

## Avatar 1061

### Chapter 1061: I'm Back

"The income situation? I'm not sure." Tang Rou didn't show any sort of confusion, merely saying this calmly.

The reporters took a moment to react. This answer really wasn't what they were expecting. They might have asked such a question, but this was just to set up the following discussion. The income of a pro player was something that any normal Internet cafe player would drool over for half a day. Yet Tang Rou had replied with "not sure". This sort of answer was setting things up in the wrong direction!

Some veterans who heard this response from Tang Rou all sent meaningful stares at Chen Guo. They thought that this was a plot by the Happy boss, to keep the players ignorant and naive so that they were easier to control. But unfortunately, when they went to scrutinize Chen Guo, they found that she didn't seem at all unsettled or nervous at Tang Rou's answer, and instead smiled happily and that was the extent of her reaction.

What was going on?

Now the reporters were confused. Never mind pro players, no matter what job, who would go in completely blind to the income situation? Was this pretty lady messing with them on purpose?

The reporters looked around doubtfully until the press officer asked to rush them again, "Are there anymore questions?"

All these hold ups in the press conference today was causing him to get a little impatient.

"Could you guys leak a little information on the treatment Team Happy's players are getting right now?" The reporters kept at it, but they no longer focused on Tang Rou, throwing the question at Chen Guo instead.

The reporters did have a rather keen judgement. This question struck at Happy's heart. Chen Guo answered a little stutteringly, "In the Challenger League, we all gathered out of our love for Glory. Now that we're going to be a pro team, we're going to begin discussing the contracts in detail. We have yet to start, so there's nothing to leak, yet."

The reporters were thunderstruck.

If this was a tourist team that a few players created just to have fun, then this sort of circumstance would be definite. However, Team happy was the winner of the Challenger League who defeated Excellent Era and had God Ye Xiu. Chen Guo seemed to be saying, that with their lineup and circumstance, they didn't seem to have any sort of income; it was all out of joy.

"So what you mean to say is that, until now, Team Happy's players aren't earning an income?" Someone finally asked carefully.

Chen Guo felt a little awkward, but she wasn't the kind of person to hide things and would never tell a blatant lie in such a situation. She could only nod and say, "Yes."

A cacophony rose from the crowd at once and someone immediately pursued the issue. "Even God Ye Xiu?"

"Um... yeah." Chen Guo hesitated for a moment. It was probably better to not talk about the income he gained as an employee of the Internet cafe...

Nothing needed to be mentioned about the chaos that erupted then. Happy's situation was truly too shocking. Even disregarding the no income thing, Chen Guo's words suggested that they had yet to talk about contracts. That was something they definitely had to report on.

You had to keep in mind that they already had the qualifications to attend the Pro League next season and everyone was about to become real pro players. Were they waiting to have a big sale of players upon entering the Alliance or something, still not ready with the contracts to ensure the players stayed? With the performance Happy's players had in the Challenger League, the reporters knew that a lot of pro teams would show interest. Hadn't a lot of gossip come out when the Challenger League?

Speaking of, there were teams who were interested in Happy's players even back then, but now, Happy's lineup was still whole and none of them had been moved by what the other teams said. Yet, from what the boss had said, there had been no incentive given for the players to stay. Happy's players formed a team and stayed true to it of their own volition?

That was unscientific...

The other teams probably knew how strangely Team Happy operated and therefore didn't make any moves on their players. If this information was released... Team Happy wouldn't be immediately dismantled, would it?

The reporters even started worrying for Happy about this. However, they knew that this would most certainly get out. There were so many reporters here and they couldn't be certain that everyone was willing to keep this information to themselves, so the thought of helping them hide this information out of sympathy was childish and illogical. Someone was probably already organizing this information into a draft to publish.

Overall, Happy really was a new experience for the media! They actually leaked something so important in a press conference. The reporters lamented over this, gradually having the suspicion that Happy was acting nonchalant after gaining something big.

The conference was a little chaotic and, looking at the time, the Alliance press officer realized it was late, deciding to announce that the next question was going to be the last one after discussing with Happy.

The reporters had gotten a lot of information from today's press conference. They couldn't pry too much for the last question so any experienced reporter wouldn't ask anything too complicated. There was little point in ending this on low-spirits.

"After being apart from the Alliance for so long, is there anything you want to say right now?" The last question was still directed at Ye Xiu.

"Hahaha." Ye Xiu chuckled and then said, "I'm back."

