

Avatar 1021

Chapter 1021: Overturning the Sky

Dragon Tooth looked like a normal attack. For a low-level skill like Dragon Tooth, if only the damage was considered, the powerful One Autumn Leaf wouldn't even bother to block it. However, the value of Dragon Tooth didn't lie in the damage, but rather the stun effect that it carried. Dragon Tooth could be considered the most used skill among Battle Mages. It had the greatest coverage. It could be used to start a combo, and in theory, could be used as a follow up for any skill.

In theory.....

Facing One Autumn Leaf, turning theory into reality wasn't easy.

Because One Autumn Leaf was too strong. Due to the character's resistances, the stun from Dragon Tooth would be significantly reduced, leading to many follow-ups with Dragon Tooth being unviable against One Autumn Leaf. This was why God-level characters were fearsome. It wasn't as simple as having higher defense and attack. Strong resistances greatly limited the opponent's options. These limitations weren't just the result of piling stats on a character. The R&D teams would adjust the character's stats depending on the player's tendencies. The character's stats would try to make up for the player's weaknesses, as well as support the player's strengths.

This was the problem that Ye Xiu saw with Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf.

One Autumn Leaf's switched equipment was still very good, but the synergy between the character and player wasn't as perfect. Strictly speaking, this tiny imperfection couldn't be considered a hole, but Ye Xiu couldn't be any more familiar with Battle Mage stats and One Autumn Leaf's original stats. Ye Xiu analyzed it bit by bit and turned it into a hole.

Eating a Dragon Tooth mid-jump backwards?

In the eyes of the spectators, so what?

With One Autumn Leaf's stats, the stun effect would disappear in a flash. One Autumn Leaf happened to be jumping backwards too. There wasn't any opportunity for Lord Grim to make any follow-ups after the stun. That jump looked like a beautiful and successful dodge.

That's what everyone thought. No one thought that this stun effect wasn't the important point. It was the attack itself that was important. Because before this, Sun Xiang had been stunned, which allowed the Dragon Tooth to hit.

The Sky Strike changing directions twice tore at the slight imperfection in the synergy between Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf. If this had been the original One Autumn Leaf, Sun Xiang would have been able to block it.

But now, he couldn't dodge or block it. This was the scariest part about this attack.

Sun Xiang was at a loss as One Autumn Leaf landed on the ground. Lord Grim didn't chase after him, but the spear in Lord Grim's hands did. Magic undulations coiled around the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella into a humongous dragon.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky!

The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's spear form actually transformed into a high-level skill.

Even though this skill could only be at the lowest rank one, this was already an incredibly powerful skill considering Lord Grim's skill set.

One Autumn Leaf hastily rolled to the side. From those movements, it seemed as if Sun Xiang was panicking.

Ye Xiu hadn't hoped for this attack to hit. After Rising Dragon Soars the Sky, he had hidden a follow-up attack. But this follow-up attack wasn't actually needed.

This guy... dodged too far, no?

Sun Xiang's movements had been too excessive. It was outside of Ye Xiu's expectations. Moreover, Sun Xiang didn't counter attack as soon as the first clear opportunity appeared. It seemed like he was still thinking about that previous Dragon Tooth.

Has his focus been disrupted?

That would be a pleasant surprise.

Ye Xiu hadn't expected Sun Xiang's mental state to tilt after that attack. If a player wasn't focused, the player's reaction speed and playing would slow down. At the highest levels of play, this was enough to be fatal.

Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into a gun form. Three Anti-Tank Missiles shot towards One Autumn Leaf.

If this was the usual Sun Xiang in peak condition, he would have just taken these attacks and charged through them, but at this moment, Sun Xiang's reaction speed was clearly a lot slower. By the time he started moving, the missiles had already reached his face. He could only make a roll and dodge these missiles in a crude manner.

Lord Grim quickly approached. Sky Strike!

Sun Xiang tensed up. He still didn't understand what had happened previously, but he was certain that it wasn't a coincidence. Ye Xiu had definitely done it intentionally. Changing the arc of Sky Strike twice was to allow the following Dragon Tooth to hit. Even though there weren't really any follow up after that Dragon Tooth, that was just one time. What about next time?

Sun Xiang didn't dare to be negligent. When the Sky Strike arrived, he chose to dodge it.

Ye Xiu smirked. Sun Xiang gave up on blocking with an attack and instead chose to dodge. For Sun Xiang, that was equivalent to giving up on what he was best at.

Blocking with an attack fit Sun Xiang's personality best. It was also what was easiest for him. He was still very good at dodging, but it wasn't what he liked to do. If he had a choice, Sun Xiang would very rarely choose to dodge. But now, he felt compelled to choose what he didn't like to do.

That was easier than I thought!

Ye Xiu thought to himself and had Lord Grim continued chasing. It was just a Sky Strike. It wasn't enough for him to gain the upper hand. Ye Xiu had many more things for Sun Xiang to enjoy, all of which happened after Lord Grim's health dropped to 10%.

Sun Xiang was in a daze.

Ye Xiu's attacks weren't sharp, but they were very precise. Every attack targeted a vital point. He hit where it hurt.

Sun Xian felt uncomfortable. In his three years as a pro player, he had never felt so uncomfortable before.

It wasn't like he had never fought against Ye Xiu before. When he had been part of Team Conquering Clouds, he had fought against Team Excellent Era three times. And in two of those, Sun Xiang and Ye Xiu had faced each other in the individual competition.

Even though he lost both times, Ye Xiu had been using the Battle God One Autumn Leaf. On the other hand, Sun Xiang was using a so-so pro character from a mid to low tier team.

Although he lost, the fights had been very close. Sun Xiang had had a good chance of winning.

If he, too, had a character like One Autumn Leaf, perhaps the results would have been different!

That was what many people said after those matches. That season, Sun Xiang had been a spectacular rookie. Using a normal character, he challenged Ye Qiu and the Battle God One Autumn Leaf. Losing by only a sliver of health, even in defeat, Sun Xiang basked in glory.

If I had One Autumn Leaf, I definitely would have won.

It wasn't just others who thought that. Sun Xiang thought that as well.

Later on, he came to possess of One Autumn Leaf. Because of him, Ye Xiu was forced to leave the team and announce his retirement. This made Sun Xiang truly feel like the winner. He looked forward to the future awaiting him.

And then under his lead, Excellent Era was like a wild horse out of control and was relegated.....

This was an embarrassment. It hadn't been easy for Sun Xiang to accept.

He wanted to prove himself. But the Challenger League? Lead Excellent Era back into the Alliance through the Challenger League? How could that be considered proof? For Excellent Era, this should be as easy as eating food. What's more, after getting relegated, they even got Xiao Shiqin to come over.

It looked like he could only endure for this upcoming year.

That was what Sun Xiang originally thought. However, then there were rumors of Ye Xiu forming his own team and joining the Challenger League.

This piece of news was like a stimulant for Sun Xiang.

After switching ace players, Team Excellent Era's placings improved slightly before directly falling into relegations. The controversy over Sun Xiang was quite big. Comparing him to the former captain Ye Qiu was very normal.

The club firmly stood by his side the entire time, but in reality? Sun Xiang needed to prove himself.

The Challenger League wasn't enough for him to prove himself. Sun Xiang could only impatiently wait for the next year, so he could shut up those who said he was worse than Ye Qiu. Who would have thought that an opportunity would arrive in the Challenger League? This instantly made the Challenger League interesting. For him, this was a stage meant for the two of them. How well would Team Happy perform? How would he lead Team Excellent Era? The finale would only happen when the two sides clashed. It was a finale that he and the media would look forward to.

That year, he lost because his character wasn't as good as One Autumn Leaf. And now, he possessed One Autumn Leaf. He would let Ye Xiu witness just how powerful his Battle God was.

At this moment, Sun Xiang didn't hurry to beat Ye Xiu. He was like a cat playing with his food, showing off his superiority. Just winning this match wasn't enough. He needed everyone to see that beating Ye Xiu was a trivial matter to him.

But now..... Why was it like this?

"Another attack hit. This was a Sword Slash chasing after One Autumn Leaf. It was a very accurate read. What's going on? We know that going berserk at 10% health was just a joke, but why did it actually happen when Lord Grim's health reached 10%? Even though Lord Grim didn't follow through with any combos, it was obvious who had the upper hand. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf seems to be struggling. What's going on?" The commentator, Pan Lin, shouted, but he didn't get a response like he had anticipated. He turned to look at his casting partner. Li Yibo was puzzled. He clearly wasn't prepared for something like this to happen. He had been singing Sun Xiang high praises the entire time, saying how Sun Xiang was playing well and suppressing Ye Xiu.

How did Ye Xiu suddenly overturn the sky in the blink of an eye? Moreover, why was the advantage so obvious?

What's going on? You're asking me?! I'm the one who wants to find someone to ask! Today's match was making him feel very depressed.

Chapter 1022: Rolling Meat

Lord Grim, who only had 10% health remaining, clearly held the upper hand. A professional commentator wasn't needed to see that. Lord Grim's 10% health seemed to be immovable as if he had become invincible. On the other hand, One Autumn Leaf was like an open faucet, gushing blood. Even a

Berserker wouldn't trade their health like this. This was irrefutable proof that One Autumn Leaf was at the disadvantage.

One Autumn Leaf still had half of his health left. In the previous exchanges, Sun Xiang had been constantly giving Lord Grim heavy injuries. He had felt the thrill of a predator playing with its food. He had felt like the fight was under his complete control. Ye Xiu seemed to be struggling, trying to hang onto his life. It's useless. Your time is already over.....

Sun Xiang had been preparing to say these words the moment he won, but at this moment, the situation had flipped. No, to be more accurate, who had the upper hand was even more clear now. Before, Sun Xiang could feel his opponent's struggle, but now? Sun Xiang couldn't even struggle. Every attack from Lord Grim would make his head go blank as he failed to come up with any sort of counterplay.

Where did I go wrong?

Sun Xiang was feeling fretful. He watched as his health slowly bled away. He originally had fifty percent of his health left. In the blink of an eye, it turned to thirty percent. When his health reached twenty percent, he thought to himself: what had he done so far? He couldn't even struggle. He had been waiting for this opportunity to come for so long and this was going to be the outcome?

In this match, the wide disparity between both sides could be easily seen.

He was young and brimming with talent. He was destined to leave his mark on the Glory Alliance in the near future. On the other hand, his opponent had been in retirement for a year. His most resplendent achievements had been made six years ago.

He possessed the Battle God One Autumn Leaf. If the Battle God claimed second, no character would dare to claim first. On the other hand, his opponent had only just started leveling his character when the tenth server opened. It was a small character with a name that even begged to be laughed at. (TL: A more accurate translation for Lord Grim would be Please Don't Laugh)

He had gone into the fight at full health, while his opponent had just finished an intense match and only had half of his health left. Even though Lord Grim was given time to recover, it was only until 70% health. The two sides hadn't started from the same line.

For this match, let alone losing, Sun Xiang wouldn't even accept an even match.

But now, he seemed to be walking towards the abyss of defeat with every step he took, while Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was behind him, pushing him closer towards that abyss.

Lose like this?

No!

Sun Xiang's spirit suddenly rose as he saw Lord Grim slash towards his head. He immediately had One Autumn Leaf scrunch up into a ball and roll to the side. He wasn't out of Lord Grim's attack range. It could be said that this dodge wasn't successful. It was a roll that no skilled player would have done.

