thrown rampantly towards the three Tiny Herb members over there.

Boom!

The magical energy seeped through the cracks into the ground. Liu Xiaobie dodged nimbly. On the other hand, Xu Bin used Angelica's impressive defense to tank the hit and quickly headed towards Soft Mist, who was stuck in her ending lag. Vaccaria was even more elegant. The moment Shattering the Lands struck, he had sped out of range, and the moment the magical energy began to disperse, he was already back, launching an offensive on Soft Mist with Xu Bin's Angelica.

Satellite Beam!

That was when the Launcher's high-level skill descended from the skies, covering Soft Mist. The smaller beams whirled out from the center, aiming to strike at the two. However, Angelica raised his shield, catching the beam that crashed down on him and breaking through with brute force. Vaccaria, on the other hand, gave a display of impressive agility, darting through the gaps between the beams without a scratch.

The broom swung up, but, noticing an attack coming from the side, Wang Jiexi had to have Vaccaria dodge once more. Lord Grim had already arrived in front of him.

"Yingjie, keep an eye on Boundless Sea. Xiaobie go after the healer."

In the Tiny Herb team chat, Wang Jiexi calmly made strategic arrangements. Against Happy's strategy, Tiny Herb was finally making arrangements to counter.

Boundless Sea? After hesitating for a moment, Gao Yingjie, having already decided to give up this vantage point, began to search for the Qi Master's form with orders from his captain.

Because the player was Fang Rui, the Master of Dirty Play, his presence and intentions

could become a major threat to Tiny Herb at any time. Tiny Herb did not dare underestimate him, even having someone go to keep an eye on him.

Whoosh!

Kind Tree flew down from the arena, advancing straight towards Boundless Sea. Fang Rui had already noticed, but wasn't willing to give up on the attack he was prepping.

Seismic Throw!

Boundless Sea slammed his palms onto the ground and qi rushed at Angelica and Vaccaria, who were advancing on Soft Mist.

Soft Mist had managed to get out of her ending lag by then and used the opening Boundless Sea's Seismic Throw created, Tyrant's Destruction!

Retreat!

Angelica and Vaccaria had to back away to dodge the sweep attack, and Soft Mist then sent forth a Sky Strike, the angle of it pulling them both in range. But Angelica threw his shield forth and turned, knocking the blow to one side. Vaccaria then advanced, Sweeping Soft Mist into the air.

However, this knockup skill of Witches was the worst of all 24 classes. The knockup height was very limited. Usually, Witches would fly up and use their broom and their other special methods of attack to send the target higher and higher. However, Vaccaria wasn't given that opportunity. Lord Grim's attacks once again came down on him.

Clang!

Vaccaria's Stardust Extermination parried Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and a figure flashed by behind Vaccaria.

Kind Tree!

Though Wang Jiexi had told him to keep an eye on Boundless Sea, the situation on the battlefield was ever changing. Orders shouldn't be ignored, but often times, players had to judge the situation and make decisions on their own. Seeing that Vaccaria needed a helping hand with continuing his offensive and that Kind Tree was close

enough, Gao Yingjie immediately flew over to continue the attack that had been blocked by Lord Grim.

Chapter 1330

Joint Attack

Could Kind Tree hit Soft Mist?

Everyone was nervously watching for this, but then heard, with a shlink, a blade of sword energy unsheath and arc through the air.

"Sword Draw? This close?!" Li Yibo exclaimed in shock.

Yes, Lord Grim and Vaccaria stood so close, and at such a distance, Sword Draw shouldn't have had a chance to be used. Before the sword even came out of the sheathed, it would've probably already been suppressed.

However, right now, Lord Grim's Sword Draw successfully arced through the air in a circle. Not only did Wang Jiexi not block the attack, but he was jumping back to dodge as well, and Kind Tree, behind him, was instantly exposed to the sword energy of this Sword Draw. Gao Yingjie wasn't slow, but it was too late now. Blood splashed into the air, and his advance had been pushed back by Lord Grim's Sword Draw.

How did this Sword Draw find its way out?

Everything had happened too quickly, and no one had been paying attention to that moment. Playback? During such an intense moment, how could they have time to watch a playback? It was unfortunate, but probably only Wang Jiexi was the only other person who understood why Sword Draw was successful. It was because... Lord Grim's weapon was the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella!

The ribs of the umbrella at the top flipped up into spear form had stopped Stardust Extermination's attack. At the same time, the bottom of the shaft was unsheathed into sword form in a Sword Draw, allowing Lord Grim to successfully use this skill at such a distance. For any normal Blade Master, it would be impossible to parry another's attacks and use Sword Draw at the same time. In other words, this was a pace that was unique to unspecialized Lord Grim, the unspecialized blitz that no one had been able to counter yet.

If you didn't experience it personally, then it really was hard to notice!

Wang Jiexi thought to himself, already back on the offensive after dodging Sword Draw's sword energy.

"Xiaobie, behind you!" At the same time, he sent this message.

Shlink!

Sword Draw appeared once more on the field. Liu Xiaobie didn't even look. His Flying Swords turned half way and sent out a wave of sword energy. Behind him, Boundless Sea was charging over. Fang Rui naturally couldn't see Wang Jiexi's warning and this attack came abruptly to him. It was just unfortunate that this wasn't the best distance for such an attack. Wang Jiexi was in an intense battle himself, after all. A warning was already good enough; there was no way he could help Liu Xiaobie calculate the timing, too.

His relatively far distance gave Fang Rui enough time to react. Boundless Sea jumped backwards, avoiding the strike, but Liu Xiaobie couldn't just ignore Boundless Sea and continue attacking Little Cold Hands. He immediately made a decision to advance on Boundless Sea.

That was when Little Cold Hands raised his cross and began to cast, a holy white light shining like a flame on the cross.

"Xiaobie, behind you!" On the field, Tiny Herb's five members had different views of the field, and it was natural for them to warn others of these sneak attacks when they saw it. Right then, it was Tiny Herb's healer, Yuan Baiqing, that saw Little Cold Hands casting. He realized, with a single glance, that Little Cold Hands wasn't aiming to heal, but to attack. This was a Sacred Fire.

Seeing another warning, Liu Xiaobie knew who was behind him. Striking wouldn't be able to interrupt the other this time. He could only dodge!

Move, turn! Flying Swords rapidly dodged to one side. Now, he didn't dare let either Boundless Sea nor Little Cold Hands out of his sight. He was trying to find a good vantage point now. As for Little Cold Hand's attack, he must've dodged it, right?

Indeed, he had dodged it and the Sacred Fire didn't even touch Flying Swords. Just as the holy white flame jumped, Little Cold Hands turned and Yuan Baiqing realized that

something was wrong.

"Captain!" He never would've thought that Little Cold Hands' Sacred Fire wasn't directed at Liu Xiaobie's Flying Swords, but at Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria.

His incorrect warning not only interrupted the offensive Flying Swords who was charging at Boundless Sea, but also made Wang Jiexi let his guard down.

Damn it!

Yuan Baiqing was frustrated with himself. However, even if he could go back and redo things, what should he do? Little Cold Hands had such precise control over the timing of skills, able to finishing adjusting his aim at the very last moment of his casting. Even if he had realized that Vaccaria was being targeted and gave such a warning, Little Cold Hands would probably adjust Sacred Fire so that it was aimed at Flying Swords instead.

The other acted in accordance to Tiny Herb's actions. He couldn't not warn, but doing so didn't do them any good. The only way would have been to interrupt the skill. Unfortunately, it was too late now. The holy white Sacred Fire flared, and Wang Jiexi, facing off against the unspecialized blitz, was oblivious to the danger. An Wenyi's judgement was precise, and the Sacred Fire vanished practically the moment it flared, but everyone could see how this holy white flame latched itself onto Vaccaria's form.

Not bad at all!

Vaccaria's view clearly turned towards Little Cold Hands for a moment, seeming to have glanced towards the young player over there.

However, how much use would it be?

Wang Jiexi didn't panic at all and didn't make any extra actions apart from the glance he gave Little Cold Hands. He didn't stop either. Vaccaria was still doing whatever he had been doing before. Sacred Fire's three seconds of silence could be fatal, but for a Witch, they used all sorts of magic tools to strengthen their brooms in close combat. They had little to no skills which were directly used to attack. Using tools to strengthen their broom, in the end, the effects were only displayed through normal attacks.

In the next three seconds, Vaccaria had merely lost the enhancements from his magic tools, weakening his attacks. To a Witch, this wasn't a fatal blow. In fact, he didn't even

need to stop his offensive. Normal attacks, Vaccaria had already been using normal attacks originally!

Stardust Extermination continued to sweep forth and Lord Grim swung his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, parry!

However, in the moment he parried Stardust Extermination, Lord Grim's figure suddenly swayed.

A seemingly useless action, but like that, a bloom of light appeared in front of Wang Jiexi's eyes.

Heat-Seeking Missiles!

Sweep it away? Stardust Extermination had just been knocked to the side by the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. It was too late.

Dodge it? Heat Seeking Missile's AoE wasn't small, and he was also under the silencing effect of Sacred Fire and was thus unable to fly on his broom.

The other member of his team wouldn't be able to get there in time to help, so Wang Jiexi could only watch as the missile plummeted towards him, boosted by the flames it spat and splitting the air with a piercing howl.

Boom!

The immense mushroom cloud enveloped Vaccaria's form at once and the other members of Tiny Herb could only watch, unable to help. They even had to be careful that they themselves weren't caught up in the shockwave.

The three seconds of Sacred Fire's silence also ended then, but all of Happy's members launched attacks at that swaying, but still present figure in the smoke.

Flash Burst!

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart!

X-1 Extruder!

Three characters, three directions, in addition to Lord Grim who stuck to Vaccaria's

side. Their attacks disregarded all else. Tiny Herb didn't just have Wang Jiexi, after all, they still had Xu Bin, still had Gao Yingjie, still had Liu Xiaobie, but Happy completely ignored these three attackers, even if attacks came towards them.

They might not be able to stop these attacks, but they could disrupt them. So long as there was an opening in the opponent's formation, Wang Jiexi would be able to get Vaccaria out. All of Tiny Herb's members were infinitely confident in that, so they each chose their quickest attacks.

Star Refraction! Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree cast out a star card.

Roar! Xu Bin's Angelica bellowed, releasing the Knight's AoE taunt skill.

Shadow Steps! Liu Xiaobie's Flying Swords immediately split into eight, all swarming forwards to disrupt Happy's offensive.

Even Yuan Baiqing's Aweto, seeing that he was being ignored, silently began to cast a Hypnosis.

Whose skill would be faster?

After Star Refraction's star card cracked open, Star Ray shot out, striking each of Happy's members. However, Dancing Rain's X-1 Extruder had already been released, and attacking the character wouldn't knock the X-1 Extruder off course.

Knocked by the refraction, Soft Mist swayed to the side, but Dancing Fire Flowing Flame in her hand remained on course under her mechanics.

Fang Rui once again displayed his cunning as a Master of Dirty Play. Before the Star Refraction hit, he purposefully turned Boundless Sea slightly, and thus, the attack knocked Boundless Sea back to his original position.

Lord Grim, well, his actions were even more simple. Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened up and he just ignored everything behind him.

As for Angelica's Roar?

The Knight's aggro-pulling skill was the ultimate counter to this sort of focused attack, but Xu Bin wasn't so optimistic. He had a Knight's Roar, but his opponents weren't bereft of a method to stop it.

Calm and Composed!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea immediately stopped his Flash Burst when Angelica used Roar, releasing a Calm and Composed instead. All characters in range would be cleared of fear, taunts, and other such statuses.

Knowing that the opponent had a Qi Master, Xu Bin had already expected this, However, this at least interrupted Boundless Sea's Flash Burst, and that would at least give Vaccaria an opening, right?

In the yet to disperse smoke, Vaccaria's form charged in Boundless Sea's direction as expected, but in the next moment, Lord Grim had darted in front of him.

Swerve!

Vaccaria, flicked the handle of his broom, changing direction in midair and flying low with the body bowed.

Shining Cut!

With a flash of cold light, Lord Grim once again flashed in front of Vaccaria.

Swerve again!

Vaccaria turned a full right angle.

Charge, Lord Grim skidding in front of him.

Swerve again!

This time, Vaccaria shot upwards towards the sky.

There was a humming sound, and Wang Jiexi recognized it as the sound of Rotor Wings. Lord Grim had flown up as well.

Too slow! Watching Lord Grim use that skill in an attempt to fly up and block him, Wang Jiexi felt rather incredulous.

"Captain, behind you!" However, he soon saw such a warning in the team chat, four such warnings, one from each player.

Too late.

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart pierced through his chest.

Chapter 1331

Forceful

Blood sprayed into the air. Everyone could clearly see the way Soft Mist's dDancing Fire Flowing Flame impaled Vaccaria.

How could it be?

The crowd stared, dumbstruck with gasps of shock.

First consumed by a Heat-Seeking Missile, then pierced through the chest by Soft Mist's spear. This was theirat most reliable captain, Wang Jiexi, and their most powerful character of their team, Vaccaria! Yet now he was hanging from the spear of that disgrace who had promised to 1v3, like helpless prey. What a joke... How could this happen?

This couldn't be real!

The audience in the stadium couldn't accept what was happening before their eyes, but the match wouldn't wait for them. Soft mMist retracted her spear and Vaccaria's Stardust Extermination seemed like it was about to fly up again, but before he could do so, Lord Grim arrived from above and crashed down.

Eagle Stamp!

Vaccaria was sent to the ground.

Qi Blast!

Boundless Sea had readied a high-level skill, and the turmoulous qi energy was blasted into Vaccaria's body. His magic robes swelled up and blood seemed to spray once more from where Soft Mist had impaled him.

The qi energy silently broke Vaccaria down from the inside out, and Dancing Rain's X-1 Extruder arrived. Vaccaria was pulled in, unable to resist.

Liu Xiaobie's Shadow Step clones flashed in and out, but from beginning to end, no one even really paid the clones any mind. Happy seemed to only see Vaccaria. The only attacks they went to deal with were the ones that would disrupt their offensive on Vaccaria. For example, Lord Grim landed once more and turned, suddenly shooting a bullet behind him. The bullet flew, heading directly for their Cleric, Aweto. He had been so close to finishing that long cast for Hypnosis, but in the final moments, Lord Grim had struck him...

Boom!

The X-1 Extruder finally exploded, and Vaccaria was once more consumed by light and fire. The audience couldn't keep watching, and nor could the members of Tiny Herb, on or off stage.

This was their captain, the one that had always led them forth. How could he be toyed with by Happy like that?

Formless Phantom Blade!

Liu Xiaobie's Flying Swords threw forth a wave of sword-light wildly and crazily, cutting through the fire and light. Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree also darted into the sky with a Broom Tornado and then dropped down swiftly. Knight's Spirit! Xu Bin activated Angelica's Awakening skill and Angelica, under Knight's Spirit, used a Fair Heroic Leap, leaping to the other end with an earth-shaking landing.

Tiny Herb's three members stood steady around their captain, protecting him. But...

Charged Artillery!

Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

That was when Dancing Rain and Boundless Sea simultaneously launched attacks, both using charged AoEs in a pincer attack. Even Angelica's Sighing Wall wouldn't be able to block these two attacks completely.

These were the awakening skills of Dancing Rain and Boundless Sea, their specialty being that they could both be charged. After charging, their power was immense. No matter if it was the explosion that Charged Artillery created or the eruption of qi from Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow, neither of these were something that a shield could block completely.

Dodging was a priority, but what about their captain? Would he have the time to dodge this wave of attacks?

"Dodge!"

In the Team Tiny Herb chat, an order appeared from their captain, clear as crystal.

Everyone was mentally jolted back to clarity, and the Tiny Herb fans in the stadium began to cheer once more, and this was just an order. Tiny Herb hadn't even done anything yet!

However, if that's what the captain wanted, then they had to dodge!

Xu Bin, Gao Yingjie and Liu Xiaobie all scattered in their own direction and prepared to counterattack in accordance with their own observations and judgements. Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria had also raised his Stardust Extermination.

"Happy really is bold..." In the broadcasting room, Pan Lin's comment was thus after he had finished admiring Happy's performance, wide eyed in surprise.

Directly choosing Wang Jiexi as their main target was a bold enough strategy from Happy, but what was shocking was that they were carrying it out pretty well.

"It's rare to see someone who can place Wang Jiexi at such a disadvantage," Pan Lin noted.

"Perhaps, he's the only one..." Li Yibo replied.

Pan Lin naturally knew who the "he" Li Yibo was talking was was. Ye Xiu, there was only Ye Xiu, the Ye Xiu that had been at the peak of Glory when Wang Jiexi had only just joined the alliance. Compared to the legend of three consecutive championships, Wang Jiexi was a mere Best Rookie in season three. It was impressive that he didn't hit Rookie's Block, but faced with the one who erected a dynasty of three consecutive championships, it was nothing.

One, an ultimate god that had dominated the heavens like the sun, and the other, simply the most talented of a bunch of newbies. Against Wang Jiexi, what did Ye Xiu have to fear or worry about?

Nothing. Nothing at all.

Happy could execute such a bold plan of attack, because this member of Team Happy wasn't someone who feared and respected Wang Jiexi like most players.

Attack, only relentless attack.

When Xu Bin and the other two scattered, Wang Jiexi noticed that Happy's characters didn't react. They continued to fixate on the center of the pincer attack, on Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria.

Wasn't this a little too stubborn of them?

Wang Jiexi was surprised. Happy seemed to have set killing him as their ultimate goal. Were they not going to consider the result of this team competition any longer? Otherwise, why would they play in such an unbalanced waystyle? Why would they be so relentlessly stubborn in focusing their offense on him, even at such risks?

Their attacks might be successful, but they'd pay a higher price to do so. Had they not thought of that? Or, perhaps, had they thought of it, but were ignoring it?

Wang Jiexi's Vaccaria had already hopped onto Stardust Extermination, prepared to escape the terrifying attack Happy had was launching. However, that was when Ye Xiu Lord Grim and Tang Rou's Soft Mist charged over.

They had done nothing when Xu Bin and co had escaped, but when Vaccaria moved, they immediately acted.

This wasn't a good situation at all! If they came back to save him, then they would be hit by the two awakening skills. If they didn't, then there'd be little chance he could throw the both of them off, and those two skills were about to arrive. Was having the three of them dodge a bad judgementcall? Should they have gathered their strength to break through one side?

In that moment, many thoughts flashed through Wang Jiexi's mind. This match, the simple map, had come to a situation that was rather complicated. The practice they had put into using this map's terrain to their own advantage had been for naught. The battle had erupted here. If they purposefully went to use the strategy they had originally planned with the steps, it might just have the opposite effect.

But at least, they had to figure out their opponent's strategic intentions!

Boom!

The explosive power of the Charged Artillery was immense, and the thunderous boom blanketed everything. Meanwhile, Boundless Sea's Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow seemed to have been charged until it became tangible, finally blasting Vaccaria as well. This time, he failed to escape. Happy's members were more or less completely ignoring the other three members of Tiny Herb, fixated on Wang Jiexi. This definitely wasn't normal for any match. But this time, Happy had finally paid the price for such an unbalanced arrangement. Xu Bin and co, realizing that they had been ignored, turned back to counterattack and more or less repaid them for the damage Happy had dealt to Vaccaria in full.

"Isn't Happy being a little too bull-headed?" Pan Lin called out, unable to comprehend their thought process.

At first, their encirclement of Wang Jiexi really was very spectacular and successful, but this time, this was clearly an unequal trade. However, Happy still stubbornly tried to take out Vaccaria first, and what they traded for that, was the advantage they had worked so hard to build up.

"Happy is truly too naive if they think it'll be so easy to defeat Tiny Herb's ace!" Ruan Cheng laughed, as if having completely forgotten how his soul had practically left his body when Wang Jiexi had been beaten down.

"Happy is really being very forceful today," Li Yibo noted.

"Heh. So this style is called being forceful? Maybe we could use a different adjective, like reckless?" Ruan Cheng's brain, particularly clever when it came to hating on Happy, once again got to work.

"Have you two noticed Fang Rui's performance today?" Li Yibo said.

"Fang Rui? Boundless Sea?" The two were both deep in thought.

"Don't you two think that today's Fang Rui is particularly not Fang Rui? He hasn't done any dirty sneaking around, ambushes or strange tricks... Today, he hasn't used the style he's used to. Today, he's fighting openly and directly like a normal Qi Master!" Li Yibo explained.

"Is he perhaps planning on changing styles again?" Ruan Cheng considered.

"I don't think so. I think it's just because their offensive strategy today requires him to play such a role," Li Yibo analyzed.

"Offensive strategy? What offensive strategy?" Ruan Cheng laughed.

"Risk everything to wipe Wang Jiexi out," Li Yibo replied.

"Heh," Ruan Cheng laughed again. "Too bad that this is a team competition. Defeating one person doesn't mean defeating a the whole team, no? No matter how central to the team. With this recklessness, I'm really curious how many of them will be left when they finish executing this 'offensive strategy' of theirs."

How many will be left?

It almost seemed like Happy really didn't care about this.

Attack, relentlessly, furiously attack. Anything that didn't affect their offensive against Vaccaria, they ignored it, even if it would harm their characters or send them into a danger zone.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky!

Flash Burst!

The last time. This was the last time.

Boundless Sea sent his qi energy into Vaccaria's body, and then the dragon condensed from the magical energy of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky roared as it crushed Vaccaria between its jaws.

A net of sword energy instantly unleashed itself onto Boundless Sea. Fang Rui didn't seem to care about his own life, simply turning around for the last time. He saw Xu Bin's sword slam down against Soft Mist's head. The magical energy swirling around her instantly dispersed. He saw the ground approach rapidly, but he could no longer Quick Recover. He saw Vaccaria, far off, encircled by the magical energy of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky, which exploded along with the qi energy that had injected through Flash Burst.

Chapter 1332

A New Future

These guys actually did it!

Under the eruption of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky and Flash Burst, Vaccaria's health was finally wiped out. Their healer couldn't make it in time to provide support and Vaccaria fell without resistance.

However, Happy had also paid a high price for this.

Soft Mist and Boundless Sea, as they dealt this last blow together, had been killed by Tiny Herb's furious offensive.

Three characters wiped out at the same time?

This was truly a rare and devastating trade. The entire stadium was sent into shock. The three in the broadcasting room were speechless.

Bang bang!

Two gunshots.

In that moment, even the players on the field were stunned, their rhythms slowing. Only one person was still doing as they should. In the face of such a devastating situation, he hadn't been affected in the slightest. He didn't even spare a glance for the three fallen characters before his character switched targets and charged.

Lord Grim's two gunshots had been aimed at Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree.

Naturally, they wouldn't have been able to successfully execute this sort of kill without CCing the opponent's healer.

Tiny Herb's Aweto was being blasted by Dancing Rain to the point where he was completely incapable of acting. Happy's Little Cold Hands, on the other hand, was being knocked witless by Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree.

The kill had only just happened, yet Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had already turned his fire towards his next target. With bullets on the way, Lord Grim used movement skills to flash to Kind Tree's side. Gao Yingjie was a little out of it because of what had just happened and was easily blasted into the air by Lord Grim.

Everyone snapped back to reality, seemingly only just realizing what had happened on the field.

Wang Jiexi, Vaccaria, Tiny Herb's core, the strongest part of their team, had been destroyed by Happy.

The stadium went silent.

No one had any grasp of the weight of the one for two trade. The audience only noticed one thing: Vaccaria had fallen, Wang Jiexi was out of the match.

What now?

Such a thought took over the hearts of countless fans. With Wang Jiexi gone, they were lost. They were used to seeing Wang Jiexi lead Tiny Herb to victory, vying for the championship cup year after year, season after season, match after match. From the third season, when he took the role of captain onwards, the regular season, the playoffs, sponsorship matches, sparring matches, exhibition matches, Tiny Herb's 398 matches, their captain Wang Jiexi was always present.

No matter when, he would be on the field to lead his team.

No matter when, so long as he was there on the field, everyone would feel secure.

But now, Wang Jiexi was the first to be sent out of the match.

In all these years, it wasn't that no team had ever tried, it was that no one that they could remember had ever succeeded.

But now, in front of their very eyes, the one thing that had never happened in all these years had, and in their home game, too, executed by a team that was new to the Alliance.

"The match isn't over!"

On the screen, in Tiny Herb's team chat, a message suddenly popped up.

After Kind Tree had been sent flying by Lord Grim, Gao Yingjie was the first one to clearly understand: their captain had been killed, but the match wasn't over.

In the current situation, Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi, his Vaccaria had been wiped out, but they still had Xu Bin, Gao Yingjie, Liu Xiaobie, and Yuan Baiqing on the field. Their sixth player Liang Fang had also switched in automatically.

For Happy, two of their characters had been killed and their sixth player Qiao Yifan had been switched in. Currently, only Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng and An Wenyi were there with Gao Yingjie and his teammates.

Their captain was no longer there, but Tiny Herb still held a clear advantage in numbers. They couldn't just stop and stare. Happy, over there, was at a disadvantage, yet their performance was still as stable as ever. Ye Xiu had immediately saved Little Cold Hands, and Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain was still blasting their healer, Aweto, as she ran to regroup.

It's a four versus three right now, and we hold the advantage!

Gao Yingjie told himself again and again.

But, what should they do?

After telling himself that, he then questioned himself.

Should he be making arrangements for what they were to do next?