I'm back!

This simple sentence displayed immense determination. Although a surplus of interesting information had been dug up in the press conference and even though everyone had started drafting out their articles on this information during the press conference, in the end, the media stands all chose this one sentence as their headlines.

Ye Xiu: I'm Back.

Apart from that, the media groups all did their best to compile, collate and express, reporting the other contents.

A year of preparations was what gave Happy the win. Opportunity smiles only upon those who are prepared!

Excellent Era's ex-captain strikes in the press conference, condemning Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan, for abandoning Excellent Era!

Happy, brought together by love!

...

This news all had plenty of substance to it and were written in whatever way that would elicit the best reactions. Yet this was nothing more than leaking the information from the press conference. The true value of this discussion was in using the information to guide the people.

Those reporters that liked Excellent Era used Ye Xiu's speech and the best of their writing capabilities to segregate Excellent Era from Tao Xuan. All the dirt on Excellent Era's name was shifted onto Tao Xuan. The other neutral reporters didn't point them in a different direction either, faced with the clarity of truth.

It isn't the team's fault, but a specific person!

With this description, everyone found it reasonable after reading! All these incidents were created by a single person, the boss, who had ordered this. It was his control that had brought the team down with him.

Thus, in an instant, the winds changed.

Many Excellent Era fans had already disbanded. They couldn't tolerate all the shocking situations that Excellent Era had revealed and were giving up on Excellent Era. However, with the freshly printed articles, their sorrow and disappointment all turned to anger. They gathered once more to protect their Team Excellent Era. They wanted to exorcise the real malice behind all this.

Get out of here, Tao Xuan!

Within the day, signs like these were all over Club Excellent Era's walls, their grounds and in the hands of the players. Beg for Excellent Era to not be sold? No such player ever appeared again. They had already realized that the sale of Excellent Era wouldn't cause it to collapse, but if they let Tao Xuan continue his ways, then Excellent Era's name would be forever tarnished.

Excellent Era belonged to all of them, but it was nothing but fixed assets in Tao Xuan's hands. That was Excellent Era's physical form, but not its soul.

Where was its soul? Its soul was in the hearts of all its fans.

The loyal Excellent Era fans condemned Tao Xuan while at the same time began to call out, asking for someone who truly loved Glory and Excellent Era to take over Team Excellent Era.

In that instant, Excellent Era was revived.

The fans were always the greatest wealth a team had.

No one was willing to take Excellent Era in full because all the things that had happened with Excellent Era had caused them to lose the support of their fans. This sort of mess wasn't something that anyone was willing to deal with. Yet now, the fans had saved themselves. They realized where the problem had occurred and found a way to solve it. They came out to support Excellent Era once more. This was something everyone noticed.

This sort of Excellent Era could stand on its own once more. However, there was a requirement to that, and that was that Tao Xuan had to leave. He could leave with all his possessions, but he couldn't take a single fan with him. Even if there was nothing here any longer, the fans would stand guard here. With their protection, Excellent Era could rise again from nothing and be reborn.

How did this change happen? It started from the words Ye Xiu had said to the reporters. They awakened so many fans.

Ye Xiu was their captain forever!

No Excellent Era fan would ever doubt that again. Even though Excellent Era had been sent out of the Pro League by him personally, that was a match and that was all there was to it. Wasn't this always their captain's attitude on the field?

After departing for a year, their once captain officially announced: he was back.

It was just unfortunate that he didn't return to Excellent Era. Though some people were already calling for Ye Xiu to come back and lead Excellent Era again, most of the fans couldn't ask that of him anymore.

It was too selfish.

Ye Xiu had done enough for Excellent Era. They had no reason to relentlessly demand him make any more contributions.

Ye Xiu didn't owe Excellent Era anything. It was Excellent Era that owed him too much.

Disregarding everything else, this was true from just looking at the contract he had signed. Han Wenqing, who had slaughtered his way through the Alliance from the very beginning alongside Ye Xiu, had the heftiest contract in the Alliance. As for their captain? All these years, he still held the contract that had been signed at the beginning of the Alliance, a contract that gave him a pitiful income in these times.

Talking about money was somewhat blunt, but Excellent Era owed their captain this bluntness. However, he had never expressed anger about it because he had never cared.

All he wanted, all he ever wanted was one thing: victory. This was something that would never change for him, no matter where he was. All the Excellent Era fans could do was give him their blessings.