But Sun Xiang did it. Not waiting for the commentators to note this mistake, One Autumn Leaf dodged the blade, but didn't get up and instead continued to roll to the side.

It was too ugly to look at. Along with Lord Grim's swing and the rolling One Autumn Leaf, it made the viewers think of the phrase: rolling meat**.

This wasn't a good phrase. To make people think of this phrase signified just how unsightly One Autumn Leaf looked right now. The character that was known as the great Battle God and always viewed as Glory's number one character, it could actually move in such a vile manner?

The crowd instantly fell into silence. Excellent Era's fans had trouble responding. As for Excellent Era's players? Tao Xuan was embarrassed. He even glanced to his left and right like a little thief, as if he didn't want others to see One Autumn Leaf's unsightly appearance.

Unfortunately, his hopes wouldn't come true. It wasn't just the crowd that saw this, but also the millions of people watching the broadcast.

The entire Glory world might have frozen at this moment. One Autumn Leaf actually rolled several times in a row to get away from Lord Grim's combo.

Would Ye Xiu be startled by this ugly move? Of course not.

No one knew better than him that, although One Autumn Leaf's several rolls looked very ugly, these rolls were truly effective. Sun Xiang managed to save himself from Lord Grim's combo with that.

The rhythm had been broken!

At this moment, the other side would most likely counter attack, and with Sun Xiang's personality, the counter attack would only be that much more impatient. Ye Xiu didn't dare to be negligent. He hastily had Lord Grim move back two steps to distance himself from his opponent. However, Ye Xiu discovered that One Autumn Leaf did the same thing.

Not only was Sun Xiang not in a hurry to counter attack, he had his character retreat to distance himself.

"This guy... focused again?" Ye Xiu was startled.

The two characters confronted each other. Neither side made any rash moves. One Autumn Leaf was at 20% health. Lord Grim was at 10% health.

One Autumn Leaf's advantage was obvious, but he looked to be on the losing side. Not rushing forward to attack in this type of situation wasn't Sun Xiang's style. This guy was the type to think of himself as invincible, even if he only had 1% of his health left and would charge forward proudly to fight with his opponent. But at this moment, he unexpectedly chose to retreat?

Normal players might not understand what this implied, but those who understood Sun Xiang's style would immediately notice this abnormality.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo quickly explained this abnormality to everyone.

Was this a talent about to go berserk? The two commentators concluded.

The two characters started to move. They didn't rush forward, but instead moved horizontally, slowly closing the distance between them.

Lord Grim had long-ranged attacks, but he didn't use them at this moment. Instead, he maintained practically the same rhythm as Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf.

"Both sides have begun to play more cautiously. Neither side plans on making any rash moves." Li Yibo said.

"This makes me think of when two masters confront each other in wuxia stories. Even though they're just standing still, neither side has any holes. Whoever moves first is the first to expose an opening." Pan Lin said.

"Wow, it really does feel like that." Li Yibo said.

"Then is Sun Xiang about to burst forth?" Pan Lin asked. He was clearly hoping for this to happen.

However, that wasn't what happened.

After the two sides carefully moved around, in the end, they started fighting again. Soon afterwards, Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf was suppressed again.

A talent about to go berserk?

What a joke! Pan Lin and Li Yibo once again felt like they had fallen into a trap.

"Sun Xiang doesn't seem to have any way out of the combo!" Pan Lin returned back to the previous topic. When the two sides fought a few minutes ago, that was pretty much all he said.

The match seemed to have gone back to the old road. Only Ye Xiu knew that that wasn't the case.

Before, he had been carefully probing out the level of synergy between Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf and then found small holes he could exploit. But now, it was the reverse. Sun Xiang had started testing what those problems were using Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

Previously, Sun Xiang's mind kept going blank. He wasn't focused, making it so he wasn't able to figure out where the problems lay. But this time, it was different. He was fully focused now. Sun Xiang was keenly inspecting where his problems were.

The holes that Ye Xiu had found were being patched up

One Autumn Leaf's health was still bleeding away. Excellent Era's fans watched on with worry, but Sun Xiang wasn't the same. The more he played, the calmer he became. He found the problems one by one.

These holes that Ye Xiu had uncovered couldn't help but make Sun Xiang somewhat fearful.

These were problems that he himself hadn't been aware of, yet Ye Xiu was actually able to find them? And everything had been figured out during the match?

He really is terrifying.....

This was the first time Sun Xiang felt fear. He had fought against Ye Xiu twice before. Even though he lost both times, the only thought he had was that he only lost by a little bit. If he was the one with One Autumn Leaf, then he would certainly have a crushing victory.

It was only now did he wake up from his delusion. One Autumn Leaf's title as Battle God hadn't come from just the Silver equipment on him. It was a character that had been raised step by step under Ye Xiu's control.

The title was granted to the character, but in reality, the title should be granted to the player. It was the player who brought glory to the character.

Sun Xiang finally understood just how terrifying the Battle God was.

However, this wasn't going to stop Sun Xiang's desire to win. His pride always told him that no matter how great the opponent was, he was better.

The holes were quickly repaired. As soon as he figured out the problems, he just needed to be more aware to eliminate them. The imperfect synergy between him and his character was still there, but that itself wasn't fatal. It just meant that it wasn't perfect.

Sun Xiang had actually been quite happy about this discovery. His imperfect form could beat Ye Xiu. Wasn't that even greater evidence of his skill?

The opportunity to counter attack was almost here! Sun Xiang looked at One Autumn Leaf's health. Ten percent. He had also locked onto this moment. On the other hand, Lord Grim's health hadn't gone down since then. It was pretty much at ten percent too.

Perfect. Everyone's on an equal playing field. A fair victory begins now!

When One Autumn Leaf's health dropped to ten percent, Sun Xiang finally sounded the horn to counterattack.

Chapter 1023: The Classic 0.03% Kill

Dragon Tooth!

Sun Xiang didn't do any theatrics. He used the simplest of initiations for Battle Mage combos.

After jumping backwards a little to avoid it, Lord Grim swung with a Sky Strike.

Sun Xiang immediately composed himself to deal with it. When Ye Xiu had managed to use this to create an opening, he had done so by changing Sky Strike's trajectory. So this time, Sun Xiang didn't bother to get One Autumn Leaf to block and instead sidestepped by three body units, swerving to Lord Grim's flank.

Lord Grim twisted, Sky Strike chasing after him. That was when One Autumn Leaf suddenly blocked it.

Could there be any more variations to Sky Strike?

No, the upwards stabbing of Sky Strike wasn't endless and limitless. If you kept stabbing up up up, then wouldn't you just end up throwing your weapon away?

One Autumn Leaf's three body unit sidestep had pulled this Sky Strike far enough so that it couldn't be modified any further. Even so, Sun Xiang didn't hold back from his habitual reaction: block.

This actually wasn't just Sun Xiang's personal habit and style. Battle Mages needed their attacks to hit in order to stockpile Chasers. Blocks were considered hits by the system, so they could also produce Chasers. Thus, all Battle Mages would block if possible.

The current Sun Xiang didn't deviate from this and neither did the past Ye Xiu.

So, Ye Xiu knew that while Sun Xiang had done a lot of dodging before, he would still choose to block when it came down to it. He couldn't just dodge instead of block to cover for his openings because if he did that with a Battle Mage, he would only be reducing his own strength.

Blocks were mostly defensive techniques for other classes, but for the Battle Mage, blocks were an offense in a defense. Then, when their opponent became too concerned about not letting the Battle Mage create Chasers and intentionally avoided the blocks, the true fatal power of the block was revealed: it had created chaos in the opponent's rhythm.

Thus, no Battle Mage would easily let go of blocks. For Sun Xiang to temporarily give up his habits and resort to dodging so often was an extremely rare and commendable effort. His pride wouldn't allow him change his style so completely. He had experienced the terror of fighting Ye Xiu, but he wouldn't cower because of it. He wanted Ye Xiu to experience his skill, too.

The block swept forth brazenly.

This Sky Strike had lost the effect and power it originally was meant to have, so Ye Xiu obviously wouldn't send it over and gift One Autumn Leaf with a Chaser. Sky Strike was cancelled and One Autumn Leaf's block hit air.

This created a great opening to take advantage of. The block of a Battle Mage would bring this sort of trouble to their opponent. Should you let him block or not?

Ye Xiu had chosen the latter, giving Sun Xiang a chance to mount an offensive.

A Falling Flower Palm was thrown out at Lord Grim.

Mounting an offense often necessitated a lot of low level skills, as they were fast to activate. As for powerful skills, if you didn't pave a road for them, you would already be late to the game by the time you unleashed them.

As for this quick Falling Flower Palm of One Autumn Leaf's, Ye Xiu didn't seem to have much of a choice but to have Lord Grim return with his own Falling Flower Palm.

The palms of the two characters hit, and released a magical pulse that swept up the dust and dirt around them. Lord Grim's figure skidded backwards. How could Lord Grim compete with One Autumn Leaf in priority for the same skill? This clash had still given One Autumn Leaf a Chaser. Battle Mages had a total of five Chasers, unleashed through one of five low level skills, Sky Strike, Dragon Tooth, Double Stab, Falling Flower Palm, and Circle Swing. Because of Chasers, Battle Mages relied on low level skills a lot.

Falling Flower Palm had ended with Lord Grim being pushed back. As for One Autumn Leaf? One Autumn Leaf had managed to gain a Fire Chaser, which was immediately sent out by Sun Xiang. A magical pulse like a flickering flame swirled around One Autumn Leaf's arms. This was the visual effect

from the strength buff that the Fire Chaser gave. As for that big fireball of a Chaser, it had already sped towards Lord Grim. Sun Xiang was about to prepare a follow up attack when something flashed in front of his eyes.

What was that?

Sun Xiang didn't have the time to think, subconsciously having One Autumn Leaf to dodge.

But it was too late!

That thing had come too fast and by the time Sun Xiang noticed it, it seemed like his Fire Chaser had cracked open as if something trying to worm its way through.

Lord Grim's attack used the Fire Chaser as cover. The finesse this required was unreal. Sun Xiang hadn't noticed it at first, only reacting when it had shot through the Fire Chaser, but by then it was already too late.

He was shot!

Lord Grim had sent out a bullet and One Autumn Leaf was immediately stunned when it hit.

This wasn't the small stun from a normal shot. That miniscule effect would do nothing against a powerful character like One Autumn Leaf.

This was a Stun Bullet, a low level skill of the Spirefire class and stun was its crucial effect.

Then, a blade flashed and cut the Fire Chaser in half before striking the stunned One Autumn Leaf with a Sword Draw.

In this exchange, it was clear that One Autumn Leaf had not benefited. The only gains he had was the Fire Chaser that was buffed his strength.

However, the one with the initiative was still Lord Grim. After the Sword Draw, the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella didn't change forms, already following up with a Collapsing Mountain.

One Autumn Leaf hastily dodged, jumping backwards, while stabbing forth with Evil Annihilation, hoping to pull Lord Grim into a Circle Swing.

Lord Grim's sword swerved. The Collapsing Mountain missed One Autumn Leaf entirely and struck Evil Annihilation instead.