Gao Yingjie knew of the expectations his team had of him, and the future his captain hoped he could shoulder. He always worked hard for this, yet when this moment was placed in front of him like this, ever so abrupt, he floundered. After he sent that message, "the match isn't over", he didn't know what to do next.

This shouldn't be!

Even if he were just a normal team member, he shouldn't feel so lost, so adrift. He had to do something.

You're going to be the one to shoulder Tiny Herb's future!

His captain's voice echoed in his ears ever so clearly, yet the current him was unable to shoulder such responsibilities. He couldn't even do what he had to do on the field like a normal player.

"With Vaccaria dead, Tiny Herb's morale has been severely impacted." Even the commentator, Pan Lin, could see what state Tiny Herb's players were in. After Vaccaria had been sent from the match, they had lost their way, flailing in the match without direction.

They had the advantage in numbers, their opponents were right there in front of them, but it was Happy's three that had managed to adjust first and it was Happy's three who took the initiative to attack.

"Tiny Herb won't just lose like that, will they?" The difference in the states of mind of the players had Pan Lin doubting Tiny Herb despite their advantage.

"Not everyone," Li Yibo said, abrupt.

"What?" Pan Lin didn't get what this was referring to.

"Xu Bin!" Ruan Cheng yelled.

Wang Jiexi really had been sent from the match by Happy. This was shocking, but fortunately, it hadn't been without dire consequences for Happy. One for two. Happy had killed off their opponent's core player, but doing so had sent themselves into a disadvantage in numbers. Their actions didn't seem worth it.

However, Ruan Cheng soon realized he was wrong.

From the reaction of the audience and the players of Tiny Herb, he finally truly understood what Wang Jiexi was to Tiny Herb. He was no normal core player.

He was their heart, their foundation, their hope, their confidence... Anything that they needed to continue fighting, Tiny Herb only had because of Wang Jiexi.

And now, he had fallen.

What he left to the players on the field was shock, the unknown, the sense of being lost, anxiety.

However, there was one exception.

Xu Bin.

A player who debuted in the sixth season and transferred to Tiny Herb from 301 Degrees, he had been a part of Tiny Herb for one and a half years, seeing great improvement and even becoming an All-Star, becoming Glory's Number One Knight.

He adapted to Tiny Herb well, but, in the end, he transferred over. He had only been a part of the team for a year and a half. Compared to the players of Tiny Herb who were born and raised there, his dependence on Wang Jiexi wasn't that strong.

When Vaccaria had fallen, he felt the same shock, but he didn't lose his cool, nor did he stop.

He had dealt with Soft Mist and had prepared to continue this offensive, but he hadn't expected that all his teammates would suddenly stagnate.

Xu Bin had intended to team up with Gao Yingjie and gang up on Little Cold Hands. So long as they got rid of Happy's healer, then their victory was pretty much assured. Who would've thought that Happy would adjust themselves even faster. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim swiftly came back to support and Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain also hurried over to regroup. However, what was more shocking to Xu Bin was that Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree had been easily blasted away by Lord Grim.

Angelica, having prepared to charge over and help him, could only stop. Then, seeing Gao Yingjie's message, he thought that there would be some sort of arrangement forthcoming. Though he had only come to Tiny Herb a year and a half ago, he had been named vice-captain. However, Xu Bin knew with clarity that Tiny Herb's future captain was Gao Yingjie. He was certain to be the one who would take up Vaccaria and continue Tiny Herb's fight after Wang Jiexi abdicated from his position. As for Xu Bin, he would always be a supporting character.

Xu Bin wasn't that ambitious and didn't have any complaints about this arrangement. After Vaccaria was defeated, the match would go to Gao Yingjie's control, so he was still that vice captain, the Knight that would stand by his king.

Yet after Xu Bin saw Gao Yingjie, the one who should take over, type that message into the chat, the other had fallen silent. In contrast, Happy's three players adjusted themselves decisively, swiftly removing themselves from the devastating trade and

beginning to counterattack.

Boom boom!

Dancing Rain's missiles soared over.

No matter how lost Gao Yingjie was, his instincts as a pro player were solid. The opponent had attacked, and if he didn't know to dodge, then he deserved to die. Following Happy's attacks, Liu Xiaobie and Yuan Baiqing started waking up, facing the current situation with a more focused mind.

They still had the advantage.

That was obvious to them.

But, what should they do next?

Everyone looked to Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree

Tiny Herb had always revolved around their Witches. Their strategy and playstyle revolved around the Witch; they needed a hero to guide them.

The Tiny Herb of the past only had a Vaccaria. He was so dependable, always there to guide them on the battlefield. But now, they also had a Kind Tree. The dual Witch arrangement made them feel like they had two safety nets. However, everyone knew that this was merely a transitional period, slowly shifting the core of their team. Wang Jiexi, debuting in the third season, was coming to the end of his pro career. Of the talented players debuting in the same season, Zhao Yang had already retired and Yang Cong had abdicated from his position as ace, changing playstyles.

Only Wang Jiexi remained the way he was on the very first day, shouldering the entire team, allowing them to lean on him.

But now, it was time to switch players. From today onwards, another would hold up this team.

"Yingjie!" Liu Xiaobie called out in the team chat. They were doing their all to avoid Happy's attacks. Though it was four against three, they needed some sort of team tactic. They needed someone to lead them into battle, and that person should be Gao Yingjie.

But... what should I do? Gao Yingjie gazed at their opponent, their numbers depleted yet still closing in. Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, even against Tiny Herb, who had won two championships, they were still the Best Partners on the field.

Could he do it? Gao Yingjie gazed into the distance as if his and Team Tiny Herb's new future was over there.

Chapter 1333

Overlapping Ghost Boundaries

"Go, Yingjie! We'll follow your pace!"

In Tiny Herb's team chat, Liu Xiaobie sent this message. As a longtime teammate of Gao Yingjie's, he could sense the other player's confusion and panic.

If he's still not confident enough, then let's help him establish confidence! Aren't we used to supporting a Witch? No matter who it is, we'll go along with him.

"Go!" Xu Bin understood Liu Xiaobie's intentions and also encouraged Gao Yingjie. At the same time, their healer player Yuan Baiqing was controlling Aweto, preparing to give aid to the whole team.

With the encouragement of his teammates, Gao Yingjie's emotions gradually steadied. He was carrying everyone's hopes, how could he let them down? He had to carry Tiny Herb's future!

"Go!" Gao Yingjie also sent a message in the chat, displaying his state of mind to his teammates, and after that, the Witch Kind Tree once again took flight.

Target: Little Cold Hands!

Gao Yingjie decided to resume the objective that he hadn't been able to complete earlier. At the moment, they had the advantage of numbers, so there should be many openings through which they could attack Little Cold Hands. If they managed to kill the opponent's healer, the game was set.

But he had barely taken a few steps when he saw that Little Cold Hands was already retreating. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim smoothly intercepted Kind Tree's path of attack.

"Charge past!" Gao Yingjie sent in the team channel. There were three of them, so even if he got tangled with Lord Grim, there were still two others who could force their way toward Little Cold Hands.

Charge!

Triple Slash!

Xu Bin's Angelica and Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword, assisting this new generation Tiny Herb Witch from the left and right, rushed forward together.

Boom boom boom!

From a long range, Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had found an angle from which she could fire. With a Tri-Shot Anti-Tank Missile, three shots fired toward the three of them. They each dodged with their own techniques: Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree twisted in the air; Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword changed direction on the second slash of his Triple Slash; Xu Bin's Angelica simply used a Heroic Leap, aiming to land in Lord Grim's direction.

But then...

Boom boom boom!

Another Tri-Shot Anti-Tank Missile came, this time from Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella at a much closer distance. In the end, they burst into three explosions.

All three Tiny Herb players were hit. The methods they used to dodge Su Mucheng's initial attack had all been predicted by Ye Xiu.

Kind Tree and Flying Sword were directly sent tumbling by the shockwaves of the explosion, but Angelica's Heroic Leap had priority. Plus, he had the stronger armor of a Knight, so even though he too was hit, his body was only slightly buffeted, and his offensive wasn't diminished at all. But just when he was about to land, brilliant white flames suddenly surrounded his body, and the priority of Heroic Leap vanished. A Sacred Fire from Little Cold Hands had Silenced him.

"Unbelievable! After sealing Vaccaria, he now seals Angelica. And these predictive attacks were both made under conditions of high-speed movement! We didn't even see the Sacred Fire burning on the ground before it took effect. An Wenyi has truly taken the precision of this skill to the limit..." Li Yibo exclaimed in shock. He too was surprised that he would save such unrestrained praise to give to An Wenyi, of all players.

After all, at the beginning, this was the guy whose mere ability to exist in the professional scene had been questioned!

"Happy ignored the doubts of the outside world and insisted on keeping An Wenyi as their main healer. Are they finally reaping the rewards?" Li Yibo continued to exclaim.

To the side, Ruan Cheng's expression darkened. As long as there was something negative said about Happy, he would always take part, and he was extreme with his criticism. With An Wenyi, for example, not only did he criticize An Wenyi for having such a low skill level, he used this as a lens through which to criticize the judgment and management of Team Happy as a whole. But now, Happy's support of An Wenyi brought them this kind of reward. Of course, this was the strongest retaliation toward his type of criticisms.

Ruan Cheng had opened his mouth, prepared to say something, but because Li Yibo had dragged the topic here, he had no way of adding anything. He could only shut his mouth, depressed.

Sky Strike.

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had already become a spear in Lord Grim's hands, thrusting directly toward the falling Angelica. At the same time, another round of fire exploded upon his body. Clearly, Dancing Rain was still helping Ye Xiu output damage from afar.

But the combo didn't last too long, because Gao Yingjie and Liu Xiaobie were already back.

Boom!

Lord Grim used one last Falling Flower Palm to shove Angelica toward Kind Tree. Gao Yingjie immediately wanted to dodge, but a Laser Rifle slammed into Angelica's body again. Instantly, Angelica's body accelerated from the force of the impact and was in front of Kind Tree in the blink of an eye. Gao Yingjie hadn't anticipated this and couldn't react fast enough. Angelica slammed into him, and the two became tangled together. Even though the damage from this wouldn't be too high, this interrupted Tiny Herb's offensive and put them in an unbearably weak position.

Did Tiny Herb's offensive trio have no way of dealing with these two from Happy?

At this time, the sixth players of both sides finally arrived.

Tiny Herb, Liang Fang, Berserker Black Bamboo.

Happy, Qiao Yifan, Ghostblade One Inch Ash.

We can't let them set up Ghost Boundaries.

This was Gao Yingjie's judgment at this moment, but on Happy's side, Lord Grim was already covering One Inch Ash as the Ghostblade prepared to cast the first Ghost Boundary. Dancing Rain opened fire with Gatling Gun, sending a storm of bullets flying their way. The four from Tiny Herb scattered, and Angelica used the cover of his weapon Sighing Wall to take the direct path.

But they were still too slow. By the time the close-range fighters arrived, the light gathering on One Inch Ash's blade was released.

Ice Boundary!

The boundary landed right beneath the feet of Lord Grim and One Inch Ash. The close-range fighters who had planned to stop him immediately had to retreat.

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim used this opening to complete a cast - another Ghost Boundary, a Sword Boundary that used blade aura as a buff.

Dancing Rain and Little Cold Hands entered the range of the Sword and Ice Boundaries. Under the protection of these Ghost Boundaries, Happy's four players steadily began to advance their position.

Ghost Boundaries appeared on the map one after another. In Tiny Herb's roster, Xu Bin, Liu Xiaobie, and Liang Fang were all close-range classes, and after the Ghost Boundaries forced them out of range, their choices of attack were extremely limited. Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree could still attack the target from outside the range of the Ghost Boundaries, but his attacks alone were far from enough to stop Happy's step-by-step advancement.

"Retreat for now!" Gao Yingjie made this decision.

The biggest limitation of Ghost Boundaries was that they couldn't move. Happy had established a strong formation, so even though Tiny Herb had an extra person, they

couldn't brute-force their way through. They'd wanted to try this, relying on their healer, but they had nothing to show for their efforts.

Boom boom!

Su Mucheng sent the Tiny Herb players on their way with a few cannon shots. Tiny Herb's players dodged, feeling depressed, when all of a sudden, Happy's Little Cold Hands suddenly raised his weapon Holy Contract. There was a flash of brilliant light, so bright that it would attract everyone's attention. It was a Hypnosis attack.

Aweto!

Tiny Herb's Cleric instantly stopped in his tracks. His body swayed, clearly already asleep. And at this moment, Lord Grim's two hands opened outward, and a gust of qi flowed outward...

Cloud Grasping Fist!

When they saw this skill, the faces of the Tiny Herb players turned ashen.

Happy's formation needed the support of the Ghost Boundaries, so they couldn't move quickly. Yuan Baiqing's Aweto, had been far back in a secure location the whole time. Because of this, Tiny Herb hadn't worried too much about protecting him, because in their view, there was no way Happy could charge out of the Ghost Boundaries, and the long-range firepower of Dancing Rain or Lord Grim alone didn't pose a great threat.

But now, Happy actually pulled Aweto into their formation. Tiny Herb had neglected the protection of Aweto, and it was now too late to interrupt the Cloud Grasping Fist. There was no way they could retreat now and come back later. Disregarding everything else, all of the Tiny Herb players turned around and rushed back to rescue Aweto.

But Happy was prepared for this. One Inch Ash continued to lay down Ghost Boundaries without rest, connecting into a chain of obstacles that hampered their movements. Just like that, Aweto was pulled by Lord Grim into Happy's formation, and the various Ghost Boundaries he passed through caused him to suffer all sorts of damage and status effects. As soon as he landed, Lord Grim didn't hold back in attacking him. Dancing Rain used her firepower to continue to take care of everyone else, and Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash maintained the completeness of the Overlapping Ghost Boundaries.

How did things end up like this?

Gao Yingjie was in a daze. It was five against four, they clearly had the advantage of numbers, so why had they been countered at every step? How had they ended up in this situation, where their healer was stolen away and they had no way of rescuing him?

If only Captain were still here, this battle never would've become such a mess!

In the end, it's because I'm useless, isn't it?

Too useless.

Tiny Herb's future? Everyone's hope? How in the world could I ever carry that?

Ah!!!

Gao Yingjie gave a shout of anger in his heart. Kind Tree, a character who could still attack from the edge of the Ghost Boundaries, now arrived there.

Dark Boundary? Ice Boundary?

Gao Yingjie studied the Ghost Boundaries on the ground. The status effects from these were too strong; no matter what, he couldn't enter those regions.

Plague Boundary?

That would only decrease his defense. He could take that.

But... that was a trap. Gao Yingjie carefully observed the positions of Happy's players. If he charged through the Plague Boundary, then all of the opponents' attacks could easily focus upon him. Under the defense-reducing effect of the Plague Boundary, the damage and effects from the attacks would all be magnified. If he tried a charge like that, he would definitely be forced back, and just the smallest mistake could result in his own death.

Gao Yingjie felt a rare clarity of mind. All of these thoughts flashed through his mind, and he made his judgments. He couldn't enter any of these areas sealed by the Ghost Boundaries. Then, all that was left was...

Silence Boundary, a region that would lock all skills. Anyone else would skip this option without a second thought.

But, I'm a Witch! Even with ordinary attacks, I can go in and cause some chaos. If I can interrupt one of Yifan's Ghost Boundaries, then my teammates can seize the opportunity to counterattack.

It'll be a bit hard, but I have to try!

Kind Tree, under everyone's shocked gazes, stepped into the Silence Boundary. His skills were instantly sealed, but his footsteps didn't halt.

Was there an open area where he could stand? Was there an opening caused by switching skills that he could seize?

Gao Yingjie concentrated everything he had on his surroundings. His Kind Tree charged toward One Inch Ash. HE was going to interrupt the opponent's array of Ghost Boundaries.

"Behind you!"

But at this moment, he received a warning from his teammate. He immediately tried to roll and dodge, but blood was already flying from Kind Tree's neck. Then, someone was already lifting him, and carelessly tossing him to the side.

Lord Grim's silhouette had already used another movement skill to return and resume his offense against Aweto. Just like that, Kind Tree was tossed into the middle of the Dark Boundary.

The entire world went black.

Chapter 1334

Decisive

Is this the end?

Gao Yingjie felt the dejection swelling in his heart as his camera view turned into a screen of darkness.

No!

But another sound rose in his heart, because he felt that he heard that sentence once again.

Shoulder the future of Tiny Herb!

This isn't over yet.

The Dark Boundary didn't cause any damage, only the loss of vision. The position he'd been in when he hit the ground, the direction he was facing...

Kind Tree clambered to his feet, turned his body slightly to face the direct center of the Ghost Boundary, and charged through!

What?

Everyone was shocked and had to double-check that that Dark Boundary hadn't already faded.

No, the Dark Boundary was still there, and there was no way the Blind effect would fade so quickly. In other words, Gao Yingjie's vision was still nothing but darkness, but he could still make such accurate controls? He had done all of this based on his memory? What incredible instinct and intuition!

Kind Tree flew into the air, riding atop his broom, Morning Dew.

At this moment, there was no way for him to make many precise controls. He could

only use a few sweeping skills to try and disrupt the opponent.

Broom Tornado!

Morning Dew swung through the air, Kind Tree spun and a tornado whipped up... To win this match, he was using everything he had, even if his skills had been sealed by the Silence Boundary, even if the Dark Boundary stole away his vision, he still refused to give up.

But the audience couldn't bear to watch any longer.

They couldn't bear to see Gao Yingjie work so hard only to fail to accomplish anything in the end.

Dancing Rain had already lifted her cannon. She aimed right at Kind Tree, and shot a Laser Rifle right at him.

Boom...

The midair Kind Tree was instantly sent flying by this Laser Rifle.

In the end, it still wasn't enough?

Gao Yingjie let out a sigh... This was far from an opponent he could defeat with his eyes closed!

The moment that Kind Tree flew out of the area affected by the Dark Boundary, he recovered his sight. Gao Yingjie immediately adjusted his position. Then, he saw Aweto trapped by countless overlapping Ghost Boundaries, with all sorts of status effects and damage stacking on top of him. Light and shadow intertwined; the occasional flashes were all black in color.

One Inch Ash's tachi was raised in the air. Those Ghost Boundaries lying upon the ground seemed to hear some sort of call, and the power of the Phantom Ghost became shifting and restless.

Ghost Feast!

In this instant, all of the phantom power exploded! The power flew in chaotic patterns through the air, searching for targets within the range of the Ghost Boundaries. Which

Tiny Herb player would dare advance at this moment? But in the very center of the boundaries, where they all overlapped, Tiny Herb's Cleric was being devoured by all of the phantom power.

Boom!

Another Satellite Beam fell from the sky. Along with the waving claws and dancing fangs of the Phantom God's power, it swallowed Aweto whole, leaving not a scrap of clothing...

Tiny Herb's Cleric fell.

In that moment, for countless people, this match was decided. Tiny Herb's stadium was silent. Only the loyal Happy fans sitting in the away team audience area were jumping and singing, welcoming the crazy victory that was just about to arrive.

"This is really... unbelievable." This adjective appeared again and again in the commentary of today's match. And this time, seeing Happy kill Tiny Herb's healer, Pan Lin once again used this adjective to describe the situation.

Even though Tiny Herb had become somewhat disorganized and depressed when Happy had killed Wang Jiexi earlier, they still had the absolute numbers advantage, and so most people still favored Tiny Herb. Ruan Cheng gritted his teeth as he waited for Tiny Herb to kill Happy, so that he could pick apart Happy's faults one by one.

But now, it looked like there was no need.

Tiny Herb's Cleric was killed. This one move was simply too decisive. Now, there probably wouldn't be any more earth-shaking miracles, would there?

There wouldn't be.

Enough shocking events had already happened today.

After this, Tiny Herb's four attackers attempted to kill Little Cold Hands, but One Inch Ash's Ghost Boundaries quickly gave Little Cold Hands the best protection. When An Wenyi was able to stand at a secure position and focus on healing, then Lord Grim, fighting on the frontlines, could be that much more reckless in his attacks.

No reversals, no comebacks. The battle ended here. Happy won their away game

against Tiny Herb, with a final score of 8-2.

There was too much that needed to be digested, and so the stadium was a bit subdued. The players from both teams walked out of the competitor booths and met in the middle, just like they had before the team competition. But now that victory had been determined, one side could laugh heartily, while the other side could only taste bitterness.

Wang Jiexi, the first one killed in this team competition, calmly looked at the players of this team standing before him.

Ye Xiu... Counting from when Wang Jiexi had first entered the Alliance, the two of them had already competed with each other for a full seven seasons. If only speaking of their results during that time, then Ye Xiu, who had never appeared in a season finals after Season 4, seemed a bit inferior to Wang Jiexi, who had played in the finals three times and won two of them.

Over the regular seasons, they had met 14 times, each with his share of wins and losses.

In the playoffs of Season 7, the two teams met in the first round, and Tiny Herb sent home the Excellent Era that Ye Xiu led. It was after that battle that everyone started screaming, believing that Ye Qiu's era was over for good. But for some reason, Wang Jiexi felt that he hadn't truly defeated this opponent. This wasn't only because of the achievements and trophies that both sides had accumulated, this was a feeling closer to the battlefield. The battle strength that Excellent Era had displayed during that playoffs match was so fragmented that even Wang Jiexi, as their opponent, almost couldn't bear to watch.

That battle became the last time the two of them fought. During the regular season of Season 8, before Tiny Herb and Excellent Era could meet, Ye Xiu announced his retirement.

When he first heard the news, Wang Jiexi couldn't understand it at all.

The outside world believed this and that. But as his opponent, Wang Jiexi only knew one thing - Ye Qiu's competitive condition was far from the point where he would need to retire. Some internal conflict must have occurred within Team Excellent Era...

But all of this became unimportant with Ye Qiu's retirement. Wang Jiexi's job was to

lead Tiny Herb on a road of endless victory.

And now, he had returned. Wang Jiexi didn't know what was up with Ye Qiu becoming Ye Xiu, but either way it wasn't important. This player had used that one and half years of time to pull together this team standing here now, and then once again defeated Wang Jiexi in battle.

When was the last time I lost to this guy?

Wang Jiexi couldn't remember anymore. What he could remember in clear detail was Season 3, when he'd won Best Rookie. He was the so-called king of rookies, but that was nothing in front of God Ye Qiu! The world had likened his Magician style to the sight of heavenly horses crossing the sky, but in front of Ye Qiu there were none of the stunning effects of magic. One Autumn Leaf waved that famed Silver weapon Evil Annihilation, using that Battle Mage style that was everywhere in the player guides, and beat his Witch bloody. The Excellent Era that he had raised was truly invincible in that era.

This time, do you plan to carry such a team once again?

"Congratulations," Wang Jiexi said, extending his right hand toward Ye Xiu.

"Thank you." Ye Xiu also extended his hand, and they shook.

"Next time, we will win," said Wang Jiexi.

"Oh? You guys?" Ye Xiu laughed, and looked at the line of Tiny Herb players arranged before him. Having lost the match, they were of course in low spirits. Gao Yingjie especially seemed painfully upset. His head hung low, and the teardrops were clear to see as they fell from his eyes.

"Maybe if they treated you as a role model, and not a crutch."

When Ye Xiu said this sentence, he had already moved past, and was shaking hands with the person standing next to Wang Jiexi.

Role model?

Crutch?

Wang Jiexi was dazed. Even when Fang Rui walked in front of him and extended his hand, he didn't react until Xu Bin reminded him. He hurriedly recovered and shook hands.

Is he saying that I've been working too hard all this time? But when you were in Excellent Era, weren't you also giving your all to carry the team on your shoulders? Wang Jiexi watched Ye Xiu's retreating silhouette, which now arrived in front of Gao Yingjie at the end of the line.

Gao Yingjie's head was bowed. He saw that someone had walked in front of him, but he didn't lift his head, and only extended his right hand.

"You did well." Ye Xiu took the initiative to speak with him. "But awareness and determination are far from enough. Who doesn't have those things?"

As soon as he finished speaking, he was already gone. But Gao Yingjie, surprised, finally lifted his head to look at him. Behind Ye Xiu, the rest of the Happy players walked by, one by one, shaking his hand, until the very last Happy member. Qiao Yifan.

In over a year's time, young players like them could grow a lot, whether in appearance or character.

Both of them had grown taller, and the childishness had faded from their faces. Gao Yingjie's face was still streaked with tears, but now that he was facing his old friend, he finally reacted and hurriedly wiped his face.

Qiao Yifan didn't laugh at him. He pulled some tissues out of his pocket and offered them to Gao Yingjie.

Gao Yingjie took them, but he didn't use them to wipe his tears.

"Yifan, you're really amazing now," Gao Yingjie said.

"So are you, still as genius as ever, being able to play even in the Dark Boundary," Qiao Yifan said.

"But what use is that? We still lost." Gao Yingjie's sadness was still clear when he said this.

"Keep working hard!" Qiao Yifan said.

"Yes. Next time I'll win for sure," Gao Yingjie said.

"Alright," Qiao Yifan smiled, not fussing over how the statement "I'll win for sure" had the implication "you'll lose for sure."

With that, the match came to a close. In the post-match press conference, both sides expressed extremely high praise toward their opponent's performance. In Tiny Herb's press conference, Captain Wang Jiexi frequently revealed a pensive expression while answering questions, and their genius player Gao Yingjie, after this failure, expressed a strength and determination that he had never shown before.

Ruan Cheng had been so prepared to sarcastically mock Happy after they'd lost this battle, but in the end, he didn't even show up to Happy's press conference. But soon, the television broadcasting station received countless calls from viewers, all expressing that they'd rather hear the commentary of someone whose skill wasn't high enough than the commentary of someone as biased as Ruan Cheng.