#### Chapter 1062: Keep Winning Through the Booming

The commotion surrounding Excellent Era was still going on, but Excellent Era was big, not nearly as easy to take over as Team Everlasting. Even disregarding everything else, just the God-level account, Battle God One Autumn Leaf, was probably more valuable than all of Team Everlasting's assets put together. Plus, Excellent Era had been a part of the Alliance for years, so they had their own training grounds. Their own stadium that had been built over the years of the Alliance's rapid development. Excellent Era was massive. There was nothing that you could just buy on a whim. Public opinion and the support of the fans had reawakened its inner value. This might have elicited interest, but it also made a purchase harder. Considering this inner value, Excellent Era's worth was even greater.

However, what was good for buyers was that Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan, had been pushed to a point where he had to sell Excellent Era. Team Excellent Era had the chance to continue to grow and create profit in anyone's hands except his, for that would turn it into a sinking ship with the loss of fan support.

With the path clear, how the future transactions concerning Excellent Era would go was up to the buyer and seller to negotiate. From popular opinion, most believed that Excellent Era wouldn't be completely bought out as a whole. After all, Excellent Era had a lot to it. Such a large investment would require several years of good business, and that was only if Excellent Era could swiftly return to the Pro Alliance and compete as a viable champion team.

However, there would always be risks in competition. If Excellent Era had another bad year and couldn't get back to the Alliance, then that would really be something to weep about. Therefore, popular opinion said that Excellent Era would most likely sell some of its basic hardware to decrease its overall value and risk. That way, someone would be willing to take it on.

How far negotiations had gone so far, no one knew, and the playoffs for the ninth season of the Pro Alliance was fast approaching.

After testing things out at the Challenger League, the Alliance eventually decided that the playoffs for the Pro Alliance would be conducted using the headcount rules of the offline Challenger League tournament matches. Additionally, after asking and obtaining the opinions of multiple parties, the scoring method was set as a point for every opponent killed. Whoever had more points would be the victor.

Apart from that, another large change was made to the rules. The new playoffs wouldn't be decided through the sum of the points of each team for two rounds of matches. Instead, the Alliance would use the overall victory of each individual round to make a judgement. The victor would be decided best two of three. That meant it had changed from needing to fight two rounds to possibly three.

Without a doubt, this was a change for the better from both competition and economic viewpoints, and the reason this change could be made was because of the use of the new rules.

The old rules split a round into three parts, individual competition, group arena, team competition. Under the situation where the team competition took up the majority of the points, the overall victory could be decided by two parts and the group arena would lose its purpose. However, if the points of the team competition were lowered, the victory could be decided with just the individual competition and group arena, and there might not be a reason to hold the team competition.

The Alliance didn't want any of these situation to happen, and the new rules would prevent any of the aforementioned situations from occurring. And if the headcounts of the two sides were tied at the end, then that could be dealt with through overtime, so it wasn't a problem. With that, the two best of three rules would be implemented.

Then, amidst the enthusiastic promotion by the Alliance, the playoffs came closer and closer, once again taking center stage in the Glory circle. The members of the eight teams that had made it to the playoffs all appeared onstage, raising support for their teams. Now that they had gotten here, any team had the reason to anticipate getting that trophy sitting at the pinnacle.

However, when being interviewed, all eight teams had been asked questions regarding Happy. Even if those questions had been asked long ago, the media didn't rest. For someone who didn't understand the backstory to this, they would probably think that Happy was a hidden bBoss in the playoffs or something upon reading these interviews. Otherwise, why else would every interview for every team mention the name Happy?

"What are your opinions on Ye Xiu's return?" In the interview with Tyranny, all the reporters were willing to ask Han Wenqing this question.

"I eagerly await to meet him on the stage." As a long-time rival, Han Wenqing's welcome to Ye Xiu was still with his fists.

"As another player who retired and returned, is there anything you would like to say to Ye Xiu?" Zhang Jiale was also a focus in the interview.

"He accomplished something I had thought impossible. For that, I truly admire him," Zhang Jiale replied.

"What are your thoughts on Ye Xiu's return?" In the interview with Blue Rain, the same question appeared.

"The skill level of the entire Alliance will rise a stage," Blue Rain's captain Yu Wenzhou expressed.

"Don't you think that without Excellent Era, it would be more of a loss?" A reporter asked.

"Hey, don't worry too much about that. Does Excellent Era's skill level not rely on their players? With their situation, there's little chance their players would stay. I think they'll find an opportunity to transfer and we'll definitely see them in the Alliance again. How about we guess where they'll go? For example, Sun Xiang, I think..."