One Autumn Leaf gained another Chaser, but who would be more clear on the gains and losses of these Chasers than Ye Xiu? He knew which Chasers he could afford to give and which he couldn't. He wasn't the kind of person who would be troubled by a Battle Mage's blocks because, unfortunately, he was the one who created this playstyle.

Giving One Autumn Leaf a Chaser had allowed Lord Grim to close in.

Sun Xiang was uncomfortable. He had thought he had the situation under control, but he never expected that it would spiral away from him again.

That was when Ye Xiu stopped using those openings and came at him head on with these attacks.

The careful preparation Sun Xiang had made to deal with Ye Xiu's tricks was for naught.

Of course, he wasn't afraid of this direct and straightforward brawl, and would even have an advantage due to his young age and stamina. Yet now, he had to keep his guard up against another possibility, where he might fall into a trap due to a subconscious action. So, he had to stay absolutely focused.

With Sun Xiang completely focused, it wouldn't be easy to distract him, but having to focus on so many aspects was definitely draining. It was good that Sun Xiang was young so he could endure.

Let's see who'll make it to the end!

Sun Xiang gritted his teeth, advancing and having One Autumn Leaf meet Lord Grim blow for blow, while also paying attention to the modifications each of Lord Grim's strikes could go through, determined to not fall into that real life stun again.

The overall situation resulted in a deadlock.

The health of both sides dropped, nine percent, seven percent, six percent...

Who would reach zero first?

No one could guess. In this moment, either side could be the victor. However, looking at the big picture, Ye Xiu had been at a disadvantage when the match began, so he had already won by being able to reach this point, fighting Sun Xiang.

Unfortunately, that wasn't how matches were judged. The true victor was the one who was left standing.

Who would it be?

Many people in the audience stood up, as if they wouldn't be able to see clearly otherwise. However, after they did that, the people sitting behind them really couldn't see. Some people began to argue and others just stood up as well, thus, the majority of the present audience had come to their feet to continue watching the match.

The Excellent Era fans had already forgotten to cheer. This crucial moment made them just as tense as the players on the field.

Curse Arrows!

That was when Lord Grim summoned several small black arrows with Curse Arrows while dodging One Autumn Leaf's attack, hoping to slow down One Autumn Leaf's momentum.

However, when victory was in grasp, Curse Arrows? That wouldn't be able to kill him, so there was no way he was letting this chance go!

One Autumn Leaf advanced in spite of the damage. Stronger characters held an advantage in situations like this. Often, they could afford to be more aggressive than other characters, because in situations where other characters couldn't hold on, they could.

Slide Kick!

Seeing One Autumn Leaf charge forth, Lord Grim didn't retreat and charged as well.

One Autumn Leaf jumped up, spear stabbing down at the Slide Kicking Lord Grim with a Circle Swing.

Lord Grim rolled to avoid it and knelt on one knee, swinging open the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and shooting furiously with Gatling Gun.

Sun Xiang was even more direct. One Autumn Leaf, falling from his jump, shook his spear and suddenly, a tumultuous magical pulse exploded out from Evil Annihilation. He had somehow managed to unleash a Rising Dragon Soars the Sky in the time it took for Lord Grim to roll!

Gatling Gun's bullets came in a flood, but compared to Rising Dragon Soars the Sky, who would die?

Sun Xiang smirked. Unspecialized was something no one had much experience dealing with. However, since it had popped up, and they knew there was a possibility of facing it, why wouldn't Excellent Era put effort into researching it?

The only thing Excellent Era lacked was the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. As for unspecialized accounts, they had began levelling several of them up after realizing they might meet Ye Xiu and Lord Grim in the Challenger League.

Excellent Era had spent no expense to deal with Ye Xiu. They had tried to research the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, but in the end they had gotten nowhere. However, if Excellent Era didn't look into the possibilities one could achieve with an unspecialized and such a weapon, then they didn't deserve to be called a pro team.

There was no contest in who would benefit in an exchange between Gatling Gun and Rising Dragon Soars the Sky. Ye Xiu obviously couldn't just let this exchange happen and hastily had Lord Grim dodge.

Want to escape? It's too late!!

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky's dragon head swerved towards Lord Grim.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky, Dragon Raises it's Head! The audience exploded into cheers. From their perspective, this was the deciding strike in the match.

However, it wasn't. Lord Grim's movements were extremely precise. He seemed to have calculated Rising Dragon Soars the Sky's pathing and, with a single step, was already behind the dragon's head.

That was when everyone saw that the dragon head, which had already swerved to the side twisted even further, almost in the completely opposite direction.

"Ah!!" Pan Lin screamed in excitement in the live broadcast, "Dragon Raises it's Head? No, this isn't it. This is no long Dragon Raises its Head, it's already a Dragon Looks Back!!" The new technique for Rising Dragon Soars the Sky had been christened by Pan Lin.

"Spectacular! This is probably a technical modification made possible after the level 75 update." Even Li Yibo, who was usually rather calm and tried to appear omniscient, couldn't hold back his excitement anymore.

"Rising Dragon Soars the Sky hits! This is a new technique, Dragon Looks Back! As expected of a team with the Battle God. They are a representation of the greatest skill level a Battle Mage can reach. In this match alone, we've witnessed two new Battle Mage techniques." Pan Lin yelled. He was about to announce victory, but then suddenly saw that, while Lord Grim had been hit by the Rising Dragon Soars the Sky, he hadn't died. He had managed to perform a Guard behind his back, managing to catch this attack.

However, the amount of damage Guard could reduce was limited and Rising Dragon Soars the Sky wasn't something it could neutralize. Lord Grim, a Guard at his back, was thrown forward by this attack, skidding all the way in front of One Autumn Leaf. However, his health wasn't completely gone. The broadcast immediately switched to a close up. 0.03 percent. Lord Grim's health had fallen to the point where they needed two digits after the decimal point to express it. This was probably an amount that One Autumn Leaf could destroy with a punch, even after throwing away Evil Annihilation.

Yet, the current One Autumn Leaf was still trapped in the ending lag of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky. No matter how amazing Sun Xiang's mechanics were, it was impossible for him to do anything right now.

Lord Grim had been pushed directly in front of Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf by One Autumn Leaf. He only had 0.03 percent of his health left, but he struck the true deciding blow.

The entire stadium had gone silent and the commentator Pan Lin gaped. In this moment, he couldn't think of anything to describe the scene before him.

Such a spectacular Rising Dragon Soars the Sky Dragon Looks Back didn't manage to kill the opponent, but instead pushed the opponent in front of himself and sent himself to death?

Pan Lin had originally thought out what he was going to say.

Sun Xiang, using a mutation of Rising Dragon Soars the Sky even more spectacular than the Dragon Raises its Head that Ye Xiu created, managed to defeat Ye Xiu. What a meaningful, amazing way of succeeding the old with the new. This scene could've been a perfect ending to this battle, turning it into a classic moment remembered by all those who played Glory!

But now it was all gone!

All Lord Grim did was Guard. Though placing a Guard behind a character's back had some degree of difficulty, it was still a level 20 and under skill. How could that possibly compare to Dragon Looks Back?

0.03 percent!

Just that 0.03 percent, an amount of health that would be lost in any exchange, somehow managed to last till the end. If it didn't, then so long as Lord Grim was killed, the classic moment wouldn't have to be changed, even with that Guard.

Yet now, nothing was the same.

The sixth match of the Challenger League finals went to Happy, Ye Xiu, and Lord Grim.

That's right, Lord Grim.

Chapter 1024: That Also Counts as a 1v3?

On stage, the last one standing was Lord Grim. One Autumn Leaf lay at his feet. One Autumn Leaf had once brought Ye Xiu boundless glory. This time, it was his opponent, and it fell by his hand.

The crowd was silent. Team Happy's few fans had also forgotten to cheer.

He won?

They had a hard time believing it. One Autumn Leaf's Rising Dragon Soars the Sky had been filled with vigor. Dragon Raising Its Head into Dragon Looks Back. Such a crazy technique made them believe that Lord Grim had fallen. But the last one standing on stage was Lord Grim. What exactly happened in that moment?

The broadcast took great pains to replay that moment. In comparison, Ye Xiu's final blow to One Autumn Leaf wasn't anything special. He just took advantage of the ending lag from One Autumn Leaf's high level move and did a quick combo. Neither side had much health left, so a quick combo was enough to finish off One Autumn Leaf.

The broadcast replayed the clip. It followed Lord Grim and showed the moment he blocked the Dragon Looks Back from behind.

0.03% health. The clip intentionally zoomed in on Lord Grim's health.

"What a spectacular block. However, it was extremely risky. That final 0.03% health left is evidence of that. If that block had been off in the slightest, it would have been a different result." Pan Lin came out of his disappointment and commented on the replay. For him personally, he had no bias towards Ye Xiu or Sun Xiang. He just wanted more to talk about. Sun Xiang's Dragon Looks Back giving the final blow to Ye Xiu would definitely have been much more exciting. Pan Lin looked at things from the media's point of view. He had hoped for more flashy performances. The outcome made him a bit disappointed, but he had to admit that this fight had been a brilliant one.

"Coach Li, 0.03% health. Do you think that Ye Xiu actually planned for that to happen or was it just luck?" Pan Lin asked.

"..." Li Yibo was annoyed. Can you not ask me to guess what Ye Xiu was thinking?

Pan Lin saw Li Yibo furrow his brows without saying anything. He immediately feigned as if those words were just a sigh and switched topics.

In the crowd, Team Tiny Herb's three players were discussing this question.

"Probably luck? 0.03% health? That number is too precise. I think it's luck." Liu Xiaobie expressed. As a Blade Master, he naturally had a deep understanding of blocking and knew the difficulty of executing such a block.

"Under normal situations, it'd be nearly impossible to calculate, but Ye Xiu should have a very good understanding of his opponent's character, no? So it's possible that he could have such a precise calculation." Xu Bin said.

"But One Autumn Leaf is a bit different than before from what I see." Gao Yingjie said.

"Hm, that's true." Xu Bin nodded his head.

"So it's luck?" Liu Xiaobie said.

"It's hard to say..... In any case, you can't be careless when facing him." Xu Bin said.

"Will he be our opponent in the future?" Liu Xiaobie mumbled softly. Ye Xiu's victory had completely changed the atmosphere in the stadium, but the problem was that Happy was still on the losing side. Team Excellent Era still has two players left. As for Happy? Lord Grim only has 0.03% health. He pretty much doesn't count... even if he tried to hide and recover his health, his opponent probably wouldn't give him enough time. Moreover, Wish Prayer was still on cooldown. In the group arena, there was no recovery after a round was complete. Whatever state you are in when the round ends will be the same at the start of the next round.

Happy was still in a disadvantageous position. Excellent Era was a pro team that had experienced hundreds of matches. They wouldn't be shaken by a single loss even if it was their ace player.

Liu Xiaobie wasn't wrong. However, he neglected the relationship between Ye Xiu and Excellent Era.

If it were any other player that took Sun Xiang down, Excellent Era could regain their calm and continue with their advantage, but it was Ye Xiu who took down Sun Xiang, the one who was supposed to be his successor. However, Sun Xiang lost. The implications of this loss were simply too great.

The instant One Autumn Leaf fell, Team Excellent Era's boss Tao Xuan almost went insane. The importance of this confrontation was as important as the entire finals, yet they lost in such a manner... Lord Grim only had 0.03% health left. People might not stress this small detail. Ye Xiu won. Sun Xiang lost. That was the result. In view of this result, people might talk more about how Lord Grim wasn't at full health from the beginning. Tao Xuan could imagine how the media would ask sharp questions about this fight. How would he explain it when the time came?