At the conclusion of Round 27, Happy's away game victory against Tiny Herb was one of the more unexpected results. But aside from this, there was another surprise: Team Wind Howl, after stumbling in so many battles, finally found their footing in this match, and won 8-2 against Team Blue Rain.

Chapter 1335

Don't Worry About the Details

Not even Wind Howl's fans felt any hope for them, and in a match against a powerhouse like Blue Rain, not even 70 percent of the tickets had been sold. Many fans gathered outside of the stadium, refusing to go inside and watch and thus expressing their displeasure for Wind Howl's recent performance.

Yet it was on this night that Wind Howl won an individual competition, won the group arena, and then won the team competition. They beat the current number two, Blue Rain, 8 to 2.

"There are many factors that can influence a match. Doing the right thing at the right time is the most efficient way to win a match. Wind Howl's offense was strong tonight, and our defense wasn't up to par," Blue Rain's captain, Yu Wenzhou, commented at the post-match press conference.

The reporters in the audience had a very clear understanding of this match. Team Wind Howl had fallen, their fans cooled, but there was one aspect that was indisputably admirable about them. No matter how terrible their performance was, their desire for victory burned as brightly as ever.

Yu Wenzhou's comment was a good summary.

If you say that victory required doing the right thing at the right time, then the previous Wind Howl could never find that right time to do that right thing.

And this time? In this team competition, Wind Howl had used an extremely crude playstyle. After their starting lineup had loaded into the map, they immediately switched their healer out for their sixth player, creating an all-DPS formation. Then, they had attacked Blue Rain, forcing their members to fight 1v1.

This sort of strategy was extremely rare in the high-end pro circle. Once the 1v1 arrangement was completed by Wind Howl, Blue Rain's team was ripped asunder. Apart from their healer, Yu Wenzhou wasn't good at 1v1s either, making things far more difficult for Blue Rain. In the end, they were unable to regroup and support each

other efficiently, losing the team competition.

The right thing at the right time...

The reporters digested this comment from Yu Wenzhou. It seemed like words of courtesy spoken post-match, but the meaning behind the words were clear. There was no need to comment any further.

As for the stars of the day, Team Wind Howl... This long-awaited victory against such a powerhouse finally let them raise their heads, standing tall and confident at the press conference.

"The competition is just beginning," they intoned solemnly.

Sure...

The reporters looked to the rankings after 27 rounds. Wind Howl was still just outside of the playoffs, though they were only 8 points away from the eighth ranked team. The problem was that none of the top eight seemed to be falling behind.

The one who was one place above Wind Howl was 301 Degrees, who had been rising up ever since the winter transfer window. This round, they had defeated Heavenly Swords 8 to 2 in their away game, scoring their tenth consecutive win. The Life Risking Strike assassination didn't appear in this match, but that meant that 301 Degrees didn't just have that one method of winning. They would judge the situation for the method necessary to obtain victory. Their captain Yang Cong wasn't so stiff as to stubbornly stick to his new Life-Risking style no matter what. He could still use the warrior-like playstyle that he favored before, charging at the head of his team if the team so required.

301 Degrees wasn't planning on relying on this singular strategy; everyone had realized that by now.

Team 301 Degrees had risen through the ranks, and the one they had knocked out of the top eight was Wind Howl. Now Wind Howl had become the pursuers and the reporters checked the schedule. A good show was soon to come. Round 28 was a faceoff between these two teams: Wind Howl's home game would be against 301 Degrees.

This seemed quite like a fight to the death.

There were still eleven rounds in the regular season. Eight points of difference wasn't a small gap, but it wasn't a very big gap either. If you wanted to turn the tables in one round, then this face off was a chance. If they won with a 9 to 1, then they'd be even. Ten to zero and they'd overtake them.

However, Wind Howl, having already disappointed everyone so much, couldn't win back everyone's faith and admiration with just a single victory against Blue Rain, especially compared to 301 Degrees with their 10 consecutive wins.

However, Team Wind Howl's members had an indomitable will to fight against the tides. The more the outside world didn't believe, the more focused they were on the match.

On March 28th, the day before Round 28 of the Pro League, the teams generally would choose such a time to announce the lineup they were to use in the match the following day.

"What? You're putting me in?"

For Tema Happy, when their lineup was announced, the loudest voice came from the computer on their meeting table.

The last time Luo Ji had played in an official match since coming to Happy was all the way back during the Challengers League. His contributions to Team Happy were more like that of a R&D member, rather than a player.

However, Luo Ji was doubtlessly a registered player of Happy's. Though he usually couldn't stay with the team because of his studies, when matchday came, no matter home or away game, Luo Ji would rush over to the stadium and meet with everyone.

Though he had never been on the stage, he had the chance to watch up close and personal. Luo Ji was no longer the noob he once was. His judgement, knowledge, were far from average. As for skill, he naturally knew his own level. In the current Happy, not even Wei Chen had much of a chance to be fielded. For himself, he was satisfied with just sitting at the sidelines. Maybe, after honing himself for another year and half, he might get some chance to play.

That was what Luo Ji thought. He never would've expected that Ye Xiu planned to field him in this crucial time as the season approached its end.

"Do you want to play an individual match or group arena?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I, I, I..." Luo Ji stuttered, speechless. It was shocking enough that he was getting a chance to play, never mind being able to choose the match for himself. This... was probably the encouragement and reward he was getting for this season.

There are still eleven rounds. It's time you gained some real battle experience," Ye Xiu decided.

Luo Ji was one of the elite students of an institution for higher education. His IQ was high, that was undebatable, and he soon figured out the logic in Ye Xiu's words.

From his view, with only eleven rounds left, if Happy had a massive lead like Samsara, then it was fine to let some newbie take the stage and gain experience in some relatively unimportant matches as the regular season came to a close. However, Happy was currently sixth with a total of 178 points, 4 points ahead of number seven Hundred Blossoms and 12 ahead of number eight 301 Degrees. Compared to number nine's Wind Howl, they did have quite a lead with 20 points ahead.

However, even if Happy didn't drop out of the top eight, falling to eighth place wasn't good either. If the current situation was any clue, Samsara's lead was certain to continue. In accordance with the playoffs rules, the eighth ranked team would be up against the number one team, Samsara, in the first round... Everyone was naturally trying to avoid such a strong opponent. If it became unavoidable, like in the finals, then they'll just go all out and hope for the best.

Happy wasn't at the point where they could relax and train their newbies. However, if Ye Xiu fielded him now, that seemed to mean that Ye Xiu was placing importance on his use later and not throwing him some unimportant matches to gain experience!

Yet Ye Xiu had said that he had to gain real battle experience in these eleven rounds. Could it be that Ye Xiu was planning on having him play in the playoffs?

Though he was sitting down, Luo Ji felt his legs go weak.

After gaining some experience in eleven rounds, he'd have to contribute to that vicious competition where a single mistake could mean a year's worth of work wasted called the playoffs?

"Is that... really alright?" Luo Ji didn't voice any of what he had thought, merely asking

the question that was going through his mind.

"You've been working hard for a long time. It's time to experience what being on the stage is like," Ye Xiu replied.

"But my skill..." Luo Ji hesitated.

"Your skill is already at the point where you need real battle experience to improve. It'll tell you what to give up and what to strengthen, how to make decisions. You have to develop such an awareness yourself; if I just tell you, there's little use," Ye Xiu explained.

"You can tell me first, I'll focus on it," Luo Ji said.

"Don't worry about the details," Ye Xiu intoned.

"Just say it, I'll definitely be able to look at things clearer if you do," Luo Ji reassured.

"I already said it!"

"Ah? Just don't worry about the details?" Luo Ji was dumbfounded for a moment. He had thought Ye Xiu had been telling him to not worry about the detail of "listen to it first and then focus on it".

"Yes, see? There's not much use, no?" Ye Xiu said.

This harsh reality had Luo Ji struck speechless. These words really weren't much use to him.

"Or, rather, pay more attention to the details you need to," Ye Xiu added.

"Pay attention to what details are important?" Luo Ji's IQ was impressive, able to easily find the implications.

"Yup," Ye Xiu confirmed.

"I'll pay close attention to it." Luo Ji nodded and didn't say much more. This was because he realized this really was something you could only develop through going through the battles yourself. Then he considered his current situation. Paying attention to details was his habit and style, and it was because of this that he could

create those incredibly detailed guides. However, when 1v1ing, the more you paid attention to, the more you had to worry about. In addition, Summoners already had very complex mechanics so he often floundered and flailed when it came to it.

Ye Xiu's advice of paying attention to what details could be ignored and what should be considered wasn't telling him to stop paying attention to detail, but to find the details that would benefit him the most when it came to defeating his opponent and then utilize them effectively. If he could do this, then he probably wouldn't be all over the place when it came to controlling his character. Luo Ji knew that he was no hand speed expert. He couldn't control a bunch of summons under complex battle situations.

Choosing between these details really was something he needed to master to improve from his current level. Ye Xiu had probably noticed that he had reached such a level and arranged for him to improve through actual matches.

However... there were only eleven rounds left.

Even if he played one match per round and even gained some experience from the team competitions, was it enough to improve and allow him to perform well in the playoffs?

This question lingered in Luo Ji's heart, and Chen Guo had doubts about it, too.

"Will Luo Ji be alright?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu after the meeting was over.

"Don't forget, he has a high IQ!" Ye Xiu replied.

Chapter 1336

The Freedom to Choose

Luo Ji was more prudent, choosing to appear in an individual competition in the 28th round. At the end of the day, he was still worried that his skill level would end up dragging down his team in the group arena, which would cost 2 points, whereas a loss in the individual competition would only cost 1 point. As for the team competition, having no available slots for him to take instead gave him a sense of relief.

Luo Ji's attitude made the members of Team Happy sigh with sorrow, especially those veterans who had more experience as a professional player.

When it came to players nowadays, who wouldn't want to have as many opportunities as possible to shine? How many people would actually have misgivings about their own ability being insufficient and dragging down their team?

"He's a really honest kid..." Chen Guo sighed sorrowfully. She may not have had much experience, but she had seen enough to know that characters as sincere as Luo Ji were hard to come by, especially amongst rookies.

Round 28 soon arrived.

It was unanimously decided that the match between Wind Howl and 301 Degrees would be the one to be broadcasted. As it was coming towards the end of the regular season, many teams would be out of hope, with the exception of those fighting over the 8th place, where the most intense competition would be taking place. And in a match like this, where the two teams were directly competing for a spot in the top 8, both teams would definitely exert their fullest effort, making the match that much more exciting and intense.

In Wind Howl's home game, during the first round of the individual competition, Wind Howl's captain, Tang Hao, took the stage.

In the Round 18 of the regular season, Tang Hao also appeared first, with the goal of sniping Ye Xiu's streak of consecutive victories in order to boost the morale of the team. Unfortunately, he was unable to win, and Team Wind Howl ended up losing to

Team Happy in a 10-0 blowout victory.

After ten rounds had passed, when faced with what could be Team Wind Howl's most important match of the regular season, Tang Hao once again took up the same role.

Perhaps, under his command, Wind Howl may not have achieved the results that everyone expected from them, but still, Tang Hao was filled with valor and confidence, leading Wind Howl in their charge towards victory. His appearance in the first round showed their intentions clearly; he could not afford to lose. If he postured like this and still lost, the morale of the team would definitely suffer a severe blow. On top of that, given that he had tried this before and failed, if he attempted it again without success, the damage to the team's morale would be even greater, and he would definitely be the subject of even more ridicule.

But even so, he was devoid of fear. In such an important match, he shouldered all of this pressure and stood as the first player on stage. Team 301's vanguard was also their team captain, but if one were to call him the nucleus of the team, that would be outdated information.

After testing and tempering their new strategy in the last few rounds of the competition, it became clear that Bai Shu was the core of Team 301. Whether in attack or defense, it was still Bai Shu who was leading 301. As for Yang Cong, he now had more freedom in the role he played. The team placed great faith in him, allowing him to use his own intuition and experience to decide what to do in the battlefield. Of course, Yang Cong took up this responsibility, and in the second half of the season, his performance was very eye-catching. If they only had the foreign monk Bai Shu and not him, Team 301 wouldn't have been able to perform as well as they had.

The Brawler, Demon Subduer, and the Assassin, Scene Killer. Both characters quickly loaded into the match, and Yang Cong could immediately see Demon Subduer at the other end of the map.

Maybe it was due to Ye Xiu's map choices, but during this season, choosing this kind of plain and simple map had become increasingly popular. Tang Hao also ended up picking such a map that left out almost any room for tactical maneuvering, instead forcing his opponent to clash with him head on!

Assassins had no fear of this kind of head-on combat, and Yang Cong had originally been a player who had such a direct playstyle anyways. Seeing that the map was like

this, he wasted no time in hesitating and just decided to adopt his old playstyle and attack!

Ding!

The curtains to the competition lifted with that tiny sound. Demon Subduer lifted his hand and threw out a Paralysis Needle, but the Silver weapon Dancing Shadows was lifted into the air by Yang Cong, sending the Paralysis Needle flying harmlessly to the side.

Powerful Knee Strike!

Tang Hao directly and unambiguously started his assault.

How fierce!

Yang Cong was filled with regret in his heart. Truth be told, the Brawler class wasn't particularly strong at these kinds of direct attacks, instead, it was there numerous dirty tracts that allowed the class to have stronger control abilities, making Brawlers more suited as a control-oriented class. If it was just about pure attack power, there were many classes that were stronger than the Brawler in that regard.

But it was exactly this class that became extremely aggressive in Tang Hao's hands, completely different from when Lin Jingyan was playing it in the past.

It was precisely because of these players with different dispositions piloting all the different classes that made Glory such a rich and colorful game. Wasn't it Yang Cong himself who had turned his Assassin into a forceful fighter on the front lines?

Seeing Tang Hao's violent and forceful Brawler, Yang Cong could only lament, "it must be nice being young". If it were a few years ago, he would also have the heart to compete against his opponent in such a forceful and direct manner. Comparing whose reactions were quicker, whose hand speed was greater, whose mechanics were more perfect.

But now, he had to adjust a little bit.

Yang Cong controlled Scene Killer to Dodge towards the side, avoiding Demon Subduer's incoming attack before quickly striking out with the Dual Swords, sending a Heart-Piercing Stab directly at Demon Subduer's back.

Tang Hao wasn't bad enough to get hit this easily. When Powerful Knee Strike didn't connect, Demon Subduer had already twisted his body in mid-air, sending out a Sand Toss instead. Yang Cong hurriedly turned his field of view away, relying on his memories and experience to try to hit his Heart-Piercing Stab. In the end, Scene Killer's movements suddenly became stiff after the attack.

Not good!

Yang Cong's experience allowed him to determine what had happened. Once Sand Toss was over, he turned his camera back to the original angle, and saw that Dancing Shadows had been gripped firmly by Demon Subduer's claw, Blood Vanishing Soul.

If it was just an attack being parried, he wouldn't feel as if he couldn't control his character properly. Instead, that kind of sensation was as if he had been controlled by a grab skill.

Empty-Handed Blade Block!

Surprisingly, the skill that Demon Subduer used was from the Striker class and had obviously been added to his weapon beforehand.

A low-levelled Empty-Handed Blade Block didn't have much attack power, but its effectiveness in dismantling attacks was the same. Professional players were only able to add a level 1 skill to their weapon, so they wouldn't pursue damage output, but instead pursue a unique effect that only that particular skill possessed.

Blocking and dismantling at the same time!

After this hit, blows immediately rained down upon Scene Killer's body, and the combo began.....

He really was aggressive enough!

As Scene Killer took hit after hit, Yang Cong concentrated on Demon Subduer's frantic offensive. To unleash such an offensive, it meant that the player behind the character was frantically inputting controls as well.

Do you really think this kind of attack can defeat me?

What do you think I relied on to stand firmly in the Alliance for so long?

Yang Cong's chest boiled with hot-bloodedness under the continuous attacks from Demon Subduer. Originally, he wanted to play more calmly and achieve victory, but now, he very much wanted to be like Demon Subduer and unleash his own flurry of attacks.

Yang Cong stared at his opponent's attacks, and finally saw an opening.

Assassin Movement Technique: With the Wind!

Scene Killer's body flickered strangely, and Demon Subduer's head-on attack actually missed him by a little bit. Attack again! Demon Subduer sent another strike out.

Assassin Movement Technique: Against the Lightning!

Demon Subduer's clenched fist suddenly lagged behind Scene Killer's body.

With the Wind, Against the Lightning, Turning Flame, Standing Ice.

The four movement techniques that the Assassin possessed were actually to retreat, to advance, move left and right or not move, things that could be achieved through normal controls. However, using the skills would naturally have a far stronger result.

Yang Cong saw an opening, used the two movement techniques and shook free of Demon Subduer's offensive in a flash.

Now... it should be my turn, right?

The Assassin's Dual Swords, Dancing Shadows, flew through the air towards Demon Subduer.....

Another kind of alternative Assassin style in the Alliance.

Scene Killer!

Two classes that were perhaps more suited to a different playstyle completed a furious bout of direct attacks. Yang Cong let go of the misgivings in his heart and used the the playstyle that he had used for so many years.

Every competition needs an end, and victory or defeat had to be decided.

This time, it was Yang Cong who lost.

"Ah, what a shame..." Yang Cong sighed.

He had lost, but that kind of free-spirited play was something that he very much enjoyed. He could try out the most eye-catching kind of Assassin playstyle, with Life-Risking Strike, or he could make use of the direct playstyle he was most familiar with after so many years.

Just like in this match, where he had started off hot-blooded, directly fighting against Tang Hao, but in the midst of it, he had also tried to find an opportunity to land a Life-Risking Strike.

He was pursuing the end-goal of victory, but he was also enjoying the thrill of competition.

Losing was a bit of a shame, but who could say that using a certain method would definitely result in a win?

For the past eight years, during every competition, he had to carefully consider what methods and tactics to use, but now, he had abandoned all of that, allowing him the freedom to do as he pleased, and the end result wasn't too disastrous. This time, he had lost, but who knew what would happen the next time?

Yang Cong left the stage having lost, but he still felt a sense of fulfillment.

"Captain, what a pity..." Team 301's players all surrounded him, breaking down the countless moments in the match that had made them excited or left them with regret. Losing, but not being discouraged because of it; Yang Cong's match had conveyed this sort of message.

"Continue to try your best!" Thus, he was able to magnanimously encourage his teammates.

"Understood!" Everyone responded, and the next contestant took the field.

At the same time, in another stadium, Luo Ji shakily stood up from his seat.

He was finally going to welcome the first match of his professional career, and he felt a hundred times more nervous than the time in the Challenger's League.

"Don't be nervous," Ye Xiu told him, after having continued his winning streak in the individual competition.

"Mm," Luo Ji said, thrice, as he rigidly nodded his head.

"Your opponent is the same as you, a new player in a new season!" Ye Xiu comforted him.

"But it isn't his first time appearing on stage!" Luo Ji felt that Ye Xiu's reassurance was completely useless.

"Don't sweat the small details!" Ye Xiu said.

"..." Did that have some kind of double meaning? Luo Ji, with his high IQ, began to ponder.

In this round, Team Happy was up against Team Miracle.

In the first half of the season, they had won in a 10-0 victory against Miracle in their away-game, beginning their frantic journey of snatching points. Team Miracle, on the other hand, had stumbled and staggered before gradually producing more stable results. Being the number thirteen team, with 110 points, this could be considered an extremely impressive result for a new team. In their team, they had many rookies who had never played competitively before, and now, they were against a player who had never played until the Round 28 of the regular season.

Team Happy's Luo Ji, and his Summoner, Concealed Light.

Chapter 1337

Who's Being Bullied?

Since he had never appeared in a competition before, Luo Ji's Summoner, Concealed Light, obviously wasn't the focus of Happy's tailor-made Silver equipment. At the moment, there weren't more than 3 pieces of Silver equipment on Concealed Light's body, and they were all put together from the leftover scraps after Guan Rongfei had finished making equipment for the other characters. After half a season, Concealed Light had only collected 3 pieces of Silver equipment.

This set of equipment was below average in the Glory Alliance, but where equipment was concerned, Luo Ji's opponent for this match wasn't better off than he was.

After Team Miracle took in the three players who had previously been in Excellent Era, their expenditure was significant, and they weren't able to make any big moves in terms of their equipment or materials. In their team, the development of equipment similarly had an order of priority to it. He Ming, Shen Jian and Wang Ze, these three former Excellent Era players were obviously the core generals of Team Miracle, so their equipment priority was naturally the highest. After them was their rookie, Guo Shao. After these four players, Miracle's equipment was more or less accounted for. In terms of equipment, they really weren't even a match for Team Happy. Whether it was their stockpile of materials or their R&D talent, they still lost to Happy by quite a bit.

This time, Luo Ji's opponent was a very pitiful player who had no standing in Team Miracle: Jia Xing, and his character, Battle Mage Proudful Mage.

The classes that Team Miracle prepared for their players was an exact duplicate of Excellent Era's original class line-up. But in practice, their structure was actually the exact opposite.

He Ming's Elementalist was originally the sixth player in Excellent Era. Shen Jian's Striker and Wang Ze's Sharpshooter were both second-string players, but now all three of them formed the backbone of Team Miracle. On the contrary, it was the Battle Mage, Launcher and Spellblade, the classes that originally belonged to the core players of Excellent Era that had become secondary characters in Team Miracle.

Jia Xing was one of these players. His Battle Mage, Prideful Mage had an arrogant-sounding name, but he actually didn't have anything to be arrogant about. Team Miracle hadn't received much attention. If they had achieved the same kind of results as Happy, there were many in the team who were likely to face the question of "whether or not they were at a professional caliber", just like An Wenyi.

Jia Xing could be considered part of the main force of Team Miracle, and his standard wasn't too bad. In the competitions, he was always careful and prudent. A stifling and oppressive performance like that of the Battle God was something that he had begun to dare to dream of.

As a rookie who had just entered the professional scene, Jia Xing was perpetually walking on thin ice. But being part of a team as new as Miracle did have a benefit: while he was still a rookie, he had far more chances to compete than rookies in other teams.

After half a season, he had grown considerably, and Team Miracle's performance was receiving favourable evaluations. Jia Xing didn't receive much attention, but still, there was a seed of restlessness in his heart. Who would be willing to continually play the role of an obscure and unknown player? A performance as grand as the Battle God's was no longer something limited just to Jia Xing's wildest fantasies, but something that he had begun to have a the tiniest bit of hope for.

So today, when he had been selected to represent Miracle in the second round of the individual competition, he had looked at his opponent's name on the television screen, and his heart skipped a beat.

Luo Ji? Who was that?

Happy had always received a lot of attention, and Miracle, a new team, just like them, could only be jealous of them. But Luo Ji was a player who had never once appeared in a competition. No matter how much attention the team was receiving, it would still be very difficult to have news about him. Luo Ji was just like Qiao Yifan in the old days. Despite being in a champion team, he had no chances to appear in the battlefield, leaving the outside world to have no way of gauging his strength. At most, when one looked at the player seats, they would realize that the team actually still had such a person.

Never appearing in a competition simply meant that their caliber wasn't high enough.

Concealing a hidden weapon? The Glory Alliance was a serious place, with no room for such a whimsical playstyle!

A rookie, and a player who had never appeared in a competition before; Jia Xing's excitement was as if he had just discovered the New World for the first time. As someone who had been around the block, he couldn't be clearer on how nervous one would be when they first appeared on stage. He had used quite a few rounds before managing to slowly get rid of that kind of discomfort. As for how much that discomfort would affect one's technical skill, he was also clear on that matter.

So, in his eyes, Luo Ji was a sub-par rookie who would be in complete shambles because of his nerves.

Finally, I've encountered an opponent that I can bully!

Jia Xing was fairly happy about this.

In the past 27 rounds of competition, there was no need to talk about the strong teams. Even when facing Bright Green and Seaside, two teams that looked doomed to be relegated in this season, someone as new as Jia Xing couldn't afford to look down upon their players, and had to use all his effort when facing them. But now, he finally had a chance to show-off to his heart's content, and display all of the fighting strength that he had.

Luo Ji?

Hahaha, this was a convenience delivered to his doorstep!

Jia Xing impatiently entered the player booth, impatiently waited for the competition to begin, and impatiently waited for the timer to countdown before the two of them loaded into the map. Then, he impatiently controlled Proudful Mage to charge out.

At the same time, Luo Ji was still taking deep breaths and still trying to rid himself of the nervousness and dread that he felt. He felt as if his whole body was on fire, and as stiff as hemp.....

Huu, huu, huu!

After taking three deep breaths, Luo Ji controlled Concealed Light and left the spawn point.

This was Happy's home game, and the map was selected by them. For his very first competition, how could Luo Ji dare to be careless? He had selected the map he had felt most comfortable and familiar on during his practice sessions for the individual round.

As he walked out of the spawn point and saw the familiar landscape around him, Luo Ji felt his mood lightening greatly.

"This should probably be the home team's advantage? It's really useful!" Luo Ji thought, controlling Concealed Light as he began to execute his mental plan for this battle.

After finding out that he was to appear in this round, Luo Ji had visualized countless scenarios in the match. Last night, he had slept very late, but woke up very early. Still, the lack of sleep didn't show on his face at all. He was too nervous, to the point where he couldn't even tell if he was tired anymore.

"Adopt your normal frame of mind."

"Just do it like you did in your practices, and you'll be fine."