"Next question." The press officer from Blue Rain cut Huang Shaotian off stoically. He had gotten used to doing this because of how many times he had to in the past. Huang Shaotian's feelings? What was that? Never heard of it.

"Hm....." In the Samsara interview, Zhou Zekai gave a "hm" before falling into a lengthy silence when faced with the question of Ye Xiu's return.

It wasn't until the atmosphere of the place had gone a little strange that he abruptly spoke up and added two words, "very difficult."

"You mean to say, that it'll be very difficult to deal with Ye Xiu?"

"Yes." Zhou Zekai nodded.

Ok, this was Zhou Zekai. Being able to get this sort of response was already good enough. If they wanted to know more opinions, it'd be better to just go and find their vice-captain Jiang Botao.

The eight teams all had different responses. The media had gotten what they wanted. However, in truth, these eight teams definitely wouldn't put their focus on Ye Xiu, who they would only see next season. The fight for the season nine championships was about to start and the first match was the gossip-filled match between Tyranny and Hundred Blossoms. The first round would be held on Hundred Blossom's turf and the tension was obvious. Even today, there were many Hundred Blossoms players who couldn't accept Zhang Jiale's decision to join Tyranny after returning.

When Zhang Jiale appeared, thunderous booing instantly flooded the stadium.

Zhang Jiale was emotionless. This wasn't the first time he had gotten this sort of reception. During the regular season, he had already received such treatment in this stadium, the very stadium that he had fought in for years, the stadium he was oh so familiar with.

Now that it had come to the playoffs, Zhang Jiale was facing a similar situation to Ye Xiu and had to fight to the death with his original team.

What was he feeling? Zhang Jiale had been asked such a question in the pre-match interview. He didn't answer because he didn't know what he was feeling. He had once thought he could deal with this calmly, but now that it came to it, he found that it wasn't so simple.

Amidst the boos, Zhang Jiale silently walked towards the preparations room.

"Go die!" A bellow rang out from the spectator stands and they saw a group of enraged Hundred Blossom fans throw filled drink bottles down. This life and death elimination match had scattered their rationality.

It was good that they were rather far away and the closest weren't very accurate. Zhang Jiale hurriedly dodged this attack. The security guards had already split into two teams, one team went to stop these fans and the other rushed over to protect Zhang Jiale from further harm.

The troublemaker fans had been sent out of the stadium. No matter what, this sort of act would be condemned heavily.

Zhang Jiale quietly watched the fans being escorted out and some still had their heads turned to curse at him. Zhang Jiale sighed, before realizing that someone next to him was staring at him.

Zhang Jiale turned his head to look and paused for a moment before squeezing out a strained smile.

"Little Le..."

Little Le was one of the security guards at Hundred Blossoms, and had been one when Zhang Jiale was still there. At the same time, he was also a loyal fan of Hundred Blossoms and the entire team was very familiar with him.

"Welcome back," Little Le said, walking closer, but his face was unsmiling.

Zhang Jiale wasn't sure how to react for a moment, about to say something when Little Le suddenly sent him a punch.

The stadium was rather chaotic right now and no one expected that even security guards would do something so irrational. Little Le was quickly restrained by his fellows. He didn't struggle at all, just gazed at Zhang Jiale without a hint of a smile.

"Let him go..."

Zhang Jiale could still feel bile coming up from the punch, but managed to squeeze out the sentence.

The guards knew the severity of what Little Le had done, but if Zhang Jiale wasn't going to press, then there was room to maneuver. They all rather obviously favored Little Le and hurriedly let him go upon hearing Zhang Jiale's words, but kept him back to prevent him from acting rashly again.

"To be a champion, I will win!" Zhang Jiale threw these six words down before turning and leaving. None of Tyranny had clearly seen the chaos that had erupted just now, only seeing the security grabbing another person, guessing that something must have happened. However, Zhang Jiale simply shook his head and didn't say much more. Everyone knew that this match was very difficult for Zhang Jiale and didn't pry.

"Don't worry, I'm fine." After sitting in his spot for a long while, Zhang Jiale suddenly spoke up. Though his teammates didn't ask, he could still feel the worry they had for him. The team was a whole. He needed to use his attitude to disperse their worries and get everyone focused on the match.

"We must win." After taking a deep breath, Zhang Jiale stood amidst the boos.