Tao Xuan's expression was incomparably ugly. Excellent Era's other players subconsciously kept their distance from their boss. At this moment, Sun Xiang exited the stage to their bench. His gaze was filled with incredulousness. He had actually lost. He had faced a character who was inferior to One Autumn Leaf and was also not at full health, yet he still lost to Ye Xiu.

Why did it turn out this way?

Am I really not as good as him?

This was the first time Sun Xiang doubted himself because this time, he couldn't find any excuse. His gaze shifted to the other side at Happy's bench, but he unexpectedly saw Ye Xiu also exit the stage.

Sun Xiang stared blankly.

Why did Ye Xiu come out? Players were not allowed to leave the stage in the middle of a match. Doing that was equivalent to forfeiting!

At this moment, the referee jogged over to Happy's seats.

"What are you doing? You don't know that players are not allowed to leave the stage mid-match?" The referee asked. Leaving was absolutely not permitted, but special circumstances needed to be treated

appropriately. For example, if something happened to a player's health or condition. As a result, the referee still asked.

"I know, but I only have so little health remaining. Is there any point in continuing?" Ye Xiu said.

"Can't you.... Do that something?" The referee was reserved. He felt too embarrassed to say heal himself.

"Haha, it's fine. I did a 1v3! I should give the other players a chance!" Ye Xiu said and continued to walk down from the stage. This move could only be deemed as a forfeit. There weren't any other penalizations.

The referee stood there in a daze.

"1v3? When did he 1v3? Did he accidentally miscount?"

How puzzling! The screen in the stadium showed the scoreboard for the group arena. The referee took a glance and nearly coughed blood.

From this meticulous scoreboard, it could clearly be seen that Lord Grim had won against Life Extinguisher.

As a result, in theory, Ye Xiu did a 1v3. That was certainly true. Xiao Shiqin had left the stage in that confrontation!

But who didn't know the circumstances? Xiao Shiqin had used up all his mana. The two hadn't done anything to each other. Xiao Shiqin just typed GG and left. This type of victory counted as a statistic, but how could the player be so bold as to actually count it as one?

1v3? That counts as a 1v3?

Chapter 1025: Unexpected

After completing a 1v3, Ye Xiu came offstage. Fortunately, these words had only been spoken to the referee. If the whole stadium had heard him, the wind from the boos could probably directly blow Ye Xiu out of the building.

Ye Xiu and Sun Xiang left the player booths at almost exactly the same time. Naturally, they also reached their seats in their respective team areas at around the same time.

Those on Happy's side naturally showed Ye Xiu a level of respect normally reserved for heroes, but what about Excellent Era? Tao Xuan was extremely gloomy. Yet, he still had to pat Sun Xiang on the back and console him. "Not bad. You were only off by a tiny bit."

Indeed!

0.03%

Wasn't that just a tiny bit? Yet, this small bit had been the difference between heaven and hell. Sun Xiang felt infinitely conflicted, and could only stare at Team Happy's side. In regards to the boss's words of comfort, he said nothing, only nodding his head before sitting alone to the side.

"We have to win the next round!" At this moment, Tao Xuan gave a desperate command. Even though they were a well-known and experienced team with all kinds of knowledge in coping with difficult situations, Sun Xiang had been defeated by Ye Xiu. This wasn't as simple as an ace player losing a match. Ye Xiu had always had an unusual effect on Excellent Era.

Although Excellent Era was still clearly in the lead, the entire atmosphere of the stadium had changed after Ye Xiu's victory. All the Excellent Era fans had become uncharacteristically silent, as had the previously prideful and arrogant Sun Xiang.

After warning the next player to go on stage, Tao Xuan once again glanced over towards Happy's side, his heart sinking at what he saw.

Sun Zheping!

Surprisingly, Happy's fifth player in the group arena was actually Sun Zheping.

Tao Xuan glanced at Xiao Shiqin, someone he relied heavily on. Prior to the competition, when they were deciding their lineup, the vice captain had guessed that Sun Zheping wouldn't come onstage during the group arena.

As a first-generation God, Sun Zheping would obviously receive a lot of media attention after suddenly joining Happy. Many reporters present were looking for an opportunity to interview him.

With Sun Zheping's personality, he obviously wouldn't cover up his hand injury. He calmly informed the reporters of his current situation. Thus, Xiao Shiqin's had assessed the situation and reached the conclusion that Sun Zheping would only be able to play in one of the rounds, either the group arena or the team competition, in the match against Excellent Era.

After all, the difficulty in facing Excellent Era couldn't be compared to that of other teams. Unless Sun Zheping decisively forfeited the round when the tides of the battle turned, his hands would definitely have to weather an enormous amount of strain. If he appeared in both the group arena and the team competition, the burden would really be too heavy for him to bear.

Except, he was an extremely strong player. This could be easily seen in the few matches in which he had appeared on stage before. As a result, Xiao Shiqin had believed that he would definitely conserve his strength during the group arena, and instead come out during the more important team competition.

However, Sun Zheping was actually Happy's last player in the group arena. This was very unexpected in Xiao Shiqin's eyes. In this position, if the previous players fell behind, a huge burden would be placed on Sun Zheping's shoulders. Like right now, he would have to face two players back-to-back. Regardless of whether he won or lost, after facing this kind of strain, would he still be able to compete in the team round?

"Could it be that the reports by the media were false?" Tao Xuan wondered.

"That's not likely ..." Xiao Shiqin replied. He had entered the Alliance at a time when the Hundred Blossoms duo, Zhang Jiale and Sun Zheping, had been at its peak. Thus, he had a good understanding of this God. This kind of scheming behavior outside of a match wasn't in line with Sun Zheping's personality at all. In Xiao Shiqin's eyes, this man was the type of person who wouldn't hide his true circumstances. Even if he made a mistake, he was the type of person to face it head on like a real man instead of trying to pretend it didn't happen. To make a big deal out of something like a minor hand injury really didn't seem like something he would do.

These years of retirement would be enough enough for him to change his temperament. Yet, seeing his performance on stage, he seemed just as fierce, wild, and untamed as before.

In light of these circumstances, there was only one plausible explanation: Sun Zheping would not be appearing in the team competition.

Then, who would be appearing in the team competition?

In this way, Excellent Era's lineup for the team round would be disrupted. Xiao Shiqin had no idea that Sun Zheping, the definitive number two player in Happy who could even be called Ye Xiu's equal, would actually not be appearing in the team competition? This was actually as unexpected as one not bringing a Cleric to the team competition!

In any case, the lineup for the team competition had long since been decided. There was no way to change it now. Luckily, he would be able to give the other players instructions during the team competition. When the time came to battle, he would simply have to make adjustments based on the situation! Xiao Shiqin took a deep breath, stopping his train of analyses and conjectures. He turned back to calmly watch the match.

From Team Happy, Sun Zheping stepped onto stage.

Excellent Era sent out Shen Jian, a Striker player.

This was likely the only group arena match today in which Happy appeared to be the stronger contender on paper.

Sun Zheping was a former God. Although he had retired for many years, it was due to an injury, not because his condition was slipping. Zhang Jiale, who had been a player of the same generation as him, was still lively on stage. If not for the hand injury, Sun Zheping shouldn't be any worse than Zhang Jiale was now, so he should still be at the same level of an All-Star.

What about Excellent Era's Shen Jian then? In Excellent Era, he could probably only be considered average.

Before Sun Xiang came to Excellent Era, when Excellent Era's troop arrangements during the team competition were relatively stable, the lineup was made up of Ye Xiu's Battle Mage, Su Mucheng's Launcher, Liu Hao's Spellblade, Guo Yang's Qi Master, and Zhang Jiaying's Cleric. He Ming's Elementalist was usually their sixth player.

Shen Jian could be considered their substitute player. Depending on who their opponents were, he would sometimes have a chance to go onstage.

After Ye Xiu left, Excellent Era was relegated. Right afterwards, both Liu Hao and He Ming were traded for Xiao Shiqin, and Guo Yang left soon after. Of Excellent Era's original lineup, only Su Mucheng and Zhang Jiaying remained. As a player with a decent amount of strength and battle experience, Shen Jian also naturally rose in the food chain, joining the main roster.

Excellent Era was a powerhouse team. Being able to rise to the position of a substitute player showed that Shen Jian already possessed an impressive amount of skill. In a weaker team, he might even be considered a strong member. However, in the face of Sun Zheping, this kind of player was evidently still not enough. Right now, the only thing that made people worry was that Sun Zheping had retired due to an injury, before suddenly appearing in the scene once more after so many years. It was said that he still hadn't entirely recovered. Then, when all was said and done, how much strength did this player truly have left? His previous performances could be considered powerful, but Excellent Era's level was not the same as those other teams. Shen Jian was previously only a sub for the team, and even now, he was just a normal player on the main roster. If he was tossed in a team like Mysterious Fantasy or Jade Dynasty, he might even become their core player!

In the face of this kind of player, would Sun Zheping still be able to showcase the same kind of overpowering performances he had before?

This competition left the audience in this kind of suspense. In this match, the attention wouldn't be focused on Excellent Era's player. In the spotlight was Sun Zheping, the former number one Berserker.

Yes, the topic had once again become focused on Sun Zheping. Team Happy ... why were they always casually tossed to the side?

Chapter 1026: Meeting Force with Force

The audience still hadn't recovered from the spectacular fight between Ye Xiu and Sun Xiang. The next round had begun, but the stadium was still silent.

However, this wouldn't affect the players on stage. When they entered the player booths, the players and characters became one. This was the mindset that they currently put themselves in.

Shen Jian's character was a Striker, which was a purely offensive type character similar to Sun Zheping's Berserker. The Striker's weapon was their body, so it had the shortest attack range of the 24 classes. However, this class represented the principle that a shorter weapon was more dangerous. When fighting in close quarters combat, their attack speed was ranked the fastest among the 24 classes. Strikers, Assassins, and Grapplers were known as the Nightmare Trio when it came to close combat.

When the match started, both sides showcased the straightforwardness of their respective classes. They didn't move strategically, but headed straight for the center of the map to fight.

Speaking of character strength, Excellent Era held a clear advantage. Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep didn't have any Silver equipment at all; all of his equipment was orange. This could be considered a disadvantage because all of his stats were known by the opponent. Shen Jian could carry out the fight according to Another Summer of Sleep's stats and bonuses. Although Shen Jian's Striker was a sub Excellent Era, Excellent Era was still a powerhouse team. The subs wouldn't have characters too

different in strength compared to the characters of the starting roster. Shen Jian had a set of ten Silver equipment, a number enough to make most players drool. In reality, a powerhouse team might not have a small number of Silver equipment even for substitute characters. The real difference between the God-level characters lay in the quality. This was clearly related to the the distribution of a team's resources. It went without saying that the ace and core characters would get prioritized when it came to using these resources, and naturally, the equipment given to these core characters were much more suited to the players' playstyles.

Shen Jian was promoted to a starter in this season, so his character also received more attention. Since he was better than he was last season, he couldn't wait to use his upgraded character to show a brilliant performance. However, this could only happen after they cleared the Challenger League.