These were some lines that his teammates told him to ease his anxiety, and the effectiveness was basically zero. Everyone dropped a few vague lines, with no one really hoping to be able to dissipate his nervousness with just a few words. At the end of the day, it was still left to Ye Xiu to be honest, telling him, "Go and carefully experience the feeling of competing!"

This kind of feeling, did it include nervousness?

As Luo Ji controlled Concealed Light, he thought about this and that, before suddenly realizing that his concentration was far too scattered. He frantically purged all of these useless thoughts from his mind, completely focusing on the road in front of him.

Jia Xing's Prideful Mage very quickly reached the center of the map, took a glance, and realized that no one was there.

He still wants to play tactics! Jia Xing laughed. A rookie who hadn't even competed before, what tactics could he possibly come up with?

Jia Xing had no fear. He originally wanted to just wait for Luo Ji to arrive, but after

thinking about it, he decided to be a little more proactive, to appear more domineering. As a result, his character moved everywhere, searching for Concealed Light's whereabouts.

Fuck!

Luo Ji's heart leapt violently. He was just controlling Concealed Light to move very carefully when Prideful Mage's silhouette suddenly flitted across his camera. Just a flicker in his field of view had caused Luo Ji to be unbearably nervous. He frantically controlled Concealed Light to take cover in a corner, before inwardly guessing whether or not the other player had seen him.

If he had seen me.....

As Luo Ji thought about it, he promptly began casting a spell, and a Devil World Flower was immediately summoned near his leg. Immediately after that, he summoned a Frost Wolf.

The Frost Wolf's attacks were physical in nature, but they had the chance of applying a magical freezing effect. Under Luo Ji's inputs, it curled up next to the Devil World Flower, giving Luo Ji a fair bit of peace of mind.

However, his opponent hadn't appeared from start to finish.

He didn't see me?

When he had first seen his opponent, Luo Ji was hoping that his opponent hadn't noticed! But after completing his summons, when his opponent didn't appear, he actually felt a little disappointed.

Had he really not noticed?

All of the spectators in Happy's stadium had their hearts in their throats!

Jia Xing had seen Concealed Light and had clearly seen where he had gone to hide. But this fellow wasn't stupid. Even though he took Luo Ji as a gift sent to him to bully, when he saw how Concealed Light had hidden himself, he knew that his opponent had noticed him. If he just charged over, who knew if his opponent had an army of summons waiting to pounce on him? That would be difficult to deal with!

So, Jia Xing chose to take a roundabout path. At the same time as Luo Ji was anxiously making his conjectures, Prideful Mage had already used another path to loop around, spying on Luo Ji's arrangements from a corner.

Of course there's an ambush.

Jia Xing laughed coldly.

There weren't a lot of summons, but the Devil World Flower was capable of attacking in all different directions, and the Frost Wolf's attacks could cause a freezing effect that would slow enemies, making them particularly annoying to deal with. If he had rashly charged over just now, things wouldn't have ended well. Even though it was his opponent's first time on stage, Jia Xing still didn't look down on him too much. He couldn't just assume that his opponent was some normal player that he could deal with easily.

Waiting a bit more would be good enough.

The Devil World Flower could attack in all 360 degrees, so mounting a sneak attack from behind wouldn't make much sense. Jia Xing decided to let the Devil World Flower time out. He didn't believe that Luo Ji would repeatedly summon a Devil World Flower at the same spot to protect him. The Summoner's summons had a high mana consumption, they couldn't simply be summoned for no reason.

Jia Xing adjusted Prideful Mage's position slightly, waiting for the Devil World Flower to time out before launching a sneak attack.

It was at this moment that a cat's cry could be heard from his character's side. It wasn't a languid purr, no, it was the wrath-filled cry of a cat chasing after a mouse.

What?

Jia Xing was greatly alarmed and frantically turned his camera, only to see a black Spirit Cat already flying towards him. At this moment, Prideful Mage was already crouching down and couldn't crouch any lower, so Jia Xing could only control him to roll towards the side. Surprisingly, the Spirit Cat was extremely nimble, twisting its body in mid-air as its claws stretched out, leaving three bloody lines on Prideful Mage's face.

The audience let out a sigh of relief.

Were they worried about Concealed Light being sneak attacked? Of course not! With the 360 degree protection from the Devil World Flower, a sneak attack was impossible. They were worried because they had seen Concealed Light summon a Spirit Cat before simply letting it free.

Would such an attack be able to hit Prideful Mage? This was what the crowd was nervous about, because Luo Ji's commands to the Spirit Cat weren't very definite, as if wasn't confident that Prideful Mage was there. But now, the Spirit Cat's attack had completely uncovered Prideful Mage's location. Luo Ji immediately turned around and started casting.

Chapter 1338

I Can Too

Did Spirit Cat have an auto-targeting system?

Of course not. The summons of a Summoner, when set to free attack mode, would automatically attack any non-teammate target that wandered into its aggro range. Spirit Cat had a comparatively larger aggro range, more or less meaning that its senses were sharper.

This map was carefully chosen by Luo Ji. There was no other one on one map that he was more familiar with. Jia Xing had thought that he would be able to sneak up on Luo Ji just by taking a more roundabout route, viewing Luo Ji as a complete newbie and underestimating his meticulous mind and familiarity with the map.

A sneak attack from behind was something Luo Ji had accounted for! Spirit Cat had been arranged in a position where it would be able to sense if any enemies were in that area. Poor Jia Xing had no idea, happily waiting for a chance to strike. In the end, what he got was a Spirit Cat, and then another Devil World Flower.

Concealed Light had summoned another Devil World Flower, making sure Proudful Mage was placed within its attack range. Then, Frost Wolf rapidly approached as well.

Concealed Light, on the other hand, was continuing to cast, another summoning array appearing on the ground, followed by the cry of an eagle. Thunder Eagle burst out of the array and, after circling for a bit in the sky, darted towards where Proudful Mage was like a streak of lightning.

It flew through the air like lightning, spitting thunderbolts; this Thunder Eagle was one of Concealed Light's main summons.

Four Beasts Style!

Seeing Spirit Cat, Frost Wolf and Thunder Eagle appearing one after the other on the battlefield, the players more familiar with the game had an idea of what style Happy's debuting Summoner was using.

Young Wyvern, Frost Wolf, Thunder Eagle, Spirit Cat.

They were called the Four Summon Beasts, each being one of the four elements in Glory, Fire, Ice, Light and Dark respectively. Any summons combos that revolved around these four beasts were known as Four Beasts Style. With the level 75 update, an ultimate skill that could be activated when all Four Summon Beasts were summoned: Beast King Elemental Formation, once again increasing the strength of the Four Beasts Style.

Now, Spirit Cat, Frost Wolf, Thunder Eagle had all appeared, so Young Wyvern probably wouldn't be long.

Luo Ji didn't disappoint. Young Wyvern was the lowest leveled of all four beasts with a quick summon time. With a swift cast, Young Wyvern also flew out of the summoning array with a breath of flame, flying towards Proudful Mage after Thunder Eagle.

Seeing the beasts heading his way, Jia Xing's mood plummeted.

Spirit Cat was very, very hard to throw off and now that he was in Devil World Flower's attack range with the other three beasts rapidly approaching, aiming to surround him. If the Elemental Beast King Formation was then activated, then that would take a chunk out of Proudful Mage for sure.

This guy wasn't bad!

Jia Xing was careful to not underestimate him anymore, already realizing that Luo Ji wasn't an opponent he could easily wipe the floor with. Currently, with the summoned creatures coming one after the other, there were layers to this offensive, a system. It was almost too much.

Flee?

With Spirit Cat already on him and Thunder Eagle's speed, fleeing wasn't a good idea. Currently, it seemed like the only solution was to brute force his way out of these summons.

This guy was no easy opponent, managing to force him into a dire situation like this.

The situation was a pain, but there was no other choice. The earlier he acted the better.

Swinging his spear, he knocked Spirit Cat aside as it leaped at him once again. With a Dragon Tooth, he forced Frost Wolf to back off a little.

Boom!

Sparks danced across Proudful Mage's body. After two actions, he was then hit by the thunderbolt that Thunder Eagle spat out.

How troublesome.

Jia Xing no longer felt like showing off anymore. He could tell that Concealed Light's four summons weren't put on automatic, but being controlled manually instead. That was why it was so systematic, so well-paced, and so hard.

Wasn't he going to come forward a little?

Jia Xing kept an eye on Concealed Light's movements. Summoners had the skill Lash, which lashed the summons and increased their combative power. With him already in an encirclement, most Summoners would come over to lash their summons to strengthen them.

However, Concealed Light didn't. He merely stood far off, constantly using Mark to adjust the actions of his summons.

Looks like he'd have to wait for the summons to switch out...

Jia Xing felt helpless. He was rather helpless against these meticulously executed attacks. He couldn't flee and could only wait until one of the summons disappeared and his opponent summoned another. There might be an opening to be found there.

Thus, Jia Xing didn't bother trying to break through and started fighting the summons. One against four with a Devil World Flower disrupting him... if it weren't for summons having rather simple and bland ways of attacking, Jia Xing definitely wouldn't be able to last. Right now, though, he could just about hold on...

Summons depended on two things to live, one was time and the other was health.

Waiting for their time to run out was too passive, so Jia Xing had to attack and try and get rid of one. However, these four summons weren't so easy to kill. Spirit Cat was quick and nimble, hard to hit; Thunder Eagle and Young Wyvern were both fliers, even

harder to hit; in the end, the easiest one to deal with of the four was Frost Wolf, but Frost Wolf just so happened to also be the tankiest one of the four, with a huge chunk of health.

How did it end up like this? Jia Xing felt like crying. He had originally thought he could easily bully this newbie, but now who'd have thought he'd be struggling to survive. In these 27 rounds, he, as a rookie on a rookie team, had been through so many hardships. Why was he falling into the same position against a rookie from a new team, in their debuting match, too?

Could it be that he had become overcautious by habit?

Did he turn to defense whenever he met any sort of trouble?

After facing off against so many experienced seniors, could it be that he had been so oppressed that he had lost his aggression?

These questions surfaced in Jia Xing's mind one after the other.

He wasn't willing to continue like this!

However, if even this opponent could suppress him like this, then when would he ever be able to gain the initiative in battle?

Initiative!

He had to take the initiative!

He shouldn't get used to this passivity. If he accepted it, then wouldn't he just continue to live in this mediocrity?

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

As if suddenly waking up, Jia Xing saw an opening in front of him and acted without even thinking. The subconscious nature of his actions had his fingers darting across the keyboard much swifter and more dexterous than before. Proudful Mage charged out!

Bang!

Spirit Cat had lunged a moment too late. It's priority was nothing compared to Dragon Breaks the Ranks, and it was flung to one side. Thunder Eagle's thunderbolt and Young Wyvern's fireball all struck the spot behind Prideful Mage, missing him entirely.

He broke through!

Delight washed over Jia Xing, though even he was a little confused as to how he had succeeded. That opportunity just now... If he hadn't been reckless, if it hadn't been subconscious, then he'd probably have given it up, thinking he couldn't do it, no?

So he really could do it!

With his delight, Dragon Breaks the Ranks broke out of the formation made by the Four Beast Summons. Devil World Flower's vines quietly crept out of the earth, but Jia Xing was ready for it.

Shattering the Lands!

Prideful Mage leaped skywards, surging magical energy pulsing from the tip of his spear. This only made Jia Xing feel a delighted warmth spread through his heart and mind.

This wild battle style was something he had only seen in the matches of gods! Yet now, he had managed to execute the same style in a match! He could do it! He really could!

Prideful Mage landed, and the magical energy roared, bursting out. Even the flying Young Wyvern and Thunder Eagle couldn't approach.

Luo Ji's Concealed Light backed away quickly, escaping from the range of this attack. However, by then, he had already been separated from his summons by this powerful, surging skill. How would a Summoner face the powerful Battle Mage without any summons?

How did everything fall apart?

Luo Ji was puzzled. His control over the situation wasn't bad.

Under Ye Xiu suggestion, he ended up choosing the Four Beasts Style as his Summoner style because he was decent at controlling four summons at once to make offensive arrangements. Though the Spirit Style and its sea of summons was powerful,

especially with the new level 75 skill Spirit Sacrifice which was the ultimate damage skill for a Summoner, he wouldn't be able to maintain control. Even with that skill, he wouldn't be able to utilize it properly.

However, his opponent had still managed to break through the four beasts Luo Ji was confident in being able to control. Did he miss some important detail?

As Luo Ji thought to himself, he was already making new arrangements.

If a summon died, it could be re-summoned, so they could stay and tank damage, usually. However, Shatter the Lands came with a huge shockwave. Even if you let your summons tank out the damage, they'd still be knocked away by the magic energy. The four beasts had their way blocked and couldn't immediately come to help, so Luo Ji hurriedly had Concealed Light resummon a creature while Prideful Mage was still in his ending lag.

He could make it!

As for his ability to calculate, that was something Luo Ji had even more confidence in. As expected, Concealed Light managed to summon a new Frost Wolf to protect him before Prideful Mage arrived, but...

Circle Swing.

Just like that, Frost Wolf was tossed behind Prideful Mage and then a Dragon Tooth struck him.

A Summoner that had been closed in on was helpless. The good thing was that even if he didn't make any moves, so long as his summons were still on the field, they would attack automatically.

However, Prideful Mage darted back and forth as he struck again and again before suddenly disappearing.

Teleportation!

This Battle Mage had shockingly chosen to add the Elementalist's Teleportation into his weapon.

A Falling Flower Palm hit from behind, and he was shoved forward. That's when he

saw his Four Summon Beasts standing obediently in a straight line.

Summons without manual control really weren't any good! Luo Ji hurriedly had them scatter, but, it was too late.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky!

Prideful Mage's spear shot forwards, magic energy forming a massive dragon which devoured Concealed Light and all of his Four Summon Beasts.

Boom!

The magical energy erupted, darting and flashing through its multiple victims, absolutely spectacular.

I really can do it!

Jia Xing was very satisfied with his performance today.

Ai... It had been going so well in the beginning, so how did things end up like this? Luo Ji, on the other hand, was lamenting.

Chapter 1339

Writing a Guide For Yourself

Luo Ji had lost.

This result wasn't too unexpected, but at the beginning, he felt that he had been doing quite well. His confidence was being slowly built up, but who would have predicted that his opponent would knock it down again so quickly.

His opponent wasn't anyone impressive either. He was like Luo Ji, a rookie on a new team. The only thing he held over Luo Ji was 27 rounds of experience.

Luo Ji took a deep breath and exited the player booth, not at all expecting the entire stadium to explode into applause.

What was this?

Luo Ji was puzzled. At first he thought that this was their home game fans respecting Miracle's spectacular performance and applauding them. However, after he left the stage, walking away, he noticed the calls of "Luo Ji, you did great" and the gazes that were on him. He knew then that this applause was his, an encouragement for him.

Though he had never played a match before, Happy's fans all knew of his existence in Happy. This wasn't just from observing the player bench during matches, but because Happy's boss Chen Guo never forgot to mention Luo Ji when she brought up Happy's players. In fact, to make sure Luo Li was noticed, she'd often be willing to talk more about Luo Ji. Though Luo Ji had never fought a match, Chen Guo wouldn't hesitate to tell everyone of the contributions he had made to the team.

This was a testament of Chen Guo's attentiveness. She hated the thought of this benched player feeling uncomfortable or left out, so she did her best to show that he was equally as much a part of the team as anyone else.

.

Chen Guo's actions finally bore fruit at a time like now. Not only did Happy's fans know

Luo Ji, they all liked this member of Happy who, despite not having much of a chance to play for the team, had still carefully and sincerely contributed to the team. They were even hoping for the day Luo Ji would have a chance to play.

Thus, when Luo Ji really did get the chance to play a match, what he received wasn't pressure, but encouragement.

Applause and well-wishes escorted Luo Ji step by step back to the player bench.

Miracle's Jia Xing was stunned.

When he first came out of the player booth, he had truly thought that the applause was for him because he had thought he fought spectacularly in this match, just like an expert.

I've even managed to sway the hearts of my opponent's fans, Jia xing thought to himself in delight. That wasn't an easy thing to accomplish at all. He waved, continuing to show off his demeanor, and acknowledging these cute Happy fans that were clapping for him.

It was only until he had come off the stage and approached the stands that he heard what the fans were yelling. He stiffened. He suddenly wanted nothing more than to cut off that damned waving hand.

This Luo Ji was so well liked amongst Happy's fans? Even if he lost he could still gain everyone's love like that? Jia Xing stared at Luo Ji, who had returned to the player bench, with a heart full of envy.

Luo Ji sat in the empty seat next to Ye Xiu without needing any prompting.

Even if Ye Xiu didn't come to find him, he would go and ask Ye Xiu for pointers regarding this match. Depressed from losing? When it had just ended, a little, yeah! But Luo Ji had been prepared to lose so he soon shook off those feelings. Then, hearing the cheers and encouragements from the fans after exiting the booth, Luo Ji was determined to work even harder in order to thank his team and the fans for their support.

Luo Ji had noticed Chen Guo's efforts in trying to make sure he didn't feel left out.

"You started off well." Ye Xiu didn't bother with courtesies, getting straight to the point.

"Yes." Luo Ji nodded.

"Your control was meticulous; that's your strength," Ye Xiu continued.

"Yes." Luo Ji nodded again. His calculations were accurate, thus his actions were meticulous. Luo Ji understood himself well.

"Yet that's exactly how you lost," Ye Xiu then said.

Luo Ji fell into contemplation.

"Your opponent is a person, not a machine. A person's mechanics, a person's performance, will never be as precise as theory. Sometimes they might be in a poor condition, other times they might go beyond their usual limits. Your playstyle has to account for these changes in your opponent's pace," Ye Xiu explained.

"Do you remember the Dummy's Guides you used to make often?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I do." Luo Ji nodded.

"Your current control has the same flaws as your guides for dummies: They don't tolerate mistakes and deviations," Ye Xiu said.

"Oh..." Luo Ji immediately understood what Ye Xiu was getting at.

He thought of when his opponent had used Dragon Breaks the Ranks to break through his summons. In his calculations, that opening wasn't something this opponent had the ability to grasp.

But his opponent had broken past his own limits, achieving a hand speed and mechanics he wouldn't have been able to usually. Thus, what Luo Ji had thought wouldn't happen, happened, and his playstyle didn't have any way to make up for this.

It seemed like his calculations regarding his opponent's ability wasn't comprehensive enough! However, just as Ye Xiu had said, a person's condition would fluctuate and change. Even they themselves would be incapable of controlling this. It was impossible for another to completely account for this in their calculations.

"Then what do I do?" Luo Ji asked.

"The best way is, of course, to refine your playstyle further," Ye Xiu replied.

Luo Ji felt a headache coming on. He naturally understood this reasoning. More refined attacks, harder to counter attacks, that would naturally allow him to suppress and defeat his opponents. The problem was that his ability was limited. He could only refine his playstyle within the boundaries of his talent. This best way was something he couldn't choose, or else he'd have tried ages ago.

"If you can't refine everything, then what about smaller parts?" Ye Xiu then said.

"Partly refine?"

"Consider Mo Fan," Ye Xiu suggested.

Luo Ji was stunned for a moment. What did Mo Fan have to do with this?

Currently, Mo Fan was already on the stage for the third individual match. The projection and the big screen were both playing the scenes of his and his opponent killing each other.

Whoosh!

A rapid five part combo had Deception's opponent floundering.

I'll probably never be able to accomplish that, Luo Ji thought to himself. However, Deception, after a few impressive combos, quickly fled the area.

Luo Ji naturally knew why Mo Fan's playstyle was like so, and thus instantly realized why Ye Xiu wanted him to consider Mo Fan.

Ye Xiu meant that for certain controls, Luo Ji might not be able to refine completely, but some simpler actions were things that he could definitely master with his current ability.

Rebuilding his offensive system through fully utilizing these actions he could master?

Luo Ji felt like he was beginning to understand.

All this time, he had been referencing guides, learning all sorts of Summoner knowledge. He already knew what he should learn, what he should master. Therefore

what he needed to do now was find the things that were most suited to him, the things he could do the best in. Just like deciding on the Four Beasts Style, he had to choose what suited him the most.

It was time he wrote a Dummy's Guide for himself.

"I understand!" Luo Ji nodded.

Ye Xiu smiled. Speaking with smart people was always the easiest! Just look and Luo Ji and then consider Mo Fan, who was currently onstage. Ok, he'll admit, speaking to Mo Fan wasn't all a waste, but getting Steamed Bun with his unique brain structure and planes of thinking to understand was truly harder than hard!

After the individual matches, the group arena soon ended.

Mo Fan had claimed victory for the third individual match and the group arena saw the powerful formation of Tang Rou, Su Mucheng and Fang Rui successfully defeating Miracle giving them a 4 to 1 lead as they entered the team competition.

In the team competition, Happy had everyone shocked, fielding Fang Rui, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi and Steamed Bun. They had let Ye Xiu rest for a round!

"Holy crap!"

Before anyone else reacted, Miracle, who was fielding all their core members, expressed their discontent first.

Miracle had three previous Excellent Era members! They believed that they had a comprehensive understanding of Ye Xiu, of Su Mucheng and of their teamwork. Last time, Happy had swept them 0 to 10. Thus, this time, they had made even more preparations. They had carefully honed their tactics to deal with Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng, determined to win back their points on Happy's home turf. Yet then... Ye Xiu wasn't even participating in the team competition this round.

Was this Ye Xiu looking down on them?

Miracle's little group felt somewhat offended, but then, thinking back on the time they were with Ye Xiu in Excellent Era, when had the other ever looked down on anyone? No matter how weak, he'd never do that. He would only mock them! No matter how strong the opponent, he'd always manage to find something to mock them for.

So was this a way of mocking them?!

The three considered it again.

However, not playing a match didn't seem like Ye Xiu's method of mockery.

The three were distressed.

They should've been laughing in delight at their opponent's strongest player not being fielded, but Miracle treated this as some sort of hateful, despicable thing. Nothing was more painful than dedicating yourself to rehearsing and practicing, but then finding out right before going on stage that it was no longer necessary; the show had been changed.

Absolutely shameless!

Miracle's three brothers felt anger burning inside them.

"Even so, we can't lose!" He Ming said to the players about to go on stage. Then he saw Guo Shao's confused blinking.

He Ming immediately realized his words seemed off.

Even so? Even so what? With his tone and wording, it was like without Ye Xiu, their opponent's just got stronger!

That wasn't right at all. Ye Xiu was Happy's core. Without him on the field, Happy's overall strength would only decrease, not increase.

"Ahem..." He Ming cleared his throat, trying to figure out what to say.

"If Senior Ye Xiu isn't being fielded, then does that mean our tactic is useless?" Guo Shao's words struck them straight in the gut.

"Yes. However, without Ye Xiu, their strength will definitely be affected. This is our chance," He Ming used this to turn them back on track.

"What should we do then?" Guo Shao asked.

He Ming short circuited.

This was because the current situation was truly the worst. Their pre-match practice was all about dealing with Ye Xiu, completely ignoring this possibility. Who would've thought that after 27 rounds, on the 28th with them, Ye Xiu would decide to do this? Miracle's pre-match preparations were all for nothing and they couldn't really come up with any detailed plan on what to do.

"Focus on... on..." He Ming looked through Happy's lineup.

"Qiao Yifan!" This name suddenly popped out. "Yes, Qiao Yifan!" He Ming nodded, saying with confidence.

Chapter 1340

Wind Howl's New Playstyle

He Ming was the sixth player when he was at Excellent Era. Players of this position were generally suddenly switched in while the two sides were deep in conflict, so they had to have the ability to read the situation and immediately understand what was happening, thus allowing them to join in and come to their teammates' aid as soon as possible.

He Ming usually played this position in Excellent Era, so his abilities in regards to this were considerable. Judging the situation, observing the tactics, he was rather good at all that. So who should they focus on first out of Happy's current lineup?

Cleric Little Cold Hands? Often considered Happy's weakness, Happy's Cleric was usually the main focus of other teams in the team competition. However, precisely because of this, Happy would often have a very meticulous plan to protect their Cleric. The teams who tried to attack Happy from this direction would often get led around by the nose instead.

Using the opponent's strategy against them! That was something Ye Xiu simply loved to do. Of the Four Master Tacticians, Ye Xiu was definitely the one with the most sophisticated plans and schemes, no matter if it came to his sheer experience or simply his style. As the Glory Textbook, he could put himself into another's shoes and predict a lot of possible strategies his opponents would use and counter them. Thus, any team of which he was a part of, if you didn't have absolute confidence in being able to take advantage of an obvious weakness, it was best to leave it be.

Miracle was currently a new team, not any sort of powerhouse and He Ming naturally didn't have enough confidence to challenge the traps Ye Xiu had laid. Thus, the choice Little Cold Hands was thrown out.

Apart from that?

Su Mucheng? They were familiar with Su Mucheng from a teammates perspective, but Su Mucheng was a Launcher. For ranged fighters, if they wanted to use Screen Cannon, they could often stay out of the main battlefield. If they targeted her, the entire team

might get kited around and thus fall to a heavy disadvantage. This wasn't a good breakthrough point.

Then, Fang Rui, Master of Dirty Play. This... nope, never mind! He Ming thought to himself. A tricky and cunning opponent like that wasn't one a young, new team like them could deal with.