In the public announcement just now, the players for each side had been announced. The first to go up for Tyranny was Zhang Jiale.

After several minutes, when he walked down from the stage, Team Tyranny had already gained two points. Zhang Jiale had successfully accomplished a one versus two in the group arena, only falling against the third person.

For the championship, I have to be strong and keep winning!

With this in mind, Zhang Jiale returned to Tyranny's bench amidst the boos with his head high and back straight.

The first day of the playoffs saw Team Tyranny winning their away game against Team Hundred Blossoms, 11 to 7. The MVP that day was the Team Tyranny player, Zhang Jiale. Account: Spitfire, Hundred Dazzling Blossoms.

Chapter 1063: Semifinalists



In the post-match interviews, Zhang Jiale was faced with many more sensitive questions as the MVP and Hundred Blossom's ex-captain. Zhang Jiale was composed, only expressing his determination to win the championships.

For the championships, Zhang Jiale mercilessly crushes Hundred Blossoms...

The media, who always liked to twist things a little, had to write much drama into the topic. The match of the second day arrived amidst the clamour and discussion.

This match wasn't as drama-filled as Tyranny versus Hundred Blossoms. Samsara still had Zhou Zekai as their ace and core, while Void, as always, had their Ghostblade Duo of Li Xuan and Wu Yuce. In the end, Zhou Zekai's fast shooting broke through Void's Ghostblade Duo and Team Samsara won their away game 11 to 8 against Void.

On the third day, it was Wind Howl versus Misty Rain. Wind Howl's Zhao Yuzhe desperately wanted to become the Alliance's number one Elementalist. In the Rookie Challenge, he had tried to imitate his captain, Tang Hao, challenging Misty Rain's ace, Chu Yunxiu. Unfortunately, he lost in the end. The two teams were paired in the playoffs and, for Zhao Yuzhe, this was another good opportunity to prove himself. Unfortunately for him, he was far from being the star of the show. Tang Hao was undoubtedly the star of Wind Howl. They also had number two player Fang Rui. As the representative of playing dirty, how dirty he could play each match was always something people eagerly anticipated seeing.

For Misty Rain, Chu Yunxiu had never been an extremely competitive person, so there wasn't all that much to see about Zhao Yuzhe challenging her. Zhao Yuzhe's ambitions had never aroused much attention. It was the beautiful twin sisters, Shu Keyi and Shu Kexing, that Misty Rain had dug up during the winter season who gained the most public attention. Team Misty Rain didn't give them two new characters. They used the two male Sharpshooters that they had used originally in the game, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack.

In the end, Team Misty Rain had three female players, yet not a single female character appeared on the field. The three characters played by the female players, Windy Rain, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, were all male characters.

Of course, after being equipped with pro level equipment, the strength of the two new characters had skyrocketed. In the latter half of the season, the twins had more and more chances to appear on the field. The two were both doing their best to get used to the pro circle and enter a better state. Everyone was wondering. Would these two become Misty Rain's ace card in the playoffs?

Not disappointing everyone's hopes, Shu Keyi and Shu Kexing ended up being a part of the starting lineup in the team competition for their opening match of the playoffs. Unfortunately, they didn't become the aces to Misty Rain's victory, because Misty Rain seemed to have forgotten that Wind Howl had Fang Rui, a man who would die if he didn't play dirty, and playing dirty was definitely the way to suppress noobs. The twins' first journey in the playoffs wasn't a smooth one and Team Misty Rain lost 9 to 11 to Wind Howl in their home game.

Three matches of the first round of playoffs had gone by and what resulted was a flood of visiting teams winning home teams. It was on the fourth day that this status quo was finally broken. In the much-

anticipated Tiny Herb versus Blue Rain match, the home team, Team Blue Rain, finally won back some face for home teams and won 11 to 9 against the visiting team, Team Tiny Herb. These two teams were already archrivals. Now that both had spectacular rookies, this match was full of ups and downs, a wonderful experience for the audience. This match was definitely the most spectacular match amongst the opening round matches.

With the opening round coming to curtain call, next up was the second round. In the end, the first match of the second round was a totally unexpected victory for Team Hundred Blossoms who managed to win against Team Tyranny in a close call 11 to 9.