There was a wide gap between the characters' stats, but Sun Zheping showed no trace of being courteous. When the two met, he immediately made the first move. Another Summer of Sleep swung the greatsword in his hand and launched a Collapsing Mountain.

Due to a Striker's limited attack range, they often failed to attack first. However, this didn't mean that they would be stuck in a passive state. Shen Jian's response was very tough. He activated Reinforced Iron Bones, and rushed towards Another Summer of Sleep's Collapsing Mountain with swinging fists.

Sun Zheping? He was famous, but this did not mean Shen Jian would be afraid of him. They were both pro players, so even if his opponent was a God, his opponent's strength wouldn't in another league. If he turned soft every time he faced someone of a higher level, how could he even participate in a match? As a new main roster player, Shen Jian didn't have many chances to show himself. Since he got to meet a figure like Sun Zheping in the match against Happy, it seemed like a good opportunity to reveal himself.

The number one Berserker? Very well, I'll use an even more fierce and crazy way to beat you.

Shen Jian thought to himself and then controlled his character to charge forward.

Reinforced Iron Bones increased his character's physical defense, but more importantly, it also granted Super Armor.

Super Armor made the character immune to all forms of CC apart from grabs. In this way, although he faced a cut from the opponent, it didn't affect his Striker's advance at all. He only lost a bit of health from this attack, but his attack continued as normal. Shen Jian neither avoided nor blocked the incoming attacks, and pushed forward with Reinforced Iron Bones. This revealed his intention to fight straightforwardly.

Sun Zheping unexpectedly reacted extremely fast. He leapt up and cancelled Collapsing Mountain in midair. Another Summer of Sleep then swung his sword. It seemed like an Upward Slash, but this blow from Upward Slash seemed to release magical waves as if ripping apart the air.

This was a low-level Spellblade skill, Wave Wheel Slasher, which used a magic boundary to seal a target before spinning and slicing the target. All four swordsmen classes typically put at least one point into it. They wanted it for its Super Armor piercing effects.

Shen Jian saw this, but didn't have any other options available. He could only choose to retreat. However, Sun Zheping had reason to not let him escape. After Another Summer of Sleep's jump, he landed and reached out to grab Shen Jian's Fighter. This was a Berserker grab Soul-Devouring Crimson Grip.

The Striker jumped back as Shen Jian chose to give way again.

Another Summer of Sleep wasn't in a hurry to rush up this time and let out a Sword Draw instead.

Shen Jian's Striker was still under the effects of Reinforced Iron Bones, so he wouldn't be beat back by this blow. He rushed forward to smash the sword's light with his body, and swung his fists once more.

However, Another Summer of Sleep held his sword in front of his chest and attacked with the Blade Master's Lunge. 'Tu-tu!' The two blows landed on the Striker. It was true that a Striker buffed with Reinforced Iron Bone wouldn't be affected by the skill effects, but the sword was pointed at his chest. If he continued to advance, wouldn't his character be pierced by the blade? Although this was a game, it couldn't be too illogical. The two lunges held up the person like a stick, and managed to postpone the incoming force of Shen Jian's Striker.

Shen Jian was unwilling to give up; there was no big deal in losing a bit of health after activating Reinforced Iron Bones. However, it would be a mistake to not seize the opportunity to attack. The Striker that was stabbed twice continued to push forward tenaciously. This time, Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep retreated. He jumped back repeatedly without turning around.

"Where are you going!" Shen Jian cried out in his head and forced his character forward even faster. The Striker used Straight Punch to try to close the gap.

Who would have thought that after Another Summer of Sleep's two backwards jumps, he would take out the sword behind his back? As Shen Jian rushed forward, the Great Sword thrust out and slashed straight down.

Demon-Slaying Slash!

Apart from its outstanding damage, Demon-Slaying Slash could also lower the target's defense. When this skill was fully upgraded, a blow could reduce the target's defense by 30% for eight seconds.

All of this couldn't be avoided when one activated Reinforced Iron Bone. Even if it was activated, the damage from the skill was rather heartbreaking. There seemed to be no convenient chance to attack, so this Demon-Slaying Slash caused Shen Jian to hesitate a bit before finally choosing to dodge.

At this point, even commentators like Pan Lin and Li Yibo were able to clearly see through Shen Jian's hesitation, let alone Ye Xiu. This guy was set on fighting resolutely and tough, but obviously that wasn't his original style. So when he fought with truly tough players like Sun Zheping, he backed down. No one understood why he activated Reinforced Iron Bones and wasted the skill's effect in the end.

Wasting Reinforced Iron Bone was a huge mistake. This was because when Strikers used this skill, they would usually neglect defense and receive a large amount of damage. If a player couldn't find an opportunity to beat the opponent enough to cough up litres of blood in this situation, what was the point of even using this skill? Shen Jian not only had no reason to, he was literally selling his blood too.

No, it wasn't even selling blood. By selling blood, there was some profit to be made. Shen Jian was purely giving out blood.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo gave a thorough analysis of Shen Jian's terrible opener. Judging from this aspect, there was quite some distance between Shen Jian and the top Gods. After all, Pan Lin and Li Yibo could comment on it with such ease. When Ye Xiu was on stage before, the two kept on falling into traps. It's obvious that they weren't skilled enough to the point that they wouldn't even be able to finish a single level of Contra if not given 30 lives.

By failing to grasp an opportunity with Reinforced Iron Bones and taking a lot of damage, Shen Jian knew how badly he fought and immediately became restless. Was Sun Zheping the kind of person to give his opponent any chance to catch his breath? His attacks grew stronger blow by blow. He waved his greatsword around like a windmill and slashed crazily.

Apart from "No wonder he's the Number One Berserker", "As expected from the Number One Berserker", and "Look, this is the power of the Number One Berserker", the two commentators had nothing else to say. They couldn't help but refrain from giving any blunt comments on Sun Zheping's performance. They had fallen into too many traps today, if they fell into another one again, all 30 of their lives would be used up.

On the Excellent Era bench, Tao Xuan's expression was extremely gloomy.

Shen Jian's resolute attitude before he went on stage caused him to feel very much at peace. Although he gave a must-win command, there would always be wins and losses in a match. Tao Xuan obviously knew about this principle. The must-win command was a type of resolution, so the player would feel pressured as well as motivated. Whether it was a win or a loss, Tao Xuan would never bring out the must-win command to criticize a player.

In addition, he clearly knew about Sun Zheping's skill. If Shen Jian couldn't take him down, he wouldn't say much, but he was losing in such an unsightly manner. Tao Xuan was angry at how Shen Jian was trying to appear fierce even though he was weak inside. If he fought like this, it would look better if he had just typed 'GG' the moment he stepped on stage!

Unfortunately, no one could point out anything in this match, and Shen Jian continued to fight with fear. Using a fierce and crazy way to defeat Sun Zheping? This plan was long forgotten. An alarmed Shen Jian even forgot to win at this point. He was too busy thinking about how he could survive as if this were an apocalypse.

Shen Jian lost without any turning points or any glimmers of hope. His performance was worse than Tang Rou's and Mo Fan's. Even though the two couldn't take down much of Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher's health, at least they had a few moments of brilliance that belonged to them. They used their efforts to clearly express their intentions.

Shen Jian? He had intentions when he went on stage, but it was smashed to pieces in two blows by Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep. His thoughts were rather weak.

"Shen Jian was obviously unprepared." Pan Lin said.

"Yeah, he might have expected Sun Xiang to finish everything, so he wouldn't have needed to go on stage." Coach Li expressed his agreement.

"He probably didn't think he would be fighting a strong opponent like Sun Zheping."

"It was quite unwise of him to try to match Sun Zheping with force."

"Yes, Han Wenqing is the only Striker in all of Glory that could use such a method to fight Sun Zheping."

"Even though Sun Zheping retired many years ago, he shouldn't be underestimated like this!"

"Yes!"

"Too careless."

The match ended with this.

Winner: Team Happy, Sun Zheping, Another Summer of Sleep.

Chapter 1027: Seize the Competition

Shen Jian walked off stage in a daze. The Excellent Era fans booed due to their discontent for the first time this match. Previously, Xiao Shiqin's 1v3 didn't need to be said. All the boos had been meant for Happy. Afterwards, Qiu Fei and Sun Xiang lost, but the crowd didn't react as harshly. The performances from Qiu Fei and Sun Xiang weren't bad. The fans didn't even look at the results. They also cared about the process.

Shen Jian's performance clearly didn't make them feel satisfied. It was just that compared to the boos towards Happy, the boos from the Excellent Era fans were still much more polite. Amidst these boos, there was even some applause to encourage their team's players.

Shen Jian returned to the bench with his head drooped down. Tao Xuan patted his back and said a few consoling words before telling him to go rest. Tao Xuan was still the boss of a veteran team. He naturally wouldn't be so childish as to lose his temper like Jade Dynasty's Xiao Jie.

Excellent Era's final player was about to come on stage. Everyone stretched their necks waiting for this person to go up. Whether it was intentional or not, Tao Xuan stole a glance at Happy. On Excellent Era's side, Su Mucheng stood up.

As expected.....

Chen Guo thought to herself.

No one mentioned the possible conflict. Would Su Mucheng represent Excellent Era today? And now the truth had finally been revealed.

Su Mucheng glanced at Happy's side. Her gaze didn't expose too many things. She turned around and walked towards the player booth. On the other hand, Tao Xuan suddenly turned his head to look at Happy. No, to be more accurate, he looked at Ye Xiu. His eyes seemed to be filled with delight as if he were making fun of him.

What's that supposed to mean?

Chen Guo didn't understand. She turned her head to look at Ye Xiu and saw an expression she had never seen before on his face. Is that anger?

Yes, anger!

Even after Ye Xiu was kicked out and painted black by Excellent Era, he had always stayed calm. He's angry? Why? Because Su Mucheng was sent out?

Chen Guo felt like that wasn't the reason. Tao Xuan's expression when Su Mucheng went out was probably why Ye Xiu was angry. Chen Guo was still pondering over it, when she saw Ye Xiu stand up and walk over to Excellent Era's bench, to Tao Xuan.

Tao Xuan was still sitting down. He didn't move and simply raised his head slightly. He looked at Team Excellent Era's former captain. They were once good friends, who got to know each other in game. At that time, they were like brothers that had gone to hell and back together. Afterwards, he raised enough money to form a team and he pulled over his brother to become his team's captain. The two gradually stopped calling each other brothers and now, the two had become enemies.

"What's the meaning of this?" Ye Xiu had restrained his anger. He looked at Tao Xuan as calm as ever.

"I hope she'll give a good performance." Tao Xuan smiled, while giving an irrelevant answer.

"So it's like that." Ye Xiu seemed to have gotten the answer he wanted and returned to his seat.

Chen Guo really wanted to ask, but... she was too afraid to. Ye Xiu no longer showed any anger like before, but his expression was gloomy. This was also an expression that she had never seen on him before.

"Calm down." Wei Chen suddenly said.

"Mm." Ye Xiu nodded his head. He didn't argue back or question him. He simply nodded his head, saying that the current him wasn't calm at all.

Ye Xiu wasn't calm?

Chen Guo felt like something must have happened. But what? Chen Guo looked at Wei Chen. She knew that he should know the answer. She used her eyes to tell Wei Chen, he could either die or explain the situation to her.

"Ahem....." Wei Chen was attacked by her glance. He gave a cough and then scooted over.