Then, there was Tang Rou, the fearsome Battle Mage. Even if her reputation had taken a hit, no one dared to underestimate her actual skill. Just now, in the group arena, Tang Rou had gone first and had almost managed to wipe out two of Miracle's players. Though she had yet to defeat a God, her persistence, her aggression meant that she definitely had the ability pin an opponent like a god level player. If they targeted Tang Rou, they might end up pinned by her, unable to escape.

Thus, looking over Happy's starting lineup, it seemed that Qiao Yifan was the only choice for a breakthrough. Plus, his Ghost Chaining was very dangerous. Dealing with him first would mean to alter the battle situation entirely.

"Let's go!" With limited time, He Ming quickly adjusted their tactics a little before leading the team onstage.

At the same time, at another much anticipated match, Wind Howl versus 301 Degrees had already entered the team competition stage.

In the 1v1s, the two teams had ended up with a 4 to 1, Wind Howl taking the lead on their home turf and only losing one point.

As for the team competition afterwards...

Man to man!

Wind Howl seemed to have tasted the sweetness of this strategy after their victory against Blue Rain. For them, who didn't have any sort of high-end strategy at the moment, dividing the opponent and conquering them through isolating the match into five 1v1s which depended on individual strength seemed like a good choice.

Of course, Wind Howl wasn't naive enough to think that 301 Degrees wouldn't be watching out for this strategy after that last match. When the match begun, Wind Howl, very uncharacteristically, didn't charge right for the center of the map. This was something extremely rare after Tang Hao had become the captain.

Wind Howl used their map advantage for their home game and split up, preparing to observe 301 Degrees from the flanks. After approaching, they saw that, as expected, 301 Degrees was on guard against their man to man offense they had used against Blue Rain. The characters of 301 Degrees were all standing closer together than usual. Every character could assure that they'll have at least two other characters' support. If they charged right in, they probably wouldn't be able to tear their team apart.

However, since Wind Howl had been expecting their opponents to be on guard against this, they naturally had their own way to deal with it. This week, Team Wind Howl had focused on practicing how to dismantle an opponent in a formation primed for teamwork and support, tearing them apart into one on ones.

After observing 301 Degrees' current formation, they quickly communicated their plans in their team channel and then Wind Howl's characters charged out from the sides.

Brawler Demon Subduer, Elementalist Beautiful Light, Spell Blade Total Darkness, Qi Master Qi Breaker, Thief Doubtful Demon.

Five classes, no healer. Wind Howl had once again executed this daring strategy.

Demon Subduer, Tyrannical Chain Punch!

Tang Hao's Demon Subduer was the first to lunge. For this skill, shoving the opponent onto the ground was equal to a grab, a very powerful control.

Qi Breaker, Cloud Grasping Fist!

Guo Yang had truly met an opportunity at Wind Howl this season, though his current Qi Master character, Qi Breaker, was rather weak. Although this was that powerful Qi Master of Excellent Era's glorious past, when the Challenger League happened, Excellent Era didn't have a Qi Master character and so this character wasn't upgraded with the big update. It wasn't until Wind Howl bought the character for a low price at Excellent Era's clearance sale that its equipment began to be upgraded, so it was natural that it was a little behind. However, for Guo Yang, this was the character he was most familiar with, one he had used for years, and it was much smoother than the character Wind Howl had given him last year. Although Wind Howl hadn't had the best journey this season, he only got better with time and stabilized his position as the last member of Wind Howl's team competition lineup. In the current Wind Howl, apart

from Ruan Yonglin, all the players had changed from before.

Right now, he cooperated with Tang Hao, of the two Fighters, one closed in and grabbed a target and the other snatched a target from afar.

Afterwards, Beautiful Light began the cast for the AoE Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire while Liu Hao's Total Darkness sent Wave Sword after Wave Sword into 301 Degree's formation. Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon, a battle Thief that didn't care for dirty play, went into pursuit, using this opportunity to start isolating his own target.

"Wind Howl's teamwork isn't bad!" Commentator Li Yibo called out. Team 301 Degrees was clearly having some trouble reacting to Wind Howl's offensive.

Demon Subduer's attack should be dodged.

Qi Breaker and Beautiful Light's attacks should be interrupted, but the two were far off.

Total Darkness' Wave Sword attacks were sweeping into their team, cutting up their formation.

Everything had occurred simultaneously, and there wasn't enough time for giving orders. In these situations, they could only rely on their teamwork and synchronization, on the reactions of the individual team members.

However, 301 Degrees' weakness was unfortunately exposed. Their team had their new core member join during the winter transfer window and their strategy had gone through a metamorphosis. Though they were doing well, it didn't change the fact that they were still in a transitional period, still trying to get familiar with one another.

Thus, in a situation that necessitated a high level of synchronization between team members, where they had to be able to divide up their workloads, they erred.

Qi Breaker's Cloud Grasping Fist wasn't interrupted, and Knight Tide was pulled out of the formation.

Tide was originally using his shield to shield his teammates from Total Darkness' Wave Swords, preventing their formation from being ruined. But with him dragged off, Total Darkness' Wave Swords reached their formation, and 301 Degrees' formation scattered as the team members dodged. Lin Feng's Doubtful Demon took the

opportunity to dart in, using a Staggering Blow to dizzy Gao Jie's Stellar Sword. Though Demon Subduer's Tyrannical Chain Punch had been dodged, Demon Subduer managed to grab 301 Degrees' Paladin, Sun Mingjin's Double O Seven, and throw him out of the formation in the confusion.

Currently, 301 Degree's formation had been completely destroyed. They hurriedly tried to adjust, but the weakness in their lacking synchronization once again surfaced. In the blink of an eye, they were thrown to a dire disadvantage.

In the end, Wind Howl won, which surprised many. No one would have thought that the 301 Degrees that everyone was nervous about facing, having been reborn after the winter transfer window with a new set of tactics, would lose to a team like Wind Howl, who was seen as weak.

"After Blue Rain, 301 Degrees, too... If succeeding the first time was just because they had it easy by catching their opponents off guard... But this time 301 Degrees had clearly been on guard against this playstyle of Wind Howl's, yet in the end, they still didn't manage to defend against it. Team Wind Howl acted swiftly, precisely, utilizing this man to man offensive to its fullest. I believe that we can reignite our hopes for this team. They seemed to have found the style that suits them," Li Yibo commented post-match.

"But wouldn't just one playstyle be too simple?" Pan Lin wondered aloud.

"One playstyle can be used in many different ways. I believe that Team Wind Howl won't just stop here. They'll definitely continue to practice and perfect this playstyle. Of course, this doesn't mean that we can say for certain that they don't have any other strategies. In any case, this playstyle is a good new addition to Team Wind Howl's strategies. In the future, whenever a team faces Wind Howl, they'd have to be on guard for this and will have to practice countering this. This, in and of itself, is already one way to hinder their opponents," Li Yibo explained.

"You're too right! And this is where Wind Howl and 301 Degrees' match ends. This match really was fast. Currently, all other matches are still fighting their team competitions!" This live broadcast was surprisingly quick to end and the broadcasting channel was probably adjusting the plans for the time they had left over. The match had ended, but the broadcast was continuing. Pan Lin and Li Yibo then turned the match broadcast into a talk show.

"Hey, we can take a look at the other matches!" Li Yibo suggested.

"Wait!" Pan Lin merely took a glance before he cried out, "Ye Xiu didn't appear in the team competition between Happy and Miracle!"

"Oh? How come? We didn't get any news of this. Is he hurt or...? Did he fight in the individual competitions?" Li Yibo asked, rapidfire.

"He did fight in the individual competition, continuing his streak." Pan Lin looked over the information. "Huh? Luo Ji's appeared to play in this round."

Li Yibo was stunned for a moment. "Sending up rookies for experience, their team's core player Ye Xiu not playing... Does Happy think that their position in the playoffs are secured and they can treat the remaining matches as training for their troops?"

Chapter 1341

An Uneventful Round

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were surprised at the arrangements Happy had made this round, and at this point, Happy and Miracle were deep into their match.

Target Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash?

He Ming's analysis and plan was good in theory, but reality told them that Qiao Yifan wasn't someone they could wipe out so easily. When the two sides met, they didn't see a hint of One Inch Ash. The other had gone on some strategic approach.

Matches weren't so inflexible. Since their target wasn't there, they weren't going to cling to this plan, ignore what was in front of them and run off to find their target. Thus, Miracle, seeing that they had the advantage in numbers, decided to just go for it!

They did, in fact, have the advantage in numbers, and a huge advantage, too.

When the two sides met face to face, Miracle was a full team of five while Happy was only Tang Rou and Su Mucheng's characters.

5v2, what was there to be afraid of?

Miracle swarmed over, but they knew that Happy wouldn't just send to people for them to kill, so they were on guard for if Happy would suddenly attack from some other direction.

5v2, with this exchange, there had yet to be a result, but He Ming, Wang Ze and Shen Jian felt rather anxious.

What were they up against? The combo of a Battle Mage and a Launcher! The combo they were most familiar with, the one that the team they had spent years in revolved around. Plus, in the past this combo had done it all: 2v1, 2v2, 2v3, 2v4, 2v5. Subconsciously, He Ming and co had erased their advantage in number from their mind. Advantage? What advantage? They were the ones pinned!

Soon enough, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea appeared and Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash also arrived from their right and left flanks, executing a pincer attack on Miracle.

One Inch Ash had appeared, but the goal of focusing on getting rid of One Inch Ash wasn't going to be easy to accomplish at all. He Ming and co shockingly realized that they had been trapped. Also, this scene was too familiar! In the past, it was their opponents who would be trapped by the Battle Mage and Launcher duo, while they caused trouble from the sides.

So in the end, it was the strategy we were most familiar with?

He Ming and the other two's spirits fell. Lord Grim and Dancing Rain had used their familiarity with these two opponents to craft a strategy to counteract them. Lord Grim straight up didn't show up though, yet it was like Miracle had lost their core. In the end, however, Soft Mist and Dancing Rain had executed a playstyle that was far more familiar to them than Lord Grim and Dancing Rain, giving them a sense of déjà vu.

Sigh, if they had known earlier...

He Ming and co all held such thoughts. In the end, the team competition ended in Happy's victory, and Happy had won a spectacular score of 9 to 1 this round.

In the post-match press conference, no one had much interest in Miracle, and their press conference ended quickly. When Happy arrived, the reports naturally expressed great interest in Luo Ji's appearance in the match and Ye Xiu's lack thereof in the team competition.

The answer they received was that they were preparing for the playoffs.

Happy already getting into the pace for the playoffs!

Soon enough, such headlines appeared on the news. However, this wasn't really anything to be too shocked about. The season was approaching its last stages, and teams that had stable scores were already preparing themselves for the playoffs. No matter now or before, the playoffs had always been different from the regular season. The matches were frequent, and you'd have to travel back and forth for the home and away games. This truly did necessitate some adjustments and planning.

However, it was only Round 28! Wasn't Happy getting into the pace of the playoffs a little too soon? If they started preparing their troops and training them, then weren't

they afraid of accidentally slipping out of the playoffs list?

However, this round of training their troops still ended up with a landslide victory of 9 to 1, so what could anyone really say? Those Happy haters could only swallow their words in the face of reality.

Round 28 was a round of landslide victories from the powerhouses. Apart from Wind Howl's 9 to 1 victory against 301 Degrees, nothing unexpected happened in any of the other matches.

Team Happy, gaining another 9 points to their score, had 187 points in total, continuing to place sixth. Next was Team Hundred Blossoms with 183. After Wind Howl had beaten 301 Degrees, they had managed to overtake the other team with their 9 to 1 victory. Though they had the same number of points at 167, Wind Howl had beaten 301 Degrees 9 to 1 this round and lost to 301 Degrees 3 to 7 in the ninth round. The total score of their matches was 12 to 8, Wind Howl in the lead, so Wind Howl was ranked above 301 Degrees despite their equal point value.

Wind Howl and 301 Degrees' ranking switch was the only movement for this round. The other teams all retained their original rankings. For all the teams ranked lower than number 12's Royal Style, it was more or less over for them this season. Now all that was left was to see if they would make a final charge towards gaining a few more points on the rankings. However, this motivation was primarily present in the club, and not the players.

The media was diving into the small area surrounding 8th place. They didn't even bother reporting on the top ranked powerhouses Samsara, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, etc... The fight for the top place in the regular season had long since lost its suspense. The powerhouses' score were stable and there was no way they would fall out of the top eight. What was there to write about? The teams heading for the top four did have some juice to them. After all, being in the top four did have the advantage of an extra home game. However, compared to the fight for the eighth place, the charge for the top four could be pushed to the backburner.

April 3rd, Round 29 of the Pro League, 301 Degrees welcoming Misty Rain to their home game became one of the more interesting face offs.

Misty Rain currently had 149 points, ranked tenth, was 18 points away from the ninth and eighth ranked 301 Degrees and Wind Howl. They still had hope for getting into

the playoffs. However, considering Misty rain's performance this season, most people didn't really expect anything.

Team Misty Rain's new playstyle had been constantly criticised, but after the winter transfer window, they still didn't make any adjustments. In the latter half of the season, their performance hadn't improved any. Now in these last ten rounds, no one knew if they even had the courage to make the charge for the playoffs. Though the club PR always sprouted messages about trust, diligence, fighting for a chance to turn the tables, these were things everyone knew to say. Bright Green and Seaside had also said that they wouldn't give up, but anyone could see that they had already disarmed themselves.

Round 29 was rather calm. Happy had an away game against Royal Style this round. Once a top team, they had already fallen to the point where they didn't even have a chance for the playoffs. However, Royal Style's home turf was still as lively as ever. This was an old team with ten years of history, after all. How many other teams in the alliance had ten years of history?

There were many older fans in their home stadium, middle aged fans were no rare sight. This was probably a scene exclusive to older teams. These people probably hadn't dedicated themselves to Glory much later than even Ye Xiu. Though they were only normal players, lacking the accomplishments that Ye Xiu had achieved, they definitely didn't love Glory any less, able to persist for a full ten years. Glory had already become an integral part of their lives.

Royal Style had completely fallen, but these people didn't leave. Like how Glory was an integral part of their lives, Royal Style was an integral part of their Glory. They had gotten used to supporting this team. If they did well, then good. If they didn't, it didn't matter either. They were no longer fans at an age where they would run over to young players and new promising teams, howling with excitement.

In the first individual competition, Happy continued to field Ye Xiu, and the audience even applauded when Ye Xiu entered the stage.

They had watched ten years of Glory, so they held respect for this veteran of ten years. Thought this guy had crushed Royal Style in the finals of the very first season of the Glory Pro League, Royal Style didn't have as big of a grudge as Tyranny. After all, they only held a grudge for this one year, not like how Excellent Era and Tyranny had gone back and forth for a full four years, always clashing in the finals; that would naturally

result in such a huge grudge.

The applause was rather surprising for Ye Xiu, and he acknowledged the audience with a wave. Thinking of Royal Style's past, and then their present, Ye Xiu grew deeply nostalgic.

Then, on the stage, seeing the opposing player and character, Ye Xiu's breath hitched with emotion.

Tian Sen, Peaceful Hermit.

Royal Style had sent out their core and captain in the first match against Ye Xiu.

Unlike Wind Howl sending Tang Hao up first, Royal Style had probably arranged this with a very different attitude. In this season, they wouldn't be able to do much more or aim for anything further. Thus, they relaxed, and even their core came over to fight an individual match. They probably wanted to try breaking Ye Xiu's record, giving their team a little boost and their fans some action! After all, if they just ended it like this, it would be way too calm.

Peaceful Hermit!

Ye Xiu gazed at the character projected by the central projector of the stadium.

This was the character that fought with Ye Xiu over the championship of the very first season of the Glory Pro Alliance. Back then, One Autumn Leaf, Desert Dust and this Peaceful Hermit were the three most elite, most famous characters of the alliance. And now? Peaceful Hermit... Now how many young people still remembered the strength of this character? In the All-Stars this season, Peaceful Hermit didn't even get in.

Tian Sen. Ye Xiu looked to Peaceful Hermit's current player, getting into the player booth on the other side. This player, tall and built more like an athlete than an esports player, always seemed to struggle to get into the booth more than others; it was somewhat comical.

The Golden Generation, the batch of rookies that had shone the brightest, had all become core members of their teams. Tian Sen was probably the most tragic of them. His pro career had consisted of watching as Royal Style declined from a top powerhouse to a team that didn't even had hope to enter the playoffs. Yet he still persisted, silently. In the winter transfer window, 301 Degrees had invited him to join

their team. Before Team Royal Style could express anything, he had stepped forth to speak his own mind.

No matter how well they did, just by this heart, he was a player deserving of respect.

As Ye Xiu entered the player booth, he thought of the player who had Peaceful Hermit before Tian Sen. That player had been known as one of the Three Gods of that era along with Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing: Guo Mingyu.

"God, my ass," Ye Xiu cursed as he inserted his account card into the card reader, "He owes me money, and he just disappeared like that. What an ass!"

Chapter 1342

They Call It Counter?

Happy versus Royal Style, individual competition match 1. Both characters had already loaded onto the map.

On one side was a ten-year player who had changed character; on the other side was a ten-year character who had changed player. These two sides rich with history stood on the stage now, and quickly met at the center of the map.

This was Royal Style's home game, but Royal Style had actually chosen to use a simple map like the ones that Ye Xiu normally chose. For a team that already had no more goals for this season, these matches had no pressure. Tian Sen probably wanted to use this kind of battlefield to directly break Ye Xiu.

"How daring." Ye Xiu couldn't help but praise the opponent.

"Bring it!" Tian Sen answered.

He had joined Royal Style just in time to witness the team's decline from prosperity. Everyone said that his story was a tragedy, but in reality, Tian Sen felt that he was still rather fortunate. At least Team Royal Style was still here, and he could still be its member. But what about the person in front of him now? Where was the team he once represented, Excellent Era? Once upon a time it was at the pinnacle of Glory, a dynasty-establishing team, but it had since collapsed until it was nothing more than smoke and ashes. And the final blow had been delivered by this person himself. This person standing here now, he was the most tragic person in Glory, was he not?

There had been numerous discussions about what had happened between Ye Xiu and Excellent Era. Tian Sen wasn't someone who liked to gossip, but he believed Ye Xiu. He believed that as long as he was allowed, he would absolutely fight for Excellent Era until the end. No matter how well or poorly the team fared, he wouldn't leave or quit. This wasn't mere loyalty. This was a sort of unbreakable tie that existed between the first generation of players, their teams, and their characters. Tian Sen understood this well, because he had inherited all of this. Even though he was part of the Golden Generation, he adhered to spirit and ideas of the Founding Generation.

Parting from one's team, parting from one's character, it was undoubtedly painful.

So Tian Sen refused to leave Team Royal Style, no matter how many promising invitations he received.

As for this person before him now? He parted from his team, parted from his character, and even had to fight a death match against his One Autumn Leaf. When he thought about these things, Tian Sen always felt deeply wronged on Ye Xiu's behalf.

But even so, Ye Xiu hadn't fallen. He continued to advance forward, all for the sake of Glory!

Yes, for Glory!

This was the spirit of the first generation of players, the Founding Generation. No matter what situations they faced, they would never give up.

Why had Ye Xiu chosen the extraordinarily difficult road of building his own team? Tian Sen felt that he understood. Because, aside from Excellent Era, he wouldn't choose anywhere else. He could only start over from zero, and create a team himself.

Perhaps everyone could see the hardships he went through, perhaps they could see the miracle that was his return to the Alliance. But no one would ever truly know the tragic journey his heart had taken.

But even so, Tian Sen would still use everything he had to defeat him. This was the greatest respect he could offer to this type of player.

Bring it!

After saying this, Tian Sen was already attacking.

Back in the day, Peaceful Hermit hadn't beaten One Autumn Leaf. Then what about today's Lord Grim?

It was said that the Exorcist was the counter to the unspecialized Lord Grim. But as the number one Exorcist in Glory, Tian Sen had only two words to say to this: how naive!

If an equipment-sealing talisman was enough to make an Exorcist the counter to Lord

Grim, then what about those who had methods to dizzy, to put to sleep, or any other control techniques? Would those become all sorts of counters?

Every skill had its value. But for one skill to raise a class to the status of being a perfect counter, that was too shallow a way of thinking.

The skill was there. But how to use it?

Team Void's Ge Caijie was an excellent Exorcist rookie, but hadn't he fallen to Ye Xiu all the same? Counter, what counter?

There was no such thing as a perfect counter in Glory. Those who thought they were counters, they were just waiting to be countered by the opponent! Because the opponent would always successfully use what you were trying to block. Especially this person here, the Glory Textbook Ye Xiu, the master of calculation... No one who had heard the words and deeds of the older generation would ever forget this.

Team Void? Still too young! That was why Ge Caijie, when placed on the field, would be sent running in circles.

Tian Sen wouldn't be that naive. He didn't treat himself as the counter. He faced this confrontation as he would any match.

Two players, two characters, two classes. On one side, the unspecialized, on the other, the Exorcist.

Peaceful Hermit's left hand snatched a talisman from the air, while his right hand was already waving the scythe Death Savvy as he charged forward. Without fear, he began close-ranged combat with Lord Grim.

But Ye Xiu was unalarmed. Lord Grim swung the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, switching to gun form, and fired a rapid burst of shots toward Peaceful Hermit: Gatling Gun.

Tatatatata...

The gunshots were nonstop. Under Ye Xiu's control, the bullets flew everywhere, attacking not one point but an area.

Peaceful Hermit shook his left hand and the talisman flashed with light. Characters

had already formed on the paper, and it was quickly slapped onto his own shoulder.

Hardening Talisman!

Peaceful Hermit didn't dodge, he simply continued to charge straight forward. The bullets exploded on his body in sparks, and he took some damage, but his forward momentum wasn't hampered by these bullets. This was the effect of Hardening Talisman, a stronger version of the Striker's skill Reinforced Iron Bones.

Using the increased defense granted by this talisman, Peaceful Hermit swiftly approached Lord Grim. Lord Grim threw a grenade at Peaceful Hermit's feet, but Tian Sen completely ignored it as well. When Peaceful Hermit stepped there, that grenade exploded, but even though it left a hole in the ground, it didn't shake Peaceful Hermit at all.

Shadow Cloak!

Lord Grim swept his sleeve and sent another skill flying. This type of grab skill was the counter to Super Armor skills like Hardening Talisman. But Tian Sen was fast with his controls. Peaceful Hermit swung Death Savvy down, and the scythe carved through the air with a burst of light. At first glance, it really seemed quite similar to the darkness swung out by Shadow Cloak.

Two skills. Which was faster?

The viewers waited for the result, but the two players had already made their judgments in an instant.

Death Savvy's swing would come faster! The attack speed of a scythe was naturally 10, and the top Exorcist Peaceful Hermit, having chosen such a fast weapon, would definitely have the best equipment to enhance his attack speed even further.

Jump back!

Ye Xiu immediately canceled his Shadow Cloak and controlled Lord Grim to jump backward and dodge. But to his surprise, Death Savvy flew out of Peaceful Hermit's hand toward him. Tian Sen had actually used Spirit Guidance!

Throwing his weapon of course increased his attack range drastically, still carrying the trajectory it'd had when Peaceful Hermit was swinging it. Lord Grim, jumping

backward, couldn't escape this range, and it was too late to parry. Death Savvy hit Lord Grim right in the shoulder.

Peaceful Hermit lifted his hand, already prepared to retrieve the weapon. But the scythe was hooked around Lord Grim's shoulder, so when the Spirit Guidance pulled the weapon back, it carried Lord Grim along with it. Peaceful Hermit's left hand had already snatched another talisman, a character already written on it: Immobile.

Immobilizing Talisman!

His right hand pulled back his weapon, dragging Lord Grim along, while his left hand slapped out a talisman. They met, time slowed down, and this talisman was stuck right on Lord Grim's forehead.

Instantly, Lord Grim was unable to move. But the audience burst into shouts.

It wasn't because Peaceful Hermit had played excellently. It was because, as soon as that talisman landed on Lord Grim, another Lord Grim had already flashed behind Peaceful Hermit.

Too bad I saw it. Tornado!

Death Savvy suddenly flipped under Peaceful Hermit's elbow. Tian Sen hadn't turned his camera view, but he already sent this attack to Lord Grim's real body.

This attack came so suddenly, and Peaceful Hermit's attack speed was so high. Lord Grim, who had wanted to sneak up and use a Cut-Throat, was actually slashed by this backward, upside-down attack first. A sheet of red sprayed into the air.

"Ah!" Chen Guo couldn't help but shout.

She had already watched who knew how many matches of Ye Xiu's, but this was the first time she'd seen him caught by his opponent like this. She'd been so sure that Peaceful Hermit's neck would soon be spraying blood, but this time, the one bleeding was actually Lord Grim.

And the scythe once again demonstrated its unique uses. After slashing, it once again hooked Lord Grim, preventing him from retreating to Peaceful Hermit's side. Peaceful Hermit had already turned around, his left hand already gripping yet another talisman. The character written on the paper flashed in the light, as though it were

about to fly out.

The Level 75 skill, targeting the opponent's equipment, the Seal Talisman!

Tian Sen didn't agree with the "counter" mindset, but that didn't mean he disagreed with the value of this skill. When there was a suitable opportunity and he could use it, he of course wouldn't let it go.

Seal Talisman. With a twist of this body, Peaceful Hermit sent this talisman toward the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella in Lord Grim's hand.

Kaka!

But with two sounds, the umbrella suddenly broke apart into two. Peaceful Hermit couldn't retract his slap, and the talisman landed upon Lord Grim's chest...