Team Hundred Blossoms hadn't had any sort of obvious advantage throughout the match, but gave a performance full of persistence and desperation. The entire team was feeling the pressure. In this season, they hadn't started out well and were plagued by criticism. It was good that they were able to catch the last bus to the playoffs after the big update. This achievement filled the team and fans with hope that they might be able to advance in the playoffs. Yet, the very first match was coincidentally against the team that Zhang Jiale had joined, the team that public opinion said was the most likely to be the champions, Team Tyranny. The fans all hoped that they would be shown their place.

But while hopes and dreams were wonderful, reality was cruel. In the first round, they lost their home game, bringing the Hundred Blossom fans back to that chilling season opening. Especially since Zhang Jiale had gotten the MVP for that match, that made things unbearably painful. However, Team Hundred Blossoms didn't give up. They managed to surge up under this pressure and counter with a heavy blow to Tyranny on Tyranny's home turf. There were no weak teams in the playoffs. The Hundred Blossom fans were proud of their team. Their tie with Tyranny was enough to make many media groups write the headlines of the following day as "The flourishing resurgence of a Hundred Blossoms".

No such reversal appeared in the two matches of the next two days. Samsara defeated Void in their home game, Wind Howl took down the visiting Misty Rain, and the two teams were set as semi-finalists.

Team Void always managed to enter the quarterfinals, but would also always get stopped there. Their Dual Linking Ghost Boundary duo was a classic pair in the Glory circle, but this pair never managed to achieve a convincing accomplishment. Should Team Void make some greater adjustments to achieve a breakthrough? This was something many people started discussing after this match.

As for Misty Rain, they might have lost the match, but their fans gained hope. This hope came from the twins. Though these twins were girls like Chu Yunxiu, their demeanor on the battlefield definitely wasn't like some maiden-in-distress. The two had open and strong personalities and great cooperation. Team Misty Rain had often been seen as lacking in a headstrong temperament because their ace was female, but now this might change because of these other two female players. Misty Rain's tactical system was changing rather obviously. This pair of twins might very well become the future core of Misty Rain, if they developed their skills well. As for Chu Yunxiu, she was changing from a DPS based Elementalist to a support. Perhaps this role was better suited to her personality. Then, Misty Rain's other All-Star level player, Li Hua, was a sneak attack and assassination expert. People were eagerly anticipating Misty Rain's future developments.

Then, on the fourth day, it was Tiny Herb versus Blue Rain again, but this time they were competing on Tiny Herb's turf. This time, it was Tiny Herb who had used their home advantage to wipe out Blue Rain.

From this, it was clear that the two teams were very close in skill level, having to eventually use the home advantage to influence the scales of victory.

Tyranny versus Hundred Blossoms and Tiny Herb versus Blue Rain both needed a third match to decide the victor. The third round of competitions would continue on the same home turf of the second round matches. That meant, it would still be the higher ranked Tyranny and Tiny Herb's home games. However, for the third round, the home advantage would be greatly reduced.

The home team would only have a familiar environment and the support of local fans, but this round, they would no longer have the right to choose their maps.

The right to choose the map was the greatest home advantage in Glory competitions and the Alliance considered how to make this as fair as possible. They were giving the team with a higher rank a part of the home advantage, but this advantage couldn't be too influential on the final victor. In the past, it was just the situation of away then home that gave them an easier time taking control of the situation. Now, the third round had been handed to them, but the right to choose the map was too big of an advantage, so they took away this right. The map for the third round would be randomly chosen from the map bank that had been prepared for the playoffs. These maps were designed specifically for the playoffs by the developers and info on them wouldn't be leaked at all. That meant that the third round would be played with the teams having zero knowledge of the map.

This sort of match would definitely be a test of the adaptability of the two teams.

The first match of the third round was Tyranny versus Hundred Blossoms again. The experience veterans had helped them greatly on this sort of unfamiliar map. Having one senior was like having a treasure, and Tyranny had three, no? In the group arena, this sort of advantage wasn't evident, but in the team competition, the veterans understood the map better and were better able to find opportunities in battle than Hundred Blossoms. Team Hundred Blossoms might be persistent, but they were still suppressed by Team Tyranny. In the end, Tyranny won 11 to 8.

Hundred Blossoms lost.

But this time, they weren't the target of any blame.

Tyranny's strength this season was clear as crystal to anyone with eyes. Though the fans hoped for more from Hundred Blossoms, they were satisfied that the match had gone this far. Team Hundred Blossoms had found their rhythm. So long as they continued down this path, they believed that victory would descend on them. The team and the fans both bid the playoffs goodbye with this sort of confidence in their hearts.

As for the other match after this, it was Tiny Herb versus