"Do you know why Su Mucheng was put last?" Wei Chen said.

Sure enough, it had to do with Su Mucheng.... Chen Guo thought to herself, but was there some sort of special meaning in it?

"Excellent Era is doubtful of Su Mucheng, but that they can't openly say that. After all, Su Mucheng is very popular. Just look at the crowd's reaction." Wei Chen said.

Yes, the stadium was already cheering. Shen Jian's embarrassing performance didn't wipe out their passionate cheers for Su Mucheng. She was only walking on stage and the crowd was going wild.

"So she's been placed last." Wei Chen said.

"Why?" Chen Guo still didn't understand.

"For one, this is their treat to the fans. If you look at how Excellent Era ordered their line up for the group arena, they planned to finish the group arena with three players, so the chances of Su Mucheng coming out is very small. However, she's at least a part of the line up, showing that they trust her. As for placing her last, that could be explained as a safeguard. This is completely reasonable." Wei Chen said.

"Mm." Chen Guo nodded her head in understanding.

"But if the situation arises and Su Mucheng needs to come out on stage, what then? She carries the burden of Excellent Era winning the group arena. Each and every move of hers will be watched with rapt attention. If she truly has ideas of sandbagging, I'm saying if!!!" Wei Chen said sandbag, Chen Guo's expression changed, so he immediately stressed the word if, "Then if anyone notices it, her reputation... will be completely destroyed."

"F*ck!" Chen Guo suddenly became angry. She shot a death glare over to Excellent Era's side. Unfortunately, no one was looking at her.

"I'm just saying if. Of course, you and I believe that Su Mucheng is a professional so she wouldn't do that. However, in such a sensitive match, even if she doesn't sandbag, if she loses, she'll most likely arouse the suspicions of others. For a match, a first impression holds more weight than the details. Any mistakes she makes could be viewed as sandbagging... so for Su Mucheng, she can only win. She cannot lose. If she loses, she'll be affected negatively." Wei Chen explained everything very thoroughly. After saying this, he put up his guard, making sure that their bold boss wouldn't flip a table over and try to murder someone.

What he didn't expect was that, after he finished explaining, Chen Guo didn't react aggressively like he thought she would. Chen Guo watched as Su Mucheng walked onto the stage; her expression was filled with bitterness.

Su Mucheng didn't want to win this match, but she had no choice but to. What type of conflict was going on inside her?

Chen Guo didn't know if Su Mucheng was aware of Excellent Era's intentions. After hearing Wei Chen's words, she felt like it wasn't really hard to figure that out, but even so, it was thanks to Tao Xuan leaking out such a delighted expression that Ye Xiu and Wei Chen realized it. If not, no matter how shameless the two of them were, they might not have thought much of it.

From this view, Su Mucheng might realize this despicable plan. What would she do to resist?

Would she directly type GG and leave? Use this type of reckless way against Excellent Era's coercion? Even though Chen Guo would feel great if that happened, the aftermath would be very worrying for Su Mucheng. Because the consequences were just like Wei Chen said, a complete loss in reputation. No matter the reason, a pro player was not allowed to violate the competitive integrity of the esport. It was for this reason that Excellent Era dared to treat Su Mucheng this way.

The current Chen Guo couldn't bother with getting angry at Tao Xuan. She also understood why Ye Xiu was so quick to restrain his anger. It was because the person everyone was concerned about was about to face this difficult situation. Was there time to worry for her? Who was in the mood to split their attention towards Tao Xuan?

What would she do?

Seeing Su Mucheng walk on stage and load in her character, Chen Guo's heart leapt to her throat.

Then, the match started. The two characters loaded into the map. Chen Guo watched Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain carefully and finally let out a sigh of relief.

Su Mucheng at least didn't say GG.

The two characters moved. Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep went straight for the center of the map. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain moved more tactfully and quickly reached a place that Li Yibo called "an excellent sniping spot".

Launchers had the longest range out of all 24 classes. Utilizing the terrain, hiding, and constantly kiting the opponent with long-ranged attacks was the usual strategy, especially against an extremely aggressive player like Sun Zheping. This method of kiting could wear away the opponent's mental state and health. Su Mucheng should be using this method to covertly attack.

This was Coach Li's analysis, but the crowd saw Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain stand up on the wall with her heads held high and the cannon on her shoulders. She didn't seem to have any intentions of hiding. She completely exposed herself on the high grounds and started firing at Another Summer of Sleep.

Li Yibo's mouth dropped wide open. He had experienced a hundred battles, but this time, he couldn't save himself because Su Mucheng's slap to his face was too quick. As soon as he finished saying that she would hide, she stood up heroically and started firing. This pose was less like taking the initiative and more like shouting out loud "I'm attacking!!"

Chen Guo hadn't given up on listening to the commentators. When she saw the huge difference between Su Mucheng's play and the commentator's analysis, her heart suddenly thumped.

Su Mucheng didn't directly go so far as to say GG, but was she planning on boldly sandbagging to slap Excellent Era's face?

Artillery fire instantly covered Chen Guo's mood. The heavy suppression made it impossible for the aggressive Sun Zheping to charge at her directly.

Under the pursuit of artillery fire, Another Summer of Sleep ran behind a wall, planning his next step, when an enormous force lifted him up from behind. Another Summer of Sleep was overturned along with that wall from Su Mucheng's barrage.

"Excellent Era... are they planning on fighting force with force against Sun Zheping?" In the crowd, Team Tiny Herb's three pro players could see the pros and cons of that strategy.

Chapter 1028: It Ends Here

Su Mucheng's performance caused many of her die hard Excellent Era fans forget to cheer because this kind of strategy was indeed very different from her usual style.

When Ye Xiu was still on the team, Su Mucheng's Launcher had always played a supportive role. Her character's coordination with One Autumn Leaf had always been very distinct.

After Ye Xiu left the team, his successor, Sun Xiang, didn't have this same kind of implicit understanding with Su Mucheng. Dancing Rain's position on the team also appeared awkward for a time.

Fortunately, Su Mucheng rapidly adjusted herself, transforming from a support player into one of the main damage dealers. Yet even so, her style still wasn't as aggressive and unyielding as what she was showing today.

In reality, not being aggressive and unyielding was something that many people often accused female players of. Team Misty Rain's Captain Chu Yunxiu had constantly been flamed by critics because of this, to the point that it was considered one of her trademark weaknesses.

Except now, Su Mucheng was actually showcasing this kind of tough playstyle, making many people feel taken aback. Even a player like Sun Zheping had been suppressed to the point that he had no way to directly attack. It was obvious how intense her firepower had to be to reach this point.

Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep and the wall behind him were both overturned, but Dancing Rain's offensive didn't stop for a moment. Only now could it be seen that Su Mucheng's original positioning of Dancing Rain on high ground wasn't to conceal her character to discreetly launch a sneak attack. Instead, it was done in order to obtain a wider field of view so as to allow her Launcher's attacks to cover a larger area. Attacking from afar allowed her to utilize her strength to the maximum.

Another Summer of Sleep still hadn't climbed out of the pile of rubble from the broken wall. A Stinger had long since been launched and had split in midair, the fragments raining downwards. This skill shot out at an arc. Although the distance the projectile could travel wasn't actually that long, Dancing Rain was currently towering above all on the high ground. The range of this skill had been increased a lot because of this.

The Stinger exploded above the ruins, turning the area into a sea of fire in the blink of an eye. Another Summer of Sleep suddenly rose, sweeping off the fragments of stone on his body. Looking at him, it really felt like a dramatic change.

However, Su Mucheng didn't let up at all. Dancing Rain had long since finished charging up a Laser Rifle. In the instant that Another Summer of Sleep burst forth, the laser beam was also released. Another Summer of Sleep's awe-inspiring pose didn't last even a second before he was pushed back by the Laser Rifle, sliding quite a distance. His feet had carved out two parallel grooves as he traveled.

At this moment, the stadium finally recovered and exploded in applause.

Facing Sun Zheping, a player who was defined by his aggressive playstyle, Su Mucheng was actually able to answer with aggressive plays of her own! Furthermore, her opponent didn't even have an opportunity to respond! If they didn't applaud for this kind of brilliant performance, what would they applaud for?

In comparison, Shen Jian's previous performance, which had been like a sheep in wolf's clothing, was unbearable. Except at this moment, who was even still thinking about his clumsy display? It was only brought up because the commentators used it as a comparison when they were looking for topics to talk about. After that, they went back to speaking about Su Mucheng's beautiful performance.

It really isn't easy ...

Even Sun Zheping, who was currently onstage, felt a sense of sorrow. He had lost many matches before, but there had been very very few in which he had absolutely no opportunity to advance on his opponent. Today, the beautiful Su Mucheng had set her heart on showcasing her power! Honestly, when he saw Su Mucheng go onstage, Sun Zheping had had some doubts about the quality of the match. Right now, since he was helping Happy compete, he obviously wouldn't shy away from any topics or problems regarding Excellent Era. He knew that Su Mucheng was in a very tangled situation. In this kind of match, would a beautiful girl still be able to display her full strength? In his heart, there was originally a question mark.

Now, however, the question mark was smashed to pieces. Su Mucheng had fought to the point that he had no way to push forward. This was practically exceeding her full strength.

However, although Sun Zheping understood Su Mucheng's inner turmoil, he wouldn't go easy on her during the competition. In his opinion, these were two completely unrelated things. In any case, all he was concerned with was winning the competition. It didn't matter who his opponent was. It didn't matter what the situation looked like. It didn't matter how he felt, or what his state of mind was. On the stage, outside of victory or defeat, there was nothing else ...

If strength wasn't enough, then what about tactics?

No, this was never Sun Zheping's style. It hadn't been many years ago, and it wasn't now. Perhaps there were many people secretly watching, watching to see if Sun Zheping had lost some of his former grandeur after being forced to retire due to an injury. Sun Zheping wanted these people to know that, even if he had a hand injury, even if he could only fight at a high skill level for a few minutes each time, in these trifling minutes, he wouldn't back down. He would press onwards with the same vigor, because that was his style. This was Sun Zheping. The grace and elegance of the Number One Berserker would not fade for any reason. Even if it could only manifest for a few minutes, so be it. In these few minutes, everyone would witness the grace, the beauty, the marvel, the brilliance, the excitement, the delight. This was the way of the Number One Berserker.

Another Summer of Sleep suddenly charged forward. Su Mucheng saw this clearly, immediately firing three Anti-Tank Missiles. Another Summer of Sleep raised his sword, releasing a Whirlwind Strike!

The blade of the sword swung towards the incoming projectile. The flames of the explosion were sliced clean in half by the sword, fluttering harmlessly before dissipating next to his body. One, then another, then the third and final one were all chopped in half by Sun Zheping in an aggressive manner. Another Summer of Sleep continued charging forth with large strides.

Everyone was stupefied. Under this kind of suppressive firepower, he actually still wanted to push forward. This kind of style was completely unreasonable. It was absolutely crazy!

Had any other player acted this way, they would likely have been seen as courting death. However, Sun Zheping and his Another Summer of Sleep pushed onwards step by step, beating into the hearts of every person watching. All they saw was this pro player and his character, possessing unyielding determination, tenaciously push forward. Step by step, they never stopped to rest. Perhaps he would die on this road, but never would he even think of compromising.

"This guy!!" At this moment, all of Happy's players felt incredibly moved.