Clothes were equipment. The Seal Talisman immediately took effect, and whatever stats granted by this upper-body clothing were temporarily nullified. But this absolutely was not what Tian Sen wanted, and he didn't think "better than nothing." A skill could only be considered successful if it achieved the effect it was meant to achieve. He failed this attack, and what was waiting for him afterward was of course a counterattack. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella split in two, that was its tonfa form. The Fighter class skills relied on this weapon form.

Pow pow!

Kicks and punches landed nonstop upon Peaceful Hermit's body. There were regular attacks, there were skills, and in the end there was a Fling which sent Peaceful Hermit flying. Taking advantage of this grab skill's priority, which locked the target's movements, Lord Grim chased after with a Shining Cut, and at the right angle, he was able to use a Sand Toss at point-blank range right onto Peaceful Hermit's face. When Peaceful Hermit hit the ground, his vision was completely dark. All he could see was a message from Ye Xiu in the chat box to the side.

"You've studied my playstyle pretty thoroughly!"

Tian Sen had indeed studied Ye Xiu extremely well, and discovered that Ye Xiu loved using Shadow Clone Technique to circle around behind the opponent. So, he carefully watched Lord Grim's hands at all times. No matter what, Shadow Clone Technique required hand seals to form. Unfortunately, even though he correctly anticipated the

attack, he still fell short.

Chapter 1343

The True Gunner God

Ye Xiu versus Tian Sen. Ye Xiu still won in the end, but Tian Sen's loss wasn't ugly at all. He unleashed the style of Glory's number one Exorcist Peaceful Hermit to the fullest. After the final attack, Ye Xiu put away his battle mindset to genuinely express his feelings.

Even though he didn't know where the familiar person had gone, the familiar character was still here, and a player who had inherited the spirit was still here. This sort of feeling was enough of a comfort.

"You played well," Ye Xiu said in the chat. Whether opponent or teammate, he wouldn't be stingy with his praise. "You played well" - the words were simple, but they were sincere to the fullest.

The two left their competitor booths at about the same time, and the stadium was already filled with thunderous applause. It was for Tian Sen, and for Ye Xiu as well. Perhaps it was because Royal Style already didn't need anything else from this season, and so the fans were more accepting, sending applause to the opponent both before and after the match. This opponent was worthy of respect, and the 28-consecutive individual win record was worthy of this applause.

Happy earned a point first. Next up was Luo Ji, Luo Ji again.

Royal Style didn't have any feelings toward this player, so of course they didn't have much of a reaction. After experiencing last round's battle, Luo Ji was finally less nervous. During this week, he had watched the recording of the previous match over and over again. That was his first battle of his professional career, not diluted in the slightest, a true you-die-I-live death match on the professional stage.

Luo Ji analyzed many conclusions from that match. His online documents and the paper notebook at his side were dense with notes. It was just a 1v1 that had lasted only a few minutes. How many little details had he noticed, in order to write so many things?

But this was just Luo Ji's method, so no one disturbed him. He drew what he needed from this, and when he came across something he didn't understand, he would ask his seniors for help without hesitation.

How much could he improve in one week? Luo Ji didn't know either. But he was standing on this stage, so he would simply do his best.

As it turned out, Luo Ji's opponent this match happened to be the Summoner player in Royal Style's roster, named He Weitang.

In the end, Luo Ji still lost, but he wasn't discouraged.

One week of effort still wasn't enough. He just told himself this. Now, he had one more recording which he could study.

And then, in the third individual round, Happy's Su Mucheng earned a point.

Next, Happy sent Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and Fang Rui in the group arena, but, unexpectedly, they lost. Royal Style's players were very relaxed as they played, with no pressure at all. Perhaps it was this attitude that allowed their performance to peak, and they ultimately won the two points of the group arena.

In the team competition, Happy sent out Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Steamed Bun, An Wenyi, and Mo Fan.

The lineup had a bit of rotation, but Happy played the team round very carefully. Royal Style could relax, but they couldn't. Ultimately, Happy won this team round, defeating Royal Style 7 to 3.

"Please work even harder in the playoffs." As they exchanged greetings after the match, Tian Sen didn't hold back with his words, sending Happy into the playoffs nine rounds early.

"Alright. Want to come with us?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"No need. Sooner or later, we'll return to that stage as well," Tian Sen said. Even though their scores had been poor for several years running now, he didn't lose the pride of being a member of Royal Style. As long as they were still here, anything was possible. Tian Sen believed this deeply.

"Keep it up!" Ye Xiu shook his hand firmly. Thus, the curtain fell on Happy's away game against Royal Style. In another stadium, the live televised match between 301 and Misty Rain also ended at this time. Ultimately, the recently-strong 301 turned out to be fiercer. Their loss to Wind Howl hadn't stopped their good condition, and in this home game, they defeated Misty Rain 8-2. However, their main competitors right now, Wind Howl, had done better this round. They had their away game against a team that was already viewed as relegated, Seaside, and didn't hold back in winning a 10-0.

With this, Wind Howl now surpassed 301 by two points, slightly expanding the lead they had just won last round.

301 was in ninth place, followed by Void. Void defeated Heavenly Swords 8-2 in their away game, continuing to maintain their chance at the top 8. They just had to wait for someone to mess up. However, with their current 11 point difference from eighth place, one mistake wasn't enough. The other team would have to make consecutive mistakes, and they would need to seize consecutive opportunities, if they were to have their shot.

Because of this, their chance was very uncertain, and Void's supporters were all extremely nervous. As for Misty Rain, after once again losing to their direct competitor, they now had a 26 point difference from the top 8. At this point, continuing to bite down on the theoretical possibility was no more than self-delusion. Misty Rain could be considered yet another team that had to say farewell to this season. This was the first time in recent years that this team had dropped out of the playoffs.

In reality, Misty Rain's greatest point of criticism was still how they tended to crumble at crucial points. But there really wasn't any fault to be found on their technical or tactical aspects, and their scores had always been fairly stable. In order to try and improve, Misty Rain had made adjustments, but it now looked like their adjustments had only given them a rather failed season. People were already beginning to discuss what move Misty Rain would make next.

After Happy finished this round, they prepared to rest overnight in City B. Heavenly Swords was also in City B, and had just played a home game. After the match, they contacted Happy to get together. Heavenly Swords right now was like Royal Style, right in the middle, with no more goals for this season. Losing a match would still be saddening, but the sadness would disperse relatively quickly. At least, when Happy's members met the Heavenly Swords team, they couldn't tell from their faces that they had just lost 2-8 in a home game.

Once Heavenly Swords' players arrived, they pulled Happy for a late-night snack. Every week, this day right after playing a match was indeed the most relaxed day of the week for pro players. As long as they were in the mood, hanging out during this weekend was fairly common. However, by the time they finished the match and the interviews, it wasn't very early, and both teams' players had the self-restraint not to stay out too late. When they were about to disperse, Lou Guanning wanted to extend the friendship of a host, and invited Happy to stay an extra day the next day. But Ye Xiu made a polite but clear refusal for himself, and Su Mucheng followed suit.

"Tomorrow is A Qingming Festival 1 ," someone from Heavenly Swords quietly reminded Lou Guanning, giving him pause. He didn't know if this was Ye Xiu's reason, but of course he couldn't ask. If someone was observing Qingming Festival, there was nothing cheerful about that.

"Then I won't hold you guys up. We can get together next time, we have plenty of opportunities." Lou Guanning let the whole team of Happy go.

"Next time," Ye Xiu smiled. The two teams said their farewells. The next day, Luo Ji returned by himself to City T, while the rest boarded a plane back to City H.

Qingming Festival...

Chen Guo of course didn't forget this holiday. Yesterday, even if Ye Xiu hadn't backed out, she herself would have. Now, it looked like Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng had the same intent as her?"

"Want to head over together in a bit?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu while they were on the plane.

"Alright!" Ye Xiu nodded.

After the plane landed in City H, Happy's members split into two groups. Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Chen Guo went one way, and the others gathered together.

"Where are they going?" The three of them hadn't really said anything, so after they left, everyone else began discussing out of curiosity.

"Probably to sweep the tombs!" Tang Rou had been at Happy the longest and had known Chen Guo's background for a while. Even though she hadn't heard Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's story directly from them, she knew a little from what Chen Guo had said.

The players also knew that Chen Guo's father had passed, but they didn't really know about Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's situation, and so they asked.

"It's Su Mucheng's older brother," Tang Rou told everyone and then looked at Wei Chen. She knew that the young man who had passed was also a Glory expert in the past, and Wei Chen was an old player from those days, so maybe he knew this person.

After hearing Tang Rou's introduction, Wei Chen did reveal a somewhat stunned expression. "So that's what it was."

"Old Wei, you know him?" Fang Rui asked.

"Of course you brats wouldn't know," Wei Chen said, beginning to reflect on his memories. "At that time, there was no Heavenly Domain, and Glory only had one server at the start, only later opening the second server. At the time, all of us spent our time in the first server. We were probably the first batch of Glory players! And at the time in our first server, the Battle Mage One Autumn Leaf was already extremely famous. But there was another guy often with him, very famous, and no less skilled than One Autumn Leaf."

No less skilled than Ye Xiu!

This could be considered the highest praise in the Glory circle. With Wei Chen's shamelessness, for him to give this sort of praise to anyone other than himself was extremely rare to see.

"What was his name?" Fang Rui quickly asked.

"Autumn Tree," said Wei Chen.

Fang Rui shook his head to show that he'd never heard of that name before. That era was too far in the past, and this was just a character in the game. Very few such stories could be passed on for that long.

"Of course, how would you little brats have heard of him?" Wei Chen said disdainfully. In his eyes, Fang Rui was just another little brat.

"So this person was Su Mucheng's older brother!" Wei Chen continued under his breath.

"Autumn Tree, 'Qiu Mu Su'...Su Muqiu?" Fang Rui realized, after slowly voicing the characters aloud.

"Yes." Tang Rou had heard this name from Chen Guo, and nodded her head.

"Oh, so it was his real name in reverse," Wei Chen realized. "But at that time there was no Su Mucheng. No one would make that connection. By the time Su Mucheng entered the Alliance and became famous, this name had probably long been forgotten!"

"Yeah..." Even though Fang Rui hadn't experienced that era, who would pass on the legend of a mere in-game expert? By the time Su Mucheng entered the Alliance, it was already Season 4. Three years was long enough to forget a name.

"This Autumn Tree, what class was he?" Fang Rui asked.

"He was a gunner god," Wei Chen said. "A true gunner god."

Chapter 1344

There Are No Ifs

"Gunner god? A Sharpshooter 1..." Happy's members began to imagine a Sharpshooter called Autumn Tree running through the game, but unexpectedly, Wei Chen shook his head.

"No, not Sharpshooter. All of the Gunner subclasses."

"All of the Gunner subclasses?"

"Sharpshooter, Spitfire, Mechanic, Launcher," said Wei Chen.

"Another expert like that!" Fang Rui exclaimed. Everyone understood this "another." Wasn't their Ye Xiu an even more ridiculous all-class expert, a king's avatar 2 ?

"Actually, at that time, there were many people like that. Who didn't have main and side accounts? But very few could play every class to the limit like they did," said Wei Chen.

"Then what happened later?" Fang Rui asked.

"Later, wasn't it like Little Tang said, he died..." Wei Chen said.

"Car accident, I'm not too sure about the details," Tang Rou said.

And then everyone looked at Wei Chen.

"I don't know too much either, but after the Alliance was established and everyone was making teams to participate, he never appeared again. Probably someone asked Ye Xiu out of curiosity, and then the news spread that he had passed away. But the fact that he was Su Mucheng's older brother, no one knew that..." Wei Chen, the shameless old man, actually let out a sigh when he reached the end, with a face full of regret and pity.

"How skilled was this person?" Fang Rui asked.

"I'll say this. Whenever I fought against him, I didn't even have the chance to cast any curses," said Wei Chen, a profound respect in his voice.

The members of Happy exchanged looks, but after a few moments, Wei Chen didn't see the expressions of shock that he was hoping for.

"That's... not that impressive, is it?" Fang Rui finally said.

"You bastard!" Wei Chen instantly knew what Fang Rui was implying. "This was over ten years ago! Back in those days, I was still a godlike youth!"

"Damn!" Fang Rui looked like he couldn't listen to any more.

"In any case, he was incredibly skilled!" Wei Chen said.

"Compared to Ye Xiu, who was better?" Tang Rou always tended to care about the question of who was stronger.

"This... They always fought side-by-side. We were all curious as to who was stronger between the two of them, but sadly there was never an answer. Not back then, and definitely not now. There never will be..." Wei Chen's expression was once again filled with melancholy.

Everyone fell silent. For Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, and the others, this was the first time they'd heard of this person, and so they couldn't truly empathize so quickly. But seeing the extremely shameless Wei Chen suddenly show such emotion, they could feel how tragic this was, the story of a young genius meeting a premature end.

"If he had joined Excellent Era with Ye Xiu..." Even just thinking about this scenario, Wei Chen couldn't help but shiver.

"If he were still here, what would things be like?" Tang Rou was also thinking about this.

If only...

Who wouldn't think about these sort of "ifs"? But such was the nature of "if," to refer to the impossible.

"What kind of flowers are these now?" In front of Su Muqiu's grave, Ye Xiu watched as

Su Mucheng placed down a bouquet.

"Hyacinths 3."

"Is there anyone else like you, changing the type of flower every year?" Ye Xiu asked.

"There needs to be innovation," said Su Mucheng.

"Innovation?" Ye Xiu laughed. "So you use every type of flower to express this meaning in the flower language?"

"He would like this kind of method," Su Mucheng said.

"Yes." Ye Xiu nodded. The person who had imagined the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and brought it into reality, was there anyone in Glory more innovative than him?

And the things left behind from his innovation were still sparkling on the Glory battlefield.

28 consecutive victories.

Ye Xiu's hand reached into his pocket, where Lord Grim's account card was quietly lying. This record would be firmly bound to this character. And it hadn't finished yet, it was still being updated.

I'll let this record last forever. But from the very start, I left out one match, to leave you a chance to surpass me.

Ye Xiu stretched out his hands to touch the gravestone. These were the hands currently controlling Lord Grim to write miracles in Glory.

"If it wasn't me here right now, and it was my brother, what would things be like now?" Su Mucheng suddenly asked this question.

"Oh?" Ye Xiu gave it serious thought, but he couldn't think of an answer.

"Would it just always be, championship championship championship championship like that?" Su Mucheng asked.

"Maybe so!" Ye Xiu said.

"And Dancing Rain would definitely be more famous than now."

"Not necessarily," said Ye Xiu. "Some guy with a female account is much much worse than a beautiful female player."

"Haha," Su Mucheng laughed, and touched the gravestone with her hands as well.

"Well, those things aren't really important," Su Mucheng said. "If only he could be here, that would be best."

Ye Xiu didn't say anything, because... there were no ifs.

This time, Chen Guo spent a longer time in front of her father's gravestone, because there were just too many things that had happened in this past year. She said many, many things, but she still couldn't finish it all.

Their team winning the Challenger League.

The difficulties they'd faced at the start of the season.

Their team's crazy win streak.

So many 10-0s.

Every team member's improvements.

The expanding guild.

The developing account characters.

And now, advancing toward the playoffs, the rhythm of sprinting toward the championship.

There was really too much...

Chen Guo actually grew tired from all the talking, and all that was just an overview. There were still many details, many other things she wanted to add!

Chen Guo was in a bit of a daze, not really knowing whether she should continue. Because of the fullness of this year, her tomb-sweeping method now became a bit unsuitable. There were too many things, she couldn't finish them all!

"Boss, want to drink some water?" Right then, Chen Guo heard someone speak. When she turned her head, she saw Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng smiling as they stood by her side.

Tomb-sweeping was a rather sad event. But Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng both knew that this year, to Chen Guo, was very happy, and for this year's tomb-sweeping, she wanted to bring this happiness here.

"Oh oh, thank you." Chen Guo took the bottle of water and gulped down some mouthfuls.

"You two are done?" she asked.

"Yeah." The two of them nodded.

"Alright, then let's go!"

"You're done talking? It didn't seem like it?" Ye Xiu said. It looked like they'd been listening to the side for a while.

"That's enough for today, I can come back and continue later. No one said that I can only come here on Qingming!" Chen Guo waved her hand, and took the lead in heading down the mountain.

When they returned to Happy Internet Cafe, everyone was gathered in the training room. They'd all been huddled together and whispering to each other, but when the three entered, they all instantly returned to their seats, they all sat upright and attentive.

"Went to sweep tombs?" Wei Chen asked with a cough.

"Yeah."

"Autumn Tree?" Wei Chen asked.

"Right," Ye Xiu nodded. It was no surprise that the experienced Wei Chen knew this name.

"It's a real pity," Wei Chen said.

"No one said it wasn't!" Ye Xiu smiled, and took his seat as well.

The room was quiet; no one dared to say anything else. For this sort of topic, it didn't feel right to ask the person in question to find out more. Everyone only knew that there was once a monstrously skilled Glory expert, but he left before he had the chance to strive for any glory. Compared to that, everyone here, whether strong or weak, whether new rookies or old veterans, they were still working hard to strive for everything. There was no greater fortune than that.

Click click click click...

The room was filled with nothing but the sounds of the computer mice and keyboards. Everyone was working hard for their own goals, but at the same time, everyone thought of the other burdens that they were carrying upon themselves.

Wei Chen thought of his teammates from back when he was on Blue Rain. They had already left the Glory Alliance, left this battlefield. Some people he might still be able to meet in life, but others had already disappeared without a trace to unknown places. The championship was what they had pursued back then, but in the end they had all departed with regret. And now, Wei Chen again returned to this stage, with his old skills completely insufficient in coping with the intensity of today's matches. But even though this was the case, he could still carry his burdens, couldn't he? If he really could win the championship, then when his old brothers heard and saw it, wouldn't they feel that he had fulfilled for them their strings of conviction?

This kind of feeling wasn't bad at all!

"Hey!" After thinking to here, Wei Chen suddenly gave a rough shout.

"Hey who?" Ye Xiu asked.

"You!"

"What's up?"

"Next match, I want to play," Wei Chen said.

"Oh? Ready to blaze a fire?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"Did you really think that I only came to watch?" Wei Chen said.

"Not many rounds left, is it enough?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's enough," Wei Chen grinned arrogantly. "I understand matches much better than these noobs here."

"Hmph..." The training room was instantly filled with boos.

"I say, in terms of real Pro League experience, aren't you worse than me?" Fang Rui spoke up. He was a Season 5 player, and had now played for over five and a half years. And Wei Chen? His professional career had been only two seasons, two years. Plus, there had been fewer pro teams at the time and skill levels were all over the place. The competition format was entirely different from what it was today.

"Pro League?" Wei Chen sneered. "Why do I call you noobs? This battlefield is called Glory. The Pro League is no more than a part of it."

"So you're saying you're about to go to Heavenly Domain and get some materials for us?" Fang Rui said.

"You look like you need to be taught a lesson! 1v1, let's go!" Wei Chen shouted.

"Who's scared of you! Make the room," Fang Rui yelled.

And thus the two went to compete in shamelessness and dirty playing. To the side, everyone else was listening and laughing, but they were all sprinting forward with more active, more positive, more hardworking attitudes.

The past could only be turned into ifs and remembered in the heart. Only the present could truly be grasped, and only by grasping the present could they take control of the future.

Nine rounds remaining.

Everyone looked at the leaderboard in the training room. There were still nine full rounds remaining. Play these nine rounds well, then they would enter the playoffs, and step upon an even more brutal journey. Everything had to be grasped tightly, starting from now.

Chapter 1345

That Was Only the Past

In Round 30 of the League matches, Happy played a home game, welcoming the currently last-place Team Seaside. Seaside was in low spirits, as they were essentially already relegated. The players were all worried about their future prospects, and very few fans had come along with the team.

As usual, Ye Xiu was the first in the individual round, earning a clean victory. And then Luo Ji came up, finally winning the first victory of his professional career. The audience was a sea of cheers, congratulating Luo Ji.

And then, Wei Chen.

The stadium burst into excitement again. This especially down-to-earth old player had been absent for while. No one even remembered the last time he had come onstage, but now he was pulled onto the stage once again.

Wei Chen boldly and grandly waved toward the audience, and the audience gave him an enthusiastic answer, but the end result wasn't what people expected.

Wei Chen, Happy's representative in the third individual battle, lost.

Seaside already had no prospects, but some of the individual players were still considering their own futures and putting their full effort into performance to try and attract more attention. Wei Chen met one such player, resulting in a long battle that ended with a slight mistake he made causing his loss.

Real battle was still a whole different matter from daily practice. Regularly training and sparring with teammates couldn't replace the rhythm of one professional match a week.

"Old Wei, can you even keep up anymore!" When Wei Chen came offstage, Xiaoshan Stadium came alive with many hollers from the audience.

It wasn't mockery, it was just the lighthearted joking from the fans that knew him well.

Even though these words hit a sore spot, the shameless Wei Chen could always stand up to these kind of jokes.

“The hell do you guys know, this is tactics,” Wei Chen yelled. But his voice had no way of competing with the noise of so many audience members talking at once, and it couldn’t carry. Wei Chen could only hear everyone continuing to mock him as he helplessly walked back to the player area.

“Can’t keep up, huh, Old Wei!” Fang Rui was following along with the audience.

“The hell do you know? This is called tactics.” Finally, Wei Chen could make his retort heard.

“What tactics? Please, do enlighten us,” Fang Rui said.

“Stop messing around,” Ye Xiu interjected. “Old Wei is very upset after losing that match. Don’t provoke him, or else he might cry.”

“Pah!” Wei Chen spat in contempt.

“How are you?” Ye Xiu sat next to him, his tone becoming more serious.

“Even you’re still doing fine, would I be any worse?” Wei Chen gave him a sideways glance.

“I have 29 consecutive victories,” Ye Xiu said.

“Soon I’ll be kicking ass, just you watch,” Wei Chen said.

“Of course, we found you just for that purpose,” said Ye Xiu.

“Well, I have to say, you found the right person.”

“Good luck.”

“I’ll get into condition quickly.”

The joking tone had finally vanished with those last two sentences.

“Now it’s our turn!” Ever since becoming the the anchor of the group arena, he often

had this grand air of a general. The group arena roster of him, Tang Rou, and Su Mucheng wasn't something that Seaside could defend against. Just two of the Happy players were enough to defeat and destroy Seaside. Seaside didn't even have the chance to see in individual battle that character which had once been their core, Boundless Sea.

In the intermission, Happy actively prepared for the team competition. Seaside's players, however, just sat scattered around the player area, each lost in their own thoughts. There was no communication at all.

This was a team that had already completely splintered apart. Just last season, they hadn't been doing so poorly, but this season had been a nonstop plummet. After Zhao Yang retired, the team said they sold Boundless Sea so they could set down a burden and travel light. But now, there was a big discrepancy between expectation and reality.

What they set down wasn't just the burden of economic investment and resources. At the same time, they had set down what had always been this team's soul and conviction.

To Team Seaside, Boundless Sea was more than just a contribution to their strength. He was the support on which the team's spirit rested. Zhao Yang's retirement was already a huge blow to the team. By selling the character Boundless Sea immediately after, this two-hit combo completely destroyed this team's courage and belief to continue fighting.

Tear down and rebuild. But Seaside had torn down too much, until there was nothing left of their team. This team, perhaps, had collapsed the moment that Boundless Sea was sold off.

And at the same time, the most attention-grabbing match of this round, the match chosen for television broadcast, had also entered the most exciting part of the group arena.

Blue Rain vs Hundred Blossoms.

Huang Shaotian vs Yu Feng.

Former teammates, now the core players of their respective teams.

And now, it was finally time for them to stand opposite each other with their swords

drawn, fighting to the death in this battle to decide the group arena.

Troubling Rain still had 96% health remaining, while Blossoming Chaos was at 100%. With such a slight difference, the two characters were essentially beginning this match at the same starting line.

“Let the match begin!” When commentator Pan Lin made this announcement, the two characters had already finished loading onto the map. But, shockingly, the chat wasn’t instantly flooded with a huge amount of text.

The instant the battle began, the television broadcast had already switched the close-up display to the chat. But there wasn’t a flood of messages?

“What’s going on?” Pan Lin exclaimed. “This is a match with Huang Shaotian! And it’s only the opening, they’re not fighting each other yet, how come there are no messages in the chat? Ah! It’s already been seven seconds and there isn’t a single message! What is this? Did something happen? Is there a problem in the player booth? Did Huang Shaotian faint? Can someone go and check?”

“I think...” To the side, Li Yibo finally opened his mouth. “Even though Huang Shaotian hasn’t sent a message yet, you sounded a lot like him just now.”

“...”

Fortunately, Pan Lin didn’t need to worry, as just at that moment, Huang Shaotian’s message finally appeared on screen.

“We meet onstage again. But after so long, we’re probably used to this feeling by now! Come on, let’s have a fierce battle. Let’s see if your greatsword is fiercer or my lightsaber is faster.”

At the same time the messages appeared, Troubling Rain was already Swift Running out, his weapon Ice Rain at his side glowing with faint blue light, leaving blurred afterimages like the marks left by raindrops freezing as they dripped down.

Just one message. For Huang Shaotian, this was truly unprecedented. Such an atypical performance seemed to indicate that he still wasn’t quite used to treating this former teammate as an opponent? Even if Yu Feng had already left Blue Rain over a year and a half ago.

“I’m sorry that I can’t continue to walk alongside everyone...”