Throwing the game?

If anyone watching this match still entertained these ideas, they really should be dragged out of the stadium and executed by a firing squad a hundred times over.**

This confrontation was one that required full commitment from both sides. There wouldn't be anyone throwing the match, nor would either side back down. Everything this stage represented, everything it embodied, all of it came down to the two players' Glory. At this moment, everything else became truly irrelevant.

Victory! This was what both sides were trying so hard to achieve.

Everyone present was influenced by the players passion. They too forgot everything. At this moment, all their attention was drawn to the confrontation unfolding before their eyes. Their only concern was who would attain victory. Not one person even considered the many consequences that would arise from either side's victory.

Who would win? Who would lose?

No one blinked, all eyes focused on the two characters on stage. Another Summer of Sleep — a character name that sounded extremely languid and laid back. No one knew what was going through Sun Zheping's mind when he came up with a name that had nothing in common with his playstyle. But now, the languidly-named Another Summer of Sleep had finished his Long March.*** Now, he had finally arrived in front of Dancing Rain, and he could finally sink his teeth into the one who had hindered his journey, the opponent who had lined his road with a thousand different obstacles and dangers.

However, it was also at this moment that Dancing Rain finally took a step back ...

Sun Zheping's strike only struck air. He stared blankly.

When he recovered his senses a moment later, he unexpectedly laughed.

He had only been thinking of charging forward, and he forgot. He forgot that Su Mucheng wasn't him. In these circumstances, Sun Zheping would stay and collide his opponent head on. But Su Mucheng, she temporarily retreated. This was something that Sun Zheping would never choose to do. Yet, it indeed was the smarter choice.

I'm going to lose ...

Sun Zheping knew this in the bottom of his heart. His opponent had fought more intelligently, whereas he had perhaps only been recklessly acting without thought all along.

It really was a pity because he wouldn't have many more opportunities to play so recklessly, without a regard for the rules. He really missed the old days, when he so recklessly fight onstage however much he wanted.

Dancing Rain retreated, and in the blink of an eye a Satellite Beam descended from the sky. Another Summer of Sleep had finally reached the last thread of his life, collapsing onto the ground. He brought with him Sun Zheping's profound regret, not only for this match, but for his entire Glory career. Even when he could only compete for a few minutes, he still was that Sun Zheping. Yet, such a short amount of time truly couldn't satisfy him ...

The group arena had finally concluded. Su Mucheng was victorious. Excellent Era finally won one point.

Sun Zheping walked out of the player booth first. The entire stadium was silent. Gradually, however, sounds of applause rang out, eventually spreading to the entire stadium.

In the past, Team Happy had only received booing and derision. Now, they were suddenly being applauded?

Of course not.

At this moment, they were applauding was for Sun Zheping. Although he had lost, through this one match, every person had experienced and appreciated his unyielding fortitude. Why did this kind of player have to suffer the misfortune of a hand injury, which was deadly to pro players? No one could voice the regret they felt. The audience could only send their respect and blessings through applause.

Afterwards, the applause was directed towards Su Mucheng, who had obtained victory for the team. The audience waited for Su Mucheng to exit the player booth. However, they discovered that Dancing Rain hadn't immediately logged off after winning. At this moment, she was still standing onstage.

"My time with Excellent Era ends here."

In the competition channel which had yet to be closed, this sentence suddenly appeared. Before anyone could react, Dancing Rain logged out, disappearing from the stage. Immediately afterwards, Su Mucheng exited the player booth.

For a moment, that inexplicable sentence caused the audience's applause to become scattered. Soon after, under the gaze of everyone present in the stadium, Su Mucheng walked off of the stage towards the team benches. When she passed the Excellent Era bench area, she didn't stop, walking all the way over to Happy's area before sitting down.

The entire stadium exploded. Amidst the commotion it was impossible to make sense of anything. However, Su Mucheng didn't care at all. At this moment, she felt more calm and at ease than she had in a year and a half. She no longer felt any inner turmoil, nor any burden weighing her down. Everything had returned to the beginning, when she had followed her brother and Ye Xiu as they struggled to make a living through video games. It had been hard, it had been exhausting, but they had been content.

Su Mucheng felt tears begin to form in her eyes. She quickly buried her face in the shoulder of the person sitting next to her.

"Leave the rest to me!" That person said.

"Okay...." Su Mucheng agreed. In reality, she had never wanted the spotlight for herself ...

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

** This is the literal translation of 枪毙一百遍. The translators do not condone violence in any form.

*** 万里长征 refers to the Long March that the Communist Party of China took from October 1934 to October 1935 in order to escape from the Chinese Nationalist Party. Literally, it can be translated as "thousand mile expedition," although the Long March reportedly spanned over 5600 miles. This event would eventually cement Mao Zedong's ascent to power.

--Veriquity

Chapter 1029: Starting Lineup

The crowd couldn't calm down. How deep was the friendship between Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng? Because Ye Xiu had always kept a low-profile, his fans didn't know. As a result, Su Mucheng publicly announcing her split with Excellent Era right after the group arena ended and then sitting at Happy's bench was simply too astonishing.

Why?

The crowd clamored noisily, but no one could answer the question. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were also dumbstruck by this outrageous conduct. For a moment, they didn't know what to say.

"Su Mucheng.... Su Mucheng..." Pan Lin was the first to regain his composure. He wanted to explain this crazy action, but when the words reached his mouth, he couldn't find the right words to describe his thoughts. He had never encountered such a situation before. No matter how experienced he maybe as a commentator, he was no better than anyone else at the moment.

"Does the Alliance have any rules regarding this?" After stumbling on his words for awhile, he suddenly asked a question.

"What do you mean?' Li Yibo asked.

"The... the..." Pan Lin wanted to say "The rule not permitting players to sit at another team's bench", but he had second thoughts. Su Mucheng publicly announcing her split and defecting to the enemy side had never happened before, but if you said sitting at another team's bench, that wasn't anything new. Sometimes, the players on the two teams were good friends off-stage, so they went over to each other's bench to make some small talk. However, doing that was a somewhat sensitive subject, so there was usually a special precondition required for it to happen.

Su Mucheng was definitely an exception though. She was touching on the "sensitive" subject that everyone was worried about. She displayed this "sensitive" subject for everyone to see.

What should be said for this conduct? Pan Lin was unable to say what he wanted to say. His co-caster, Li Yibo, racked his brains and finally squeezed out a few words: "In any case, Su Mucheng's conduct is

inappropriate. No matter what the reason is, such an action is a heavy blow to her team and her fans. It doesn't matter if there's some sort of conflict between her and Excellent Era, this definitely isn't the way to resolve it."

Li Yibo was clearly saying empty words. For Su Mucheng to act in such a way, who would believe she had a good relationship with her team? Su Mucheng and Excellent Era definitely had some sort of conflict and it clearly wasn't a small one. The two of them weren't needed to analyze something so obvious. Everyone in the crowd knew. They were wondering what the conflict was to make Su Mucheng defect to Team Happy.

Was it related to Ye Xiu?

Many people thought that was the reason. After all, Ye Xiu had the closest relationship with Su Mucheng among those in Team Happy.

Opinions differed.

The crowd discussed with each other. The reporters were also looking at their data and racked their brains to analyze the reasons. However, the match was still going to continue. The team competition came after the group arena. The break time was a bit longer than usual. The employees nervously prepped the player booths. The six players participating in the team competition might be different than the five players participating in the group arena, so adjustments needed to be made to the setups in the player booths.

The players competing in the match also had some free time during their rest time. They could go to the restroom and so on. However, no one left. On Excellent Era's side, the color of Tao Xuan's face had already turned purple. He hadn't expected Su Mucheng to actually do something like that.

Her way of splitting with the team was too crazy. There was no precedent. The media must be very interested in digging deeper. Once they started digging, they might find a lot of problems, which had been covered up by Tao Xuan the entire time. Because once this fuse was set, it might explode in front of the public. How could Tao Xuan be calm? As for Su Mucheng defecting to Happy, he wasn't concerned about that issue because he knew long ago that this would happen. When Su Mucheng firmly refused to renew or extend her contract, he already knew it was inevitable. Unlike the public, he had a clear understanding of the relationship between Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu. When he renounced Ye Xiu, he had already been prepared to let go of Su Mucheng. Her departure wasn't unexpected, but her way of doing so was.

Tao Xuan had no idea how to handle the situation in front of him. Su Mucheng's actions affected the team. They still needed to play in the team competition. Their hearts couldn't waver right now.

Tao Xuan was busy trying to stabilize the team, while Happy was jubilant. If one only looked at the atmosphere surrounding the two teams, no one would believe that Excellent Era had just won the group arena by one point. It looked like Excellent Era was losing by a lot.

The crowd clamored noisily for however long the break time was. Everyone was concerned about the issue of Su Mucheng from start to finish. They practically forgot about the following team competition. They still hadn't figured it out, when it was announced that the team competition would be starting soon.

On Excellent Era's side, with Tao Xuan personally stabilizing the situation, the team had calmed down. As teammates, they also knew that Su Mucheng would leave at the end of the season. As a result, they were similar to Tao Xuan. They were mainly surprised by her way of doing so.

"In this team competition, don't give them any opportunities! Good luck everyone!" Tao Xuan clapped his hands in encouragement. The other worries in his heart had been buried for now. In any case, winning this match was what was most important.

"Okay, let's go!" Sun Xiang had lost to Ye Xiu in the group arena, but it looked like he had readjusted his mindset. As the team captain, he walked at the front, leading their team competition players to the player booths.

Sun Xiang, Xiao Shiqin, Qiu Fei, Shen Jian, Zhang Jiaxin. Sixth player - Wang Ze.

The lineups for the team competition had been fixed ahead of time, so they couldn't be changed at the last moment. From this, it could be seen that Excellent Era's number three All-Star player, Su Mucheng, hadn't been a part of the team competition lineup. It could be seen how doubtful Tao Xuan was of Su Mucheng. In the team competition, he didn't have any method of forcing Su Mucheng to play seriously, so he might as well just kick her to the side.

"Are you ready?" On Happy's side, Ye Xiu asked. His words weren't aimed at the entire team, but at a certain someone.

"Yes." A player on the bench nodded his head and stood up. At this moment, the Happy players were being introduced.

Wu Chen. Launcher. Dawn Rifle.

As the introduction echoed throughout the stadium, everyone in Team Excellent Era halted their footsteps.

It was not just them. When the crowd heard this name, they were also stunned.

Whether it was Excellent Era or Happy, those who had been following the matches closely were all familiar with this name. But Wu Chen... this person was undoubtedly a part of Team Happy's registered players, but in the offline tournament, he had never made an appearance. And now in such a crucial match like the finals, he would be making his first appearance?

There was no applause from the crowd.

He was a player that had never gone on stage and he wasn't a player that everyone had been looking forward to seeing. His sudden appearance made everyone puzzled rather than expectant. Even the commentators, Pan Lin and Lin Yibo, were crazily ridiculing Happy. It could be considered as them venting their emotions from not knowing what to do about Su Mucheng's actions. They did all sorts of analyses on Wu Chen and most of their conclusions were unfavorable.

"Happy is in a difficult position against Excellent Era, so they thought of putting out a surprise player. However, this player has no experience of what it's like on stage. Suddenly throwing him out in the finals is too rash. Going too far is just as bad as not enough!" Li Yibo concluded.