Every time he met Yu Feng again, Huang Shaotian flashed back to what this guy had said just before he left Team Blue Rain, when he was bidding farewell to them all.

“I want to see what I can accomplish with this greatsword in my own hands,” Yu Feng said.

What he could accomplish?

These two seasons, everyone had seen his accomplishments. Under Yu Feng’s lead, Team Hundred Blossoms rebuilt its former trademark duo, the Berserker and the Spitfire. The number one Berserker, after leaving Blue Rain and joining Hundred Blossoms, was still the number one Berserker. But his simplest, most sentimental season would always belong to Blue Rain.

That was Blue Rain’s most beautiful summer.

In Season 6, Blue Rain defeated Tiny Herb in the finals, winning that year’s championship.

At that time, Yu Feng was a mere rookie in the team. He wasn’t like Lu Hanwen, who had taken up the responsibility of main attacker in his very first year. In that year, Yu Feng’s position still wavered between main roster and substitute as a rotating player.

But he played a role in Blue Rain’s championship victory. Everyone saw his talent and anticipated his growth.

As expected, he quickly became a solid, indispensable member of Blue Rain, always the one who stood at the very front of the team to meet the enemies that came at them.

But unfortunately, this situation only lasted for two seasons. In Season 9, Yu Feng voluntarily transferred, wishing to leave Blue Rain. And his reason was exactly as described above: he wished to forge an era that was his own.

“But if that’s the case, then what was Blue Rain to you?”

Only Huang Shaotian would ask such a sharp question without hesitation.

“Thank you everyone, for your care all this time...” But this was Yu Feng’s only reply,

and he left just like that. And Huang Shaotian, who had wanted to go up and demand answers, was ultimately pulled to a stop by Yu Wenzhou.

A position truly as the core. A team that truly belonged to him.

Perhaps some people wouldn't care about these sort of things, but others would care about them greatly. And Blue Rain could not give these things to Yu Feng. Even if they had once had that perfect summer, even if Yu Feng had always led Blue Rain forward like the front of a train, these were not what he most wanted.

He wanted to use the greatsword in his hand to forge an era that belonged to him!

Even when Huang Shaotian hurled that "what was Blue Rain to you" question at him, he felt no guilt or remorse. What was Blue Rain to him? Every time he faced Team Blue Rain in battle, every time he met Blue Rain's players, he would always think of this question.

At the time, he hadn't known, and so he hadn't given a reply. But now, he had found his answer.

The past.

To him, Blue Rain was the past.

That place had brought him laughter and tears and sweat and emotion. But all of that was in the past. Now, his body bore the emblem of Hundred Blossoms. He was this team's captain. He had already waved farewell to the past. Now, he was using his sword to strive for what he wanted to obtain.

And no one could block him, not even Huang Shaotian, this person who talked so much and yet could never be hated.

Even if the one blocking his way was the Sword Saint, he would knock him down for good.

Blossoming Chaos, charge forward!

Without pause, without retreat, the two characters flew toward each other at the center of the map, and without hesitation, the swordlight clashed.

AAAAAH!

Blossoming Chaos seemed to roar. In terms of power, the Berserker of course had the advantage over the Blade Master, especially since he had activated the Berserk status from the start. Blossoming Chaos' two eyes had gone red, and blood energy roiled around him. The Silver weapon he held, Blossoms Burial, with all the strength to bury everything in its path, swung toward Troubling Rain.

Chapter 1346

The Instant Spotlight Steal

“Right now Yu Feng has the advantage!!” Commentator Pan Lin described the current situation in shock.

When the two characters met, Troubling Rain was actually instantly suppressed by Blossoming Chaos. Under the ferocious attack of the Berserker, Troubling Rain was clearly in a bad position.

The broadcasters couldn't help but cut to a close-up of the chat every so often. This was a habit born from broadcasting many of Huang Shaotian's matches. But now, there was nothing... The chat was clean and empty.

“Huang Shaotian has said unusually little during this match!” Li Yibo observed.

“Looks like Yu Feng is giving him a lot of pressure. Maybe he doesn't have any time left to type words?” said Pan Lin. The pace of the players' attacks and defenses was so fast that Pan Lin had no time to discuss any details of the battle. He could only insert some side comments like this.

“After spending over a year in Hundred Blossoms, Yu Feng has indeed improved significantly,” said Li Yibo.

“Maybe it's the responsibility of captaincy that gave him more courage, gave him more of a role to play!” Pan Lin said, before glancing at the two sides' health bars once again. “The battle is extremely fast-paced. Troubling Rain's health has already dropped to 71%, while Blossoming Chaos still has 79%. Just looking at the health, we see that even though Huang Shaotian doesn't have the initiative, he's still managed to take away a large portion of his opponent's health. Plus, at the start of this match, Troubling Rain was already at 96%, meaning that up to now, he's lost 25%, while Blossoming Chaos has lost 21%. That's only a 4% difference!”

“On that point, we have to remember that Blossoming Chaos is a Berserker. During these exchanges, Yu Feng will likely be bolder,” Li Yibo said.

“Whoa, just in the time it took us to say that, their health has dropped again, Troubling Rain 67%, Blossoming Chaos 70%! Blossoming Chaos ate a big attack here! If we consider the two characters’ starting health, doesn’t this mean that Troubling Rain is now in the lead?” Pan Lin was surprised, because looking at the current offensive, Yu Feng clearly had the upper hand.

“Huang Shaotian’s defensive ability has always been exceptional, and his ability to attack while defending is also strong. This has to do with the role he often plays within the team,” Li Yibo said.

“That’s true,” Pan Lin agreed. The two didn’t describe this point further, because all sorts of reporters, critics, and commentators had already talked about this many times. Huang Shaotian’s defensive ability was high because Team Blue Rain had several characters that needed to be defended. Aside from the healer, Yu Wenzhou’s Swoksaar also needed his support frequently.

But the protection of Swoksaar was different from the typical protection of a healer. After all, Yu Wenzhou wasn’t someone who could be casually killed off. Even though his hands were slow, he relied on experience and rhythm to fight in his own way. So, Huang Shaotian’s protection of Yu Wenzhou more often contained a counterattack. This strategy of Blue Rain’s was very mature by this point: from Swoksaar, launch a defensive counterattack.

So Blue Rain’s players were all skilled in this area, with Huang Shaotian as the leader. Right now he was being suppressed by Yu Feng, but while defending, he managed to gain the upper hand in health. It had to be said that Huang Shaotian’s defensive counterattacking was extraordinarily effective.

Having been teammates for three years, Yu Feng wouldn’t overlook this special trait of Huang Shaotian’s. But at this moment, it seemed like he didn’t care, as he tenaciously continued to attack.

“Is Yu Feng playing too carelessly?” Pan Lin said at this moment. “Even though he has the initiative, if this keeps up, the initiative won’t help him win!”

Just as he said these words, Yu Feng finally fell behind in terms of raw health. Troubling Rain was now at 61%, while his Blossoming Chaos had been brought down to 58%.

“He still won’t stop to consider strategy?” said Pan Lin. Indeed, it looked like Yu Feng had no plan of stopping. The battle rhythm was just as fast as before, and in the midst of flying blood droplets, the health bars continued to drop.

60%, 57%;

58%, 54%;

54%, 51%;

50%, 40%...

After a flurry of blows, Blossoming Chaos’s health suddenly plummeted drastically, from 51% all the way down to 40%.

“Ah, this...” Pan Lin was already losing his voice as he cried out. Blue Rain’s home stadium erupted in cheers to welcome victory.

“No! Now, Yu Feng’s offensive truly begins!” Li Yibo shouted. After seeing this sharp drop, he realized something.

Blood Awakening. Activating once a Berserker’s health was below 50%, this granted a massive increase in strength. The lower the health, the greater the increase. And Yu Feng’s health had dropped all the way to 40% in one step. The strength increase granted by this 10% would boost Blossoming Chaos’ attack power and priority. And this sudden boost in attack priority would instantly put greater pressure on Huang Shaotian’s defense. If he couldn’t keep up with this increased rhythm, it was very possible that he would be crushed.

It looked like Yu Feng wanted to use this moment to attack explosively, directly defeating Huang Shaotian’s Troubling Rain in one go. Now that his own health was at 40%, Blossoming Chaos used his Awakening skill: Bloodthirsty Craze.

Boost!

Aside from the boost to strength, Bloodthirsty Craze also boosted Blossoming Chaos’ movement and attack speeds. It relied on the same logic: sacrifice one’s own health to drastically increase attack power.

In just this short instant, Blossoming Chaos completed a massive explosion of stats.

This explosion wasn't a coincidence, of course. Yu Feng had planned for this long ago. He had a very clear plan here: relying on this explosiveness, he would deal the final blow to Huang Shaotian.

It's here!

The Silver weapon Blossoms Burial once again whipped up a hurricane of blood. All of these boosts had come so suddenly, even Huang Shaotian probably didn't expect Blossoming Chaos to swiftly enter a 40% health Blood Awakening and activate Bloodthirsty Craze. This was all completed in an instant. Blossoming Chaos' attacks now were on a whole different level from before.

Could Huang Shaotian withstand this sudden increase of power?

No, clearly not.

When Troubling Rain lifted his weapon Ice Rain to defend, it was instantly forced back by the greatsword Blossoms Burial. Blossoming Chaos' attack priority right now wasn't something that Troubling Rain could casually block with his blade.

Hit!

It looked like even Ice Rain was thrust into Troubling Rain's flesh. The blood sprayed up like a screen to cover the two people. Only their health bars could be seen, reflecting the current situation as they jumped downward.

Troubling Rain: 45%; Blossoming Chaos: 39%.

43%; 38%;

40%; 37%;

35%; 36%...

In an instant, in just this instant, Blossoming Chaos completed his counterattack. His health was now higher than Troubling Rain's. There wasn't even an exchange, there was only Yu Feng's crazy offensive. Blossoming Chaos' health depletion was only an automatic side-effect of Bloodthirsty Craze.

I can win! I will win!

Yu Feng saw the opportunity, the opportunity that he'd constructed from the very beginning, finally in his hand. He loved this feeling, truly loved this feeling, the feeling of having everything firmly in his grasp. It felt so enriching, and so very real...

32%; 35%;

29%; 34%;

25%; 33%;

20%; 32%...

Controlled well, his attacks were controlled excellently, the gap between their health was only widening. Even more importantly, as Blossoming Chaos' health depleted his strength was still increasing, and his offensive grew more and more violent.

The Bloodthirsty Craze status was about to wear off, and a large portion of his battle ability was about to vanish. Afterward, he would need to rely on Berserk to make up for it. But Huang Shaotian had probably already grown accustomed to this current rhythm; the replacement boost from Berserk probably wouldn't be enough to suppress him.

Still, he didn't need to worry too much. It wasn't a big deal if he sacrificed some health. Consider it a one-time interest payment on Bloodthirsty Craze! The final offensive was about to begin here.

Berserk!

Yu Feng didn't wait for Bloodthirsty Craze to wear off before using a new skill. Just before Bloodthirsty Craze was about to end, he activated Berserk.

His offensive continued, but as Yu Feng expected, the 25% decrease that Berserk represented couldn't help Yu Feng suppress Huang Shaotian completely.

He needed an exchange. He just needed to complete one exchange.

His 12% health lead allowed Yu Feng to feel calm. This battle would end after this final wave of attacks.

Whirlwind Strike!

Blossoming Chaos' attacks continued. He used a Whirlwind Strike to send his sword spinning toward Troubling Rain.

But...

Falling Blossom Form!

Troubling Rain suddenly darted out with his sword. So fast, so accurate. The attack was clearly initiated just slower than Whirlwind Strike, but it landed upon Blossoming Chaos first.

Blossoming Chaos was sent falling down out of his control, and Yu Feng was stunned. What happened? How was his offensive broken here? Troubling Rain's attack came so quickly that he truly had no way of responding. This one attack came as though it had been waiting for a long time, as though it had been ready for a long time. One touch completely shattered Blossoming Chaos' offensive.

"Dropping health like that in front of me, you really are too bold. Have you already forgotten what my style is?" Huang Shaotian finally graced the chat with some of his words. He mentioned his style. This style... He probably wasn't referring to how he was finally talking now, he was evidently referring to something else... Huang Shaotian's style, aside from his talkative nature.

Opportunist. The greatest opportunist in Glory. One opening was enough to create a reversal. One opening was enough to kill.

It wasn't that Yu Feng didn't know this, nor would he forget this. He simply believed that he wouldn't give Huang Shaotian any openings, any opportunities. But now...

Swordlight. Ice Rain's swordlight, like strings of frozen raindrops, landed over and over upon Blossoming Chaos' body.

20%, 28%;

20%, 25%;

20%, 22%;

20%, 15%;

20%, 11%;

20%, 0...

Just like that, Blossoming Chaos' 32% was wiped away in one go. Troubling Rain took no damage.

As expected of this guy! Yu Feng watched, helpless, as Blossoming Chaos fell. This guy always had a sudden explosion at a critical point, instantly stealing your spotlight. On the battlefield, no matter how hard he worked, no matter how well he played, it could never compete with the elegance of that guy's instantaneous strike.

He thought he had grasped victory in his hands, but it still slipped through his fingers in the end. That feeling of fullness turned empty in the blink of an eye.

This is why I had to leave Blue Rain!

At Blue Rain, your sudden appearances always crushed the presence I worked so hard to build up. It was truly too cruel...

Chapter 1347

Sprint

In the group arena, Troubling Rain defeated Blossoming Chaos, giving the victory to Blue Rain. In addition to the two points they had earned in the individual competition, Blue Rain entered the team competition with a 4 to 1 lead.

In the end, Blue Rain used their home advantage to crush their opponents in the team competition, winning an impressive victory of 9 to 1 against Hundred Blossoms. In the same round, Happy also managed a 9 to 1 victory against Seaside. Conquering Clouds was crushed by 301 Degrees in their away home, not getting a single point and losing 0 to 10. As for Wind Howl, 301 Degree's most direct competitor, they had managed to win against Misty Rain 8 to 2 on their home turf, but their 2 point lead was eliminated by 301 Degrees. They only managed to remain eighth thanks to their victorious battle against 301 Degrees.

There were two matches that roused public interest this round, Tiny Herb's home game against Void and Tyranny's home game against Thunderclap.

In the end, the two home teams ended the match 8 to 2. Thunderclap's team once again lost; this time to Tyranny's team. Something that was rather unexpected, however, was that Han Wenqing, Zhang Jiale, Lin Jingyan and Zhang Xinjie, after a long time of not fighting together, all appeared in the starting lineup this time.

Was it a coincidence of their rotation?

No one would think that way. Team Tyranny had implemented this rotation for Han Wenqing, Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan to switch off. With all three of them present, Tyranny seemed to perform perfectly well, so what was the point of the rotation?

"Tyranny's begun the sprint for the playoffs." With Team Happy, Ye Xiu merely glanced at the lineup before making a conclusive judgement.

In the past, Chen Guo would probably ask why, but she didn't need Ye Xiu to explain something like this anymore, because she could read between the lines. In reality, Happy also had such plans for Wei Chen, and Wei Chen's situation was far worse than

Tyranny's veterans.

Veterans like them didn't have enough energy for the entire season, especially not with the fact that there was an even more anticipated, even more intensive, even more frequent playoffs after the regular season.

Last season, Tyranny was ever so impressive, but lost at the finals.

Perhaps they had felt their efforts taking a toll on them ages ago, holding on only through their faith. Another match, just another match... Perhaps, that was what they were chanting in their heads. Getting to the finals, fighting three rounds against Samsara, they were holding on stubbornly through sheer willpower. However, no matter how strong they were, their energy would eventually be depleted. Under this exhaustion, they had met their strongest rivals in the Alliance and Tyranny had fallen, and many people could only think of what a shame that was.

Thus, in the new season, they had discarded their headstrong ways, not opening the season very well. Everyone felt that it was such a shame; they sighed: the spirit of these veterans were admirable, but what was the use in this stubborn persistence?

The voices cheering for Tyranny for the championship slowly died out, but Tyranny didn't care, continuing forth like that. Their scores soon stabilized. Though they weren't as impressive as last season, there was no pressure for them to get into the playoffs. Nonetheless, some people still felt it was a shame. They longed for the time where the four kings lead Tyranny to victory together, sweeping through the alliance with high-spirits.

Yes, high-spirited, but they ended up losing the finals.

But this time, Tyranny wouldn't act according these personal feelings anymore. They fought steadily, stably. The veterans, including Han Wenqing who hadn't backed down in ten years, all began playing in rotation. He was the team captain, after all – the soul of Tyranny. Currently, there wasn't a single team that had such a figure in such a consistent rotation. It was rare that these people would even sit out for a single match. Yet now, this was something that had happened to Han Wenqing. The Han Wenqing that always pressed forth and never backed down.

Everything was for the championship.

Team Tyranny's members, after their loss last season, had clearly realized that they

could no longer fight freely and without restraint like the younger generation. They had to preserve their strength. They needed enough energy to face the playoffs, to face the finals. Thus, they stayed in rotation this season, marching forth and keeping a low profile. The three veterans had each played two thirds of what they had played last season. They maintained their condition throughout the intense pro level matches and didn't deplete so much of their energy.

And now, it was Round 30 of the regular season. After this round, there would be eight more rounds in the regular season before the even more intense playoffs begun.

Team Tyranny's low profile would end here. In the match against Thunderclap, they revealed their fangs and claws. The three veterans and Zhang Xinjie appeared in the starting line up together, wiping out Thunderclap, who were using their team competitions to make miracles this season. They were announcing their return, announcing that they were prepared for the playoffs. They were going to use the following eight matches to once again get completely used to their team, to find the state they needed, because this was their true pillar. This was weapon they wielded in this fight for the championship. That was something they never doubted since they had formed this team last season, this team had people had thought senile.

"It's time to start."

That was the simple and straightforward reply Han Wenqing gave in response to the reporter's questions on their lineup.

It was starting.

All the teams were preparing.

Those who hadn't secured their position would begin their final slaughter to the top. Those who had already reached the door to the playoffs were all adjusting their teams to get into the rhythm of the playoffs.

Tyranny had the three veterans fight together, and Happy also had Luo Ji and Wei Chen find their optimal state through the following matches. As for the teams that didn't have much hope, they were beginning to change their tactics, too, willing to try out new things. Each team, depending on their own situations, would be adjusting to a different pace in these last eight rounds.

Often times, strange and unexpected situations would result from the clashes of these

differing rhythms. Some would be at a disadvantage, others would be able to take advantage.

Happy was, unfortunately, one of those disadvantaged. In Round 31, they played their away game against Misty Rain, and Happy somehow lost with a shocking 1 to 9. Apart from the victory Ye Xiu gained in the first individual round, they lost spectacularly until the end.

If it was last season's Misty Rain, this score wouldn't be too shocking, no matter what team they had managed it against. However, Misty Rain's condition clearly wasn't very good this season, and their strategic structure had completely collapsed. But in this round, Misty Rain had fought unrestrained and won a landslide victory against Happy.

"Don't underestimate us!" Chu Yunxiu grinned, saying to Ye Xiu as they shook hands after the match. "We didn't underestimate you, we just really weren't expecting it," Ye Xiu said helplessly.

The individual rounds were acceptable. Happy had been prepared to lose points when they sent up Luo Ji and Wei Chen. The thing was that in their team competition this time, Misty Rain completely ignored the criticism from both outside and inside the circle. This time, they were even crazier. Chu Yunxiu took Shu Kexing and Shu Keyi, and the three ranged fighters fought elegantly and without a care for a world. Li Hua's Ninja didn't bother acting as a close ranged guerrilla tank anymore, instead running around and launching sneak attacks. Misty Rain had gone completely off the rails, leaving Happy floundering to react, and swept a victory for themselves.

"How was it? Our strategy?" Chu Yunxiu was enthusiastically asking for Ye Xiu's opinion.

"Be happy about catching us off guard elsewhere. Stop shoving it in my face, would you?" Ye Xiu said.

"Heheh," Chu Yunxiu didn't mind this at all. It was clear she understood that their performance had simply caught Happy off guard. If Happy had prepared and dealt with this more carefully, Misty Rain's strategy wouldn't be all that reliable. "Good luck!"

After Ye Xiu walked past Chu Yunxiu, Su Mucheng came over and grasped Chu Yunxiu's hand, giving her words of encouragement, as if they had been the one to win and not

Misty Rain.

Chu Yunxiu naturally understood what Su Mucheng was talking about. Her encouragement wasn't about this match, but Misty Rain's overall situation.

Faced with her good friend, Chu Yunxiu didn't bother with the triumphant demeanor she had worn in front of Ye Xiu, shaking her head and giving a strained smile.

"Let's hang out after this!" Chu Yunxiu suggested.

"Alright!" Su Mucheng didn't reject the offer. The two didn't dawdle any longer. After the players of each team finished giving each other their post-match regards, they each returned to their prep rooms to prepare for the post-match press conference.

Misty Rain were the victors, so their press conference was after Happy's. The sudden victory was exciting for the reports, and they enthusiastically tossed questions about the playstyle Misty Rain had used this round as well as what they thought about the playoffs.

Chu Yunxiu answered the questions one by one. Their strategy was something the team had been figuring out and researching. With the victory today, it seemed pretty good, so the team would continue to look into it and hone themselves. As for the playoffs? No one would know until the last moment, and Misty Rain wasn't planning on giving up.

Watching the satisfied reporters, Chu Yunxiu could only sigh to herself. Was there really any hope for Misty Rain this season?

After the press conference, Misty Rain's players bid each other goodbye. Chu Yunxiu was the last to leave the prep room and she flipped open her phone to a text from Su Mucheng: "Waiting at Exit E."

"Coming."

Chu Yunxiu replied before heading for Exit E.

The moment she stepped out from Exit E, Chu Yunxiu saw the somewhat blurred but elegant figure of her friend in the night lightning. Next to her was another, a fitful spot of red light fading and burning.

The elegant figure waved at her and Chu Yunxiu quickly walked over.

“How come you’re here, too?” Chu Yunxiu didn’t greet Su Mucheng, instead choosing to side eye the smoking Ye Xiu.

“I felt like the Great God Chu seemed after uncertain and was wondering if she needed some advice from a helpful senior,” Ye Xiu replied.

“Give me a cig!” Chu Yunxiu demanded.

Ye Xiu didn’t hesitate to take out a cigarette and hand it over and even offered a flame. Chu Yunxiu accepted the cigarette and lit it smoothly.

“Let’s go to the coffee shop over there!” Chu Yunxiu suggested after taking a puff from the cigarette.

Chapter 1348

Misty Rain, Helpless

The coffeeshop was fairly remote. It hadn't been too long since the match ended, and the more eye-catching places along the road were popular hangouts for gamers who had just finished watching the match. If the three of them had gone to one of these places, there would definitely be onlookers. Fortunately, this was Misty Rain's home stadium, and Chu Yunxiu was extremely familiar with the area. She led the two to this very quiet location.

They took their seats, each ordering a cup of coffee. The cigarettes were already finished during their walk over here. Ye Xiu stared blankly at the prominent no-smoking signs hanging in the coffeeshop.

Finally, Chu Yunxiu opened her mouth. "Happy really is doing well."

"What about Misty Rain?" Ye Xiu didn't dance around, going straight to the topic. He could tell that Chu Yunxiu was really feeling quite depressed. There must be some problems with the team, for her to ask to meet them after the match.

"What do you think?" Chu Yunxiu asked Ye Xiu.

Misty Rain's problem right now was one of strategy, everyone knew this. In general, things like strategy should be kept secret from competitors. But unlike the stats of Silver equipment, strategies were publicly demonstrated in battle. So, strategies themselves weren't considered some secret weapons. The key was their execution. 301 adapted to their new strategy of the Knight covering the Assassin like a fish to water, but if you tried to get a different team to emulate it, it probably wouldn't be as effective. Different players and characters required different strategies. There needed to be adaptability.

So, there wasn't anything taboo about talking strategy. Anything you can do, everyone else can too. It just came down to whether or not it'd be useful or effective. Still, mutually asking for tips and advice was rarely seen. Who had time to help the competitor improve?

But now that Chu Yunxiu said this, Ye Xiu didn't seem like he cared about all that, and he directly said what he had to say. "It's clear that the current strategy isn't suitable. Let's make an analogy! In basketball, there's a strategy of having one tall player with four perimeter players, but there's no strategy with a short player running around with four perimeter players. Misty Rain right now is the latter. You could play with this strategy occasionally to trip people up, but it's not suitable as a main strategy."

"Who said that wasn't the case?" Chu Yunxiu said.

"If you know the problem, then why don't you adjust?" asked Ye Xiu.

"How do you think we should adjust?" said Chu Yunxiu.

"Sun Liang should play in the starting lineup for the team competition," said Ye Xiu. Sun Liang was a member of Misty Rain, a Striker. He used to be a main player for the team, but after Misty Rain changed its strategy this season, he became a rotating player.

"Oh, then who should be switched out?" Chu Yunxiu asked.

Ye Xiu hesitated.

For such a simple question, Chu Yunxiu didn't need to ask him step by step. Who should be switched out? When Chu Yunxiu said this, the frustration and bitterness on her face was plain to see. Clearly, there was more to this question. After Ye Xiu thought for a moment, he realized where the problem must lie.

"When it comes down to it, that pair of sisters will just have to be separated," said Ye Xiu.

"That's the problem. They can't be separated," Chu Yunxiu said.

"Oh..." Ye Xiu understood and fell silent. He had already guessed the general situation.

The Shu siblings couldn't be separated? How could something like that be so absolute? Their partnership wasn't guaranteeing the team's success. On the contrary, it was because the two of them were on the field at the same time that the team couldn't adjust their class composition. They couldn't be separated, not for strategic reasons, but for other reasons. And the only thing that could supersede strategic demands were the decisions of the club itself. This wasn't a problem of strategy. This was a problem

of the operations of Club Misty Rain. The club required that both of the Shu siblings be on the battlefield.

Just from how Misty Rain had specially requested the Alliance to change the genders of these sisters' characters, the hope and importance placed on these two was clear. And for pro players, value was ultimately demonstrated on the battlefield. So it wasn't strange that the club directly required that these two had to appear together on the field.

And this was something that players could hate, but could do nothing about.

Business operations overrode strategy. The outside directed the inside.

Chu Yunxiu hadn't asked to meet Su Mucheng to try and find some solution. She was simply feeling depressed and wanted to chat and share with a good friend. Now that the situation had been made clear, the three sank into silence. For a problem like this, if Chu Yunxiu was powerless to fix it, then how could outsiders like Ye Xiu or Su Mucheng help?

Chu Yunxiu, Li Hua...

This was the true strategic core duo of Misty Rain. The value of this pair was higher than that of the Shu siblings. If it came down to it and this pair needed to sacrifice in order to achieve a more suitable class composition, then it wouldn't just be an individual sacrifice. The team as a whole would be sacrificing its fighting strength. If Misty Rain resorted to such a method to get a reasonable class composition, how much strength would they ultimately have remaining, anyway?

Furthermore... between these two players, if they had to choose one to remove from the roster, then Chu Yunxiu was a better choice than Li Hua. After all, the Shu siblings were both long-range Sharpshooters and had some overlap with the use of an Elementalist. Keeping Li Hua's Ninja on the field would allow greater flexibility of tactics. But with that, the problem became even more unsolvable. Chu Yunxiu was this team's captain; Windy Rain was this team's core character. If she didn't play on the main roster, was Misty Rain planning to start over from zero?

Ye Xiu combed through Misty Rain's situation in his mind, and he discovered that this really was a frightening problem with no clear solution. No wonder Chu Yunxiu was so helpless.

“Then what do you plan to do?” Su Mucheng suddenly asked. She hadn’t said anything since entering the coffeeshop, but she’d thought of everything that needed to be thought of.

“I don’t know...” Chu Yunxiu’s gaze was somewhat empty. This season, she had truly felt rather lost and confused. The heads of the club had ordered that the Shu sisters be placed in the main roster, but Misty Rain’s core wasn’t suited for the sudden addition of two Sharpshooters.

But no one talked reason with her. The club simply wanted all of these players on the field at once. Windy Rain, Dark Forest, Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack, all four characters had to be there.

Ye Xiu had proposed the hypothetical of either Chu Yunxiu or Li Hua sacrificing themselves, but in reality, even that wasn’t possible! Misty Rain was greedy; they wanted not only the beautiful sisters, but their core partnership as well. They demanded that this irrational roster win results. Misty Rain had already drifted unsteadily through half a season, but the upper management still refused to change. In their view, Misty Rain just needed to push a little more to get results. The players needed to work just a little harder, the strategies needed to mature just a little more, and then they would begin winning matches beautifully.

While they treated this as an obvious fact, they overlooked the reality.

While Misty Rain’s players were working hard, the players of all the other teams were working just as hard.

While Misty Rain’s strategies were maturing, the operations of the other teams were only growing smoother and smoother.

And Misty Rain’s class composition gave them a natural handicap that they could never overcome.

A Misty Rain like this could not win.

Chu Yunxiu had racked her brains for half a season, but in the end, this was all that Misty Rain could accomplish. What else could she feel, beside frustration and bitterness?

“If you can’t make adjustments, then you can only try even bolder things!” Ye Xiu

suddenly said.

“Say it.” Chu Yunxiu looked at him.

But Ye Xiu only said two words: “Wind Howl.”

“So that’s how it is?” Chu Yunxiu looked not at Ye Xiu, but at the ceiling.

“You’ve already noticed it, haven’t you? Misty Rain could possibly emulate Wind Howl’s playstyle,” said Ye Xiu.

“It’s a desperate playstyle,” said Chu Yunxiu.

“Do you all have any other choice? If you don’t want to give up right here.”

Chu Yunxiu was silent.

Anyone could use a strategy. The question was whether or not it was suitable. Misty Rain was traditionally viewed as soft, so much so that it was basically considered part of their style. To have such a soft team try and emulate Wind Howl’s ferocious and desperate style, it clearly wasn’t a very suitable choice. This was a choice made when there were no other options, a choice to beg for victory in the midst of defeat. Even Wind Howl themselves wouldn’t have gone to such extremes if their performance hadn’t been so unstable. A fight without a healer was just too risky.

The three fell into silence once again. Chu Yunxiu rested one arm on the table. Her other hand held a small spoon to stir the coffee in front of her. She stirred it for a very long time, but in the end, didn’t take a sip.

“Let’s go, let’s head back.” She suddenly stood up.

“You’re leaving like that?” Both Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were surprised at her suddenness.

“I still have two episodes of my TV drama to watch,” Chu Yunxiu said.

“This late?” Ye Xiu looked at the time.

“You think I’m watching it on TV?” Chu Yunxiu scoffed.

“Alright, then!” Ye Xiu said helplessly, as he and Su Mucheng also stood up to leave.

Night had already fallen. There were no streetlamps around this out-of-the-way coffee shop to which Chu Yunxiu had brought the two of them. Under the starlight, her blurred silhouette walked at the very front. Misty Rain’s troubles were both internal and external, but as the team’s captain, Chu Yunxiu could only quietly carry this burden. On this point, she needed to be even tougher and more resilient than too many of her fellow male pro players. Misty Rain was in a disastrous situation, the outside world all criticized their strategies, the club was unwilling to change. But even in this situation, she had never said anything. She only continued to try and think of solutions, think about how she could use this unreasonable roster to earn results with which people could be satisfied.

“Alright, I’m going this way. What about your hotel, where is it?” At the intersection, Chu Yunxiu stopped and asked them.

“That way.” Su Mucheng pointed.

“Okay! When you get back, let’s chat online.” Chu Yunxiu walked back and hugged Su Mucheng.

“Keep your chin up,” Su Mucheng said. In reality, they hadn’t really talked about much this night. Everything that Ye Xiu said, Chu Yunxiu had understood long ago. Perhaps she only wanted to lay bare her emotions to her girlfriend; perhaps she wished to draw from this the courage and faith she needed to continue.

In any case...

“I will,” Chu Yunxiu said softly. She turned, waved her hand, and disappeared into the distance.

Soon, Round 32 was upon them. That night, Misty Rain presented a shocking roster to everyone who believed they were already done for the season.

Six attackers. No healer.

Chapter 1349

Team

The current round was Misty Rain's home game against Team Void. In the 1v1 matches, Misty Rain won one individual round and the group arena afterwards, gaining a lead of 3 to 2. Then, when their formation for the team competition appeared onscreen afterwards, the entire stadium erupted.

Team Wind Howl had created an all DPS formation, but they were smart about it, arranging for their healer to appear in the starting lineup like any normal team. As for if they'd switch their healer out for an all DPS formation, that was something their opponents had to contemplate. They might do a man-to-man offense, but they might do a normal one healer four DPS formation.

However, Misty Rain's formation didn't even have a healer in it. This was something that hadn't happened in the Alliance for who knows how many years, but now it had appeared with Misty Rain, a team which was often considered rather soft.

Were they cutting off all chance of backing down?

Everyone could feel their determination with this lineup.

"How fierce..." Team Void's captain, Li Xuan, looked over at Misty Rain, where Chu Yunxiu was telling the players of Misty Rain something. This captain, the only female captain in all twenty teams in the Alliance, might truly not have as much hot-blooded passion that was typical of male players, but her dedication to her team didn't lose to anyone. "But is Misty Rain's formation really suited to this playstyle?" Wu Yuce looked up at the player lineup on the big screen.

Chu Yunxiu and the Shu sisters, one Elementalist and two Sharpshooters, these three ranged fighters had no problem with DPS, but they lacked CC. Melee classes, even if they didn't have any control skills, usually had an easier time restricting an opponent's actions. Could Misty Rain use three ranged fighters to completely pin their opponents?

"Don't let your guard down," Li Xuan said. Misty Rain wouldn't neglect to consider such simple problems. If they still dared to use such a formation, then there must be a

reason. After all, didn't Happy get crushed by Misty Rain's sudden switch in tactics, despite having a home game advantage? Perhaps Misty Rain was now preparing to use a different strategy every round and hoping to win through catching their opponent's off-guard.

"It's time." After the referee approached to call them over, the players of the two teams entered the stage.

For Void, their starting lineup was comprised of Li Xuan and Wu Yuce's Ghost Duo, Li Xun's Assassin, Ge Caijie's exorcist, Tang Lisheng's Paladin and their sixth player was Ge Zhaolan's Spitfire.

How would Void's typical team arrangement face off against Misty Rain's extreme?

Currently, Misty Rain's fans were extremely anxious. Thought they were 32 points away from the current eighth team, but what if they really did achieve a miracle?

Last round, Misty Rain had crushed Happy with their sudden and drastic change in playstyle and rhythm. This round, they had made significant adjustments too, so maybe they would claim victory again? If and only if they continued like that, would their opponents' mistakes be of use. Perhaps the conditions of the top eight teams would suddenly slide, allowing Misty Rain into the playoffs?

You have to win... All of the audience members in the stadium were all thinking of the same thing, even those players who had given up on their team this season felt the embers of passion flicker to life.

Just maybe, there was still hope?

They hadn't seen a victory, but they saw Misty Rain's attitude. This attitude reignited their hope.

The team competition between a Misty Rain with a six DPS formation and Void begun! Unfortunately, this wasn't the match that had been chosen to be live broadcasted on television, so there was no way of drawing everyone's immediate attention. The match broadcasted this round was also much anticipated. At Tiny Herb's home game against Thunderclap, the two sides had reached the team competition.

In the 1v1 matches, Tiny Herb had claimed 4 points and Thunderclap only 1. It was a good lead and should've given them a huge morale boost, but when the opponent was

Thunderclap, then a lead in the 1v1 matches didn't mean much for a morale advantage. Thunderclap had always relied on their performance in team competitions to achieve such heights, after all.

In the current round, they were playing their away game against Tiny Herb. How would their team competition end?

Oh... After several rounds of exchanges, Team Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi understood what was happening.

So everyone has started to focus on me? It was probably because the match against Happy had given everyone too clear of a message.

If you defeated Wang Jiexi, then you've defeated Tiny Herb. That's probably what everyone believed! So, was that Thunderclap's current plan as well?

Divide, encircle, reserve Box-1.

Wang Jiexi had noticed Thunderclap's strategic intentions, but what should he do? Wang Jiexi gazed at the team members at his side. Under his leadership, it was true that Tiny Herb had obtained two championships, but he couldn't be their pillar forever. Ultimately, he would retire, and the team would have to depend on themselves. Be a role model instead of a crutch, huh?

Wang Jiexi recalled Ye Xiu's words. In the past, he really hadn't considered that much, simply carrying Tiny Herb on his shoulders unthinkingly. Perhaps, it was precisely because of their previous successes that the team had developed such a strong dependence on him.

However, he would eventually be incapable of bearing such a weight, so they had to find a way to break away from this dependence. Gao Yingjie, Gao Yingjie had grown up under his careful attention and protection. The other had gained confidence, but it seemed that he had yet to gather the courage necessary to truly bear the weight of Tiny Herb.

They had to grow under a trying situation! Those who overcome adversity would gain more courage, and their confidence would be fortified. He couldn't continue to shoulder all their difficulties; he had to leave some for them to overcome on their own.

Yes, just let them deal with it themselves!

Wang Jiexi made this decision, and Vaccaria fell into Thunderclap's attempt at divide and encircle.

Perhaps he had the ability, the chance to throw off this attempt at dividing them, but this time, he decided to try and brute force his way out of the encirclement and destroy it. Of these two choices, there wasn't one that was particularly better or worse. Wang Jiexi's choice had always been to deal with it himself if he could, though. But now, he had chosen the latter, depending on the power of the entire team to destroy Thunderclap's strategic arrangements.

Would it work?

Wang Jiexi didn't know, but this was a trial, a trial for all the players of Tiny Herb.

Happy had added more chess pieces to hone for the playoffs, Tyranny's veterans were adjusting their pacing and condition in preparation, and as for Tiny Herb? Tiny Herb had to prepare for the playoffs, and even the future beyond them. They had to change their ways, completely. "Ah... Tiny Herb's been divided by Thunderclap!" the broadcast commentator Pan Lin cried out in surprise.

"Yeah..." Li Yibo gave a very simple reply. He had a feeling that the reason Thunderclap's strategy was executed so successfully was because of Wang Jiexi's choices. If it were the Wang Jiexi of the past, it definitely wouldn't have been so easy. Perhaps, he would've once even managed to crush Thunderclap's attempt at dividing them with a peak in performance. Yet this time, it felt like he was going with their plan and letting it succeed. What for? To push Tiny Herb as a team? Was it because he didn't want what happened with Happy to repeat?

No one knew about the words Ye Xiu and Wang Jiexi exchanged post-match, so Li Yibo felt like there was a barrier, preventing him from truly understanding. He had long since developed caution and didn't dare make a hasty judgement. He needed to continue observing. He thought to the last round where Tiny Herb faced off against Hundred Blossoms and lost their away game 4 to 6. Since that match wasn't broadcasted on tv, Li Yibo simply checked the post-match report, not bothering to rewatch the match.

Did any specifics happen with Tiny Herb in that match?

Li Yibo didn't know. After Tiny Herb had lost to Happy, they had fought another four

matches. Did they make any adjustments? Li Yibo didn't know. Since they hadn't broadcasted any of the four matches, the attention he paid to Tiny Herb had fallen to such lows.

He wasn't like this before...

Even if he didn't watch all of the matches, he would at least follow the matches of the powerhouses. Not watching four rounds of matches of a powerhouse like Tiny Herb is something he wouldn't have even been able to imagine.

Why did it end up like this? Was it because now that Glory was growing in popularity, the number of reports by the media and commentaries also grew in number, making it easier to obtain large amounts of information, so he got lazy?

If he continued like this, then what was the point of his presence?

Never able to see deeper into the match, getting his face slapped all the time, was it fun?

No, not at all! The stockpile of Glory knowledge he had was running out. He had to keep learning, keep up with the pace at which Glory was developing!

The match was still continuing and Li Yibo once again admonished himself for not daring to express his own opinion.

"Ah, Vaccaria's been surrounded; Thunderclap has focused fire. They're trying to one wave rush him! They're keeping Tiny Herb's healer under careful control. That's right, their goal is to get rid of Tiny Herb's captain, Wang Jiexi first," Pan Lin explained excitedly.

"Tiny Herb's other members have reacted quickly, coming to Vaccaria's aid! Can they break through? Thunderclap will probably continue trying to take down Wang Jiexi first! In the match between Happy and Tiny Herb, Team Happy had sacrificed two characters to kill Vaccaria."

"Huh?! They've doubled back, switched targets... Thunderclap has adjusted their offensive, this... They've gone back and surrounded the rest of Tiny Herb's players. Vaccaria has been thrown to one side..."

"This... is isolation! Thunderclap has isolated Wang Jiexi! How to say this... This is

probably a reverse of Happy's strategy. Thunderclap may have realized that they didn't have the power to finish off Vaccaria quickly, or they thought they might not be able to assure their final victory after the sacrifices needed to get rid of Vaccaria. Thus, in the end, their strategy was isolation! Vaccaria is still on the field, but he's been cut off from the rest of Tiny Herb. Thunderclap has gone to fight a Tiny Herb without Wang Jiexi, while Wang Jiexi is actually still on the field, right? Coach Li?" Pan Lin gave commentary after commentary and suddenly realized, didn't it seem a little too quiet over here?

Chapter 1350

The Battle Never Ends

Li Yibo didn't speak because he felt like he had been enlightened. From not daring to be certain of Wang Jiexi's intentions, to Thunderclap's changing strategy. If dividing Tiny Herb up and ganging up on Vaccaria was something within his expectations, the double back and isolation afterwards was completely unexpected for him.

Brilliance, brilliance that he couldn't predict at all. His own skill really had fallen behind. He had once been a member of a championship team, and now he had fallen this low? His minds drifted to Team Tyranny; his once teammates, his once captain, who were still fighting on the frontlines. Every time people thought "that's enough, it's time he retires", he would reply resolutely: next year.

Next year next year next year.

It had been six years since Li Yibo's retirement. Li Yibo was a little older than him, but back then, had he really reached the point where he had no choice but to retire? No... it wasn't like that. It was only because that year, they had won the championships, so Li Yibo, who wasn't all that young anymore, decided that it would be the optimal time to retire.

This was called knowing when enough was enough. Li Yibo had always thought his decision wise, yet now, he was beginning to question himself. Was his decision made because he lacked a certain quality? Why had Han Wenqing, who had also gained one championship, still fighting for another with all his might? Why was Wang Jiexi, who had gained two championships, still suppressing his preferred playstyle for the good of Tiny Herb? He had fallen.

Tiny Herb's healer had shockingly become the first casualty in this battle. After all that, Thunderclap's actual primary goal was the most typical 'kill the healer first'. In this, how many strategic maneuvers and details had helped them secure their success? Li Yibo felt his head spin. He really was... absolute trash.

Losing the healer was a problem for any team. Perhaps it was because Thunderclap had let their guard down for a moment, relieved at being able to get rid of the healer,

but Tiny Herb had managed a powerful wave of counterattacks then. It was good that Thunderclap had managed to steady their footing. They didn't rush to end this, instead slowly pulling the battle into one of positional warfare and utilizing their healer advantage to its fullest. In the end, Thunderclap won, overturning Tiny Herb 6 to 4, managing to defeat Tiny Herb both in their home and away games this season with 6 to 4. They generally fell behind on the one on one matches, proving that the strength of their individual players weren't the best, but when they acted as a team, they were a force that didn't lose to any other team in the alliance.

This was no longer just about their tactics. Thunderclap's players were the pinnacle of the alliance in terms of their tactical execution and their teamwork and cooperation.

"Thunderclap wins, in their away game too. Spectacular, especially in the team competition!" Commentator Pan Lin cheered.

"Yes. However, while Thunderclap might have spectacular results in the team competitions, they've never entered the top four in the rankings. Their performance in the 1v1 rounds are rather worrying. With the current playoffs format, falling too behind in the 1v1 rounds will place huge pressure on their team competition!" Li Yibo considered aloud. According to the playoffs format, the five person group arena and the team competition would be calculated by headcount. If Thunderclap lost too many points in the group arena, then they'd be playing under much more pressure and more restrictions in the team competition. This would certainly impact the flexibility of their tactics.

"You're right, but this problem isn't so easy to solve," Pan Lin said, finding it unfortunate.

"Thunderclap might really need one or two players with strong individual strength to help them!" Li Yibo lamented.

"Indeed." Pan Lin nodded in agreement. "Now, this match between Tiny Herb and Thunderclap has come to an end. A few other matches have also finished. We still have some time left, so let's take a look at the results of the other matches."

"Ah!" Just as Pan Lin finished speaking, he cried out in surprise after receiving the results from the other matches.

"In the match between Misty Rain and Void, Misty Rain didn't have a healer!" Pan Lin

exclaimed.

“Oh? They’re copying Wind Howl’s playstyle,” Li Yibo said.

“No, they... none of the six players in their team for their competition were healers,” Pan Lin said.

“And the results?” Li Yibo questioned.

“Void won...” Pan Lin’s tone held a hint of disappointment. It wasn’t that he was taking sides, but seeing Misty Rain dedicate themselves like this, it was natural for people to be anticipatory for what they could achieve. Unfortunately, Wind Howl had been successful, but Misty Rain still lost.

“To be honest, Misty Rain’s lineup isn’t very suited to this sort of playstyle...” Li Yibo also lamented, seeing Misty Rain’s roster. This problem was something that many people had noticed, but how many were there who knew of how helpless Misty Rain truly was right now?

“Seven to three, Void won against Misty Rain. It seems like this is it for Misty Rain this season...” In the live broadcast, Pan Lin finally dared to say this. Void was the team who stood in front of Misty Rain in the rankings, and now that they had defeated Misty Rain in a direct confrontation, it was naturally a huge blow to Misty Rain. With only six rounds left to the regular season, this really was it for Misty Rain. “Amongst the other matches that have ended, 301 Degrees has swept a 10 to 0 against Bright Green, Samsara defeated Parade 9 to 1, Tyranny crushed Radiant 9 to 1 and Happy won against Conquering Clouds 8 to 2,” Pan Lin rapidly announced the results of the finished matches.

“Oh? How did Happy lose those two points?” Li Yibo asked. “It... was the individual competition...” Pan Lin scanned the report on the match, “Luo Ji and Wei Chen each lost a round.”

“Happy’s two players...” Li Yibo really did want to comment on them, but he once again lost his confidence. They were Happy’s players after all... No matter who it was, if they were Happy’s, then he felt like he had no grasp over them.

This really wasn’t a good feeling at all... Li Yibo began to worry again. He imagined his current self, standing on the battlefield. What would that be like? He wouldn’t be able to figure out his opponent’s intentions, he’d hesitate in indecision, his heart would

constantly be in his throat. On the battlefield, he'd lose like that, and right now as a commentator, his current self kept getting slapped in the face to the point where he was hesitant to speak.

"Ah! Another match's results have come out!" Pan Lin really was his savior this time, not giving Li Yibo the chance to continue his commentary on those two players and instead running off to announce the news.

"Wind Howl... swept Hundred Blossoms 10 to 0 in their home game!" Pan Lin's announcement was full of surprise, after all, it was no easy task to get a 10 to 0 against Hundred Blossoms. Last round, Hundred Blossoms had even defeated Tiny Herb. Yet this powerful team had been obliterated by Wind Howl. Wind Howl had powerful individual strength, and now they seemed to have found something that works for the team competitions, too, like they had suddenly all achieved enlightenment.

"301 Degrees and Wind Howl are neck and neck!" Pan Lin exclaimed with a smile, "After this round, their scores are still the same!"

"But the other teams' scores have changed!" Li Yibo said.

Pan Lin paused for a moment and then checked the rankings. After each getting a perfect victory of 10 to 0, especially since Wind Howl's opponent had been Hundred Blossoms, 301 Degrees and Wind Howl were now both in the top eight. Instead, Team Hundred Blossoms had fallen to ninth with 199 points, 5 points away from the top eight.

"If I recall correctly, Hundred Blossom's following match schedule won't be easy on them," Li Yibo noted.

"That's right." Pan Lin had already brought out the match schedule. "Team Hundred Blossom's next six opponents are Misty Rain, Void, Royal Style, Thunderclap, Tyranny and Samsara..."

"It seems like... Team Hundred Blossoms is really in need of some luck!" Li Yibo said.

"I didn't expect for such a change at a time like now. Looks like you really can't relax until the very last moment," Pan Lin said.

"Indeed!"

“Alright, our broadcast ends here. We’ll see you all again next time,” Pan Lin announced the ending of the broadcast. Round 32’s matches all soon came to an end. The uneventful rankings had experienced a whirlwind of change after this round, especially in the top ten. Blue Rain had risen to third, Tiny Herb fell to fourth, Happy rose to fifth, Thunderclap fell to sixth, Wind Howl and 301 Degrees had risen to seventh and eighth respectively, while Hundred Blossoms had fell by a full two places and out of the playoffs cut-off.

As for numbers ten to twelve after them, the three teams hadn’t budged. However, after Royal Style, Misty Rain had also more or less given up on the playoffs.

“In the end, we still lost...”

The current round was still Misty Rain’s home game. Chu Yunxiu, after the match, sat on the player bench, gazing at the score on the big screen. Seeing the audience leaving, she heard a lot of sighs and cursing from them. She saw her teammates sit next to her, silent.

“You guys head out first, I’m going to sit for a while,” Chu Yunxiu said.

“It’s almost time for the press conference,” Li Hua came over to remind her.

“How about you take charge for it? I want to rest a bit,” Chu Yunxiu replied.

After a match that crushed their last hopes for the season, the captain wasn’t going to attend the press conference. This clearly wasn’t very appropriate. However, after a moment of hesitation, Li Hua still nodded. “Alright.” Her teammates left one after the other and some of them looked back at Chu Yunxiu, worried. Chu Yunxiu ignored it, continuing to stare at the score on the big screen. The audience behind her were exiting the stadium in an orderly fashion, sighs and reproachful comments towards Misty Rain audible amidst the clamor.

How exhausting...

Chu Yunxiu really wanted to just lie down on this player bench.

Everyone said that she was too soft, and in turn caused the team to become soft. Perhaps that was true. She wasn’t strong enough, and it was easy for her to feel fatigued. Wouldn’t it be great if she wasn’t captain? Chu Yunxiu thought to herself, absentminded.

With Round 32, yet another team bid the season an early goodbye. What was to be of Misty Rain's future? Perhaps people would wonder, but this wasn't the focus right now. After Round 32, the top eight had gone through a whirlwind of change and Hundred Blossoms had been squeezed out of the playoffs by 301 Degrees and Wind Howl. It seemed like the fight this season was far from over. From number 5 to 9, there was only a 13 point difference. It wasn't just 301 Degrees, Wind Howl and Hundred Blossoms fighting. If Happy and Thunderclap slipped up, they might get left behind, too.



PDF by: traitorAZEN