And at the same time, the players on both sides were walking towards their player booths.

Team Happy. Their players were Ye Xiu, Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and Wu Chen.

Wei Chen and Sun Zheping, the two veterans, weren't participating in the team competition. Sun Zheping didn't participate much because of his hand injury. He couldn't play for too much without his injury flaring up. As for Wei Chen, his age was a reality that couldn't be avoided. His energy was limited. It wasn't obvious in the game. When he pulled an all-nighter and killed monsters, he seemed to be just as energetic as the younger players, but in an intense high-level competition, his energy clearly dropped faster than the others. Happy had fought several intense matches in the offline tournament. Wei Chen had to put in a lot of effort in them. The longer they took, the more tired he felt.

In their plan for the group arena, Wei Chen was supposed to face Sun Xiang. This difficult matchup would certainly put a lot of stress on Wei Chen, so in their plan for the finals, they had Wei Chen participate in the group arena, but not in the team competition. In the end, even though Wei Chen didn't face Sun Xiang, he still had to face an All-Star like Xiao Shiqin. Their original thinking behind the arrangement was still put to use.

Apart from that, there was Luo Ji, who wouldn't be appearing this match. His skill level was rather low, so they couldn't let him play in such a critical match.

The biggest surprise was Wu Chen.

Through this analysis, Wu Chen's appearance might not have been intended as a surprise, but rather out of helplessness.

Wu Chen quietly walked among Team Happy's players. He wasn't aware of the discussion going on because of him. As a player from Team Everlasting that had been a part of the Challenger League for several years, it had been a long time since Wu Chen had received any attention. Even when he was in the pro scene, he had never gotten so much attention.

In the eyes of the pros, his skill level wasn't top-notch.

But he had a dream and he relentlessly pursued it. Wu Chen had been ready for this match for a long time, perhaps too long. He had always been hoping for Team Everlasting to stride past this obstacle and return to the Alliance. Team Everlasting was no longer there, but the dream in his heart had never died.

Get through the Challenger League and return to the Alliance!

Chapter 1030: A Childish Annoyance?

The two teams of players had already neatly filed onto the stage.

The team competition was like an opera. It was a life or death situation. Who won and who lost would decide the fate of both teams. Living meant heaven, while dying meant another year of hell. Yet for Excellent Era, this would be an even deeper hell. Spending two years a row stewing in the Challenger League? Even Excellent Era would be embarrassed to call themselves a powerhouse if that happened. Sun Xiang, Xiao Shiqin, they were both All-Star players and top players in the Alliance. Both of them had sacrificed a year because they had been looking towards Excellent Era's future, but if the future was another year in the Challenger League, it was hard to say if either of them would be patient.

We have to win!

This kind of conviction wasn't something Tao Xuan needed to remind them of. They would certainly have it themselves. The future was what they were all looking towards, yet it was also something that they had to grasp and create for themselves.

What about Happy then? They had no way of sustaining for a year. As far as the outside world had been concerned, every step they advanced to signified their limit, but now, they had reached the final stage of the Challenger League. This was already something very unexpected. Defeating Excellent Era? In the eyes of many, this was something entirely unconceivable. Even those who wanted this to happen didn't think it could.

The disparity in strength was too great.

Many people knew this very well. Even Happy themselves were well aware.

But the fact that no one knew the final result was what made competitions interesting. No one would dare to say who won with one hundred percent certainty. If the results could be determined just by looking at who was stronger on paper, why would there still need to be a fight?

Victory. It would always need to be fought for and earned. It was never about comparison.

The total number of players on both sides was twelve. At this moment, they had all entered their individual player booths. The map for the team competition slowly materialized on stage. The screen displayed the current loading bars of the twelve characters. Introductions were being made for each of the characters.

Wu Chen had never appeared during the offline tournament, so naturally his character had had little exposure. Now, after he suddenly appeared in the lineup, the spectators were suddenly brimming with curiosity about his character. Raising their heads with difficulty to look at Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, everyone was greatly disappointed.

Dawn Rifle had originally been an important member of Team Everlasting. However, every piece of valuable equipment on him had been peddled away after Team Everlasting was dissolved. Yet, while Happy had been in the process of strengthening their characters' equipment, they hadn't focused on creating any pieces of Silver Equipment suited for the Launcher class, so they could only choose from the selection of level 75 Orange equipment.

Ultimately, Wu Chen managed to pull together a full set of level 75 Orange equipment for Dawn Rifle. In-game, this kind of character would be considered almost unmatched. However, on the professional stage, especially in the face of a powerhouse team like Excellent Era, a full set of Orange equipment, whose characteristics could be determined with a glance, really wasn't enough. Looking at this character, Wu Chen really didn't seem like Happy's secret weapon for defeating Excellent Era.

After both teams' characters had finished loading, the final troop arrangement was finally revealed.

On Team Excellent Era's side, the reserve player was Wang Ze.

On Team Happy's side, the reserve player was Steamed Bun.

Wu Chen was actually part of the starting lineup?

The audience once again erupted in murmurs. After seeing Wu Chen's character, everyone had been more willing to believe that he had come onstage because Happy didn't have any other choice. Thus, when the audience saw that he would be one of the starting players instead, they were once again surprised.

At this moment, the system's countdown ended. The team competition had officially begun.

Map: Ancient Maple Path.

As the designated map for the most important match of the Challenger League, Ancient Maple Path was another very comprehensive one. However, this time, the battlefield had been moved from the city to the countryside. A long, secluded ancient road ran from one side of the map to the other. Both sides of the road were lined with maple trees, the scarlet leaves rustling with the wind. Naturally, this was where the name of the map originated. However, a map couldn't be made up of just a single road. On both sides of the map, behind the trees, there were hills, rivers, mud holes, and scattered stones. Whether or not all of these things should be together in one place wasn't important for a competition map. What was important was giving the map a more diverse feel, especially for this kind of designated map. It definitely couldn't cater to any one playstyle, because this would give an unfair advantage to a team that was well suited to that style. It would be like giving one team the advantage of a home game map!

Match: start.

The characters from both teams spawned at opposite ends of the ancient road. These spawn points were also the designated support zones. Outside of these, there were also four other support zones distributed evenly on both sides of the map.

As soon as Team Excellent Era's five characters spawned, they began skillfully advancing, showing their familiarity with the map.

Qiu Fei's Combat Form was at the head of the group, with Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher following behind at a varying distance. Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric, Woven Shadow, followed behind, under the protection of these two characters. Woven Shadow was also quite a famous character within the Alliance. As a powerhouse, Excellent Era obviously wouldn't have any weak links.

After his awful performance in the group arena, Shen Jian didn't dare to make any more mistakes. His Striker character acted as a bodyguard for Woven Shadow, not daring to take a single step out of line.

Behind all of the others was Team Excellent Era's ace, One Autumn Leaf. It seemed that the generalissimo was well accustomed to bringing up the rear.

It seemed like a chaotic formation, but in reality every person's position was calculated. Traveling along the ancient road, Excellent Era constantly maintained this formation. Only Xiao Shiqin's character appeared flexible.

In contrast, Happy's side didn't have any of Excellent Era's discipline or tacit understanding. Nevertheless, their movements were still well coordinated. All of the characters neatly walked towards the left, evidently not planning on engaging with Excellent Era's forces head-on.

"How will the two sides perform?" At this time, Pan Lin clearly couldn't wait. From before the contest began until the official start of the match, he had already asked this question four times.

"Happy has elected to take a more tactical approach, which isn't unexpected. The two sides clearly differ greatly in strength, so they will have to employ flexible tactics if they want to win." Li Yibo said.

"But Excellent Era also has a Master Tactician, and furthermore he appears to be performing at his peak today. Will Happy's tactics be of any use?" Pan Lin wondered.

"Let's take a look at Happy's formation first!" Li Yibo pointed out.

Happy's five players all took a detour along the left side of the ancient road. Their sense of direction was very clear. It was obvious that they had come up with this strategy after carefully researching the map. However, Team Excellent Era's footsteps had already come to a stop. Those who studied the map had a clear understanding of where their opponents would enter their field of view if they had gone straight down the road. At this moment, Excellent Era had already reached this spot. Since they hadn't seen anyone from the opposing team, they obviously knew that Happy wouldn't be facing them in a direct confrontation.

This point obviously wasn't a surprise to Excellent Era. The team immediately changed directions, heading towards one side of the road. Seeing this, Pan Lin immediately grew excited, because the direction that Excellent Era had chosen led straight towards Happy! At this rate, the two sides would meet in the northwest part of the map.

The broadcast also cut to display an image of the map, revealing the intricacies of the terrain. Since battle had yet to break out, they had time to let everyone familiarize themselves with the map first!

At this moment, the spectators present became even more nervous. On the projection, both sides' characters were currently tiny dots, hurrying towards their destinations. Excellent Era's five characters still maintained their previous formation, whereas Happy's five people still seemed disorderly. As the gap between the two sides closed, the projection also zoomed in. The terrain and the characters also became more and more focused.

Soon!

Just as this thought crossed everyone's minds, a gunshot rang out. From Happy's side, the one who had caused everyone's surprise, Wu Chen, fired the first shot of the battle.

Dawn Rifle's projectile flew out, but it didn't seem to have any sort of purpose. It randomly exploded somewhere on the ground. It appeared as if this shot had been some sort of misclick.

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Except, Team Excellent Era clearly made immediate adjustments. The distance between the two sides had already reached the point at which artillery fire could be heard.

"Their sense of direction is very clear!" Pan Lin, seeing Excellent Era's adjustments, shouted. Just from hearing this noise, Excellent Era had made adjustments and now charged very clearly in Team Happy's direction.

"Is Happy planning on setting up an ambush?" Li Yibo, seeing Happy's action, didn't dare come to a hasty conclusion. In a 5v5 match, the power of an ambush wasn't as powerful as many expected it to be. It was mainly used to grasp an opportunity by catching the opponents off guard, but in a match in which

the gap in strength was wide, it only gave initiative. It wasn't enough to win a competition in one fell swoop. Excellent Era definitely had the strength to control the aftermath and take back the initiative.

"It seems that this isn't the case ..." Pan Lin said.

Happy's characters didn't spread out and conceal themselves, instead choosing to immediately retreat. Ultimately, they managed to put some distances between themselves and Excellent Era, but the earlier noise meant that the opposing team was very clear that they had been here just recently. As they got closer to the area, they began to guard against Happy's ambush. In the audience's eyes, their extremely careful movements were almost laughable. Excellent Era's fans only hated the fact that they had no way of warning their team that the opponents had already run away.

Excellent Era quickly realized that their opponents had indeed left. Once again, the team's formation was adjusted, widening in order to search a larger area. However, at this moment, another explosion rang out. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle had once again unexpectedly fired.

Excellent Era once again followed the source of the noise, yet once again Happy turned and retreated, disappearing into thin air. Excellent Era's formation once again tightened to guard against an ambush, making the spectators look at one another in dismay.

If all they wanted was to use this method to wear down Excellent Era's spirit, weren't Happy's so-called tactics too childish? This kind of annoyance, as long as you ignored it, what kind of damage could it do?

As a result, when Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle fired out a third shot, Excellent Era's team still appeared patient, chasing the noise once more. However, Team Happy finally decided to switch things up. The team split into two, with Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle suddenly running off on his own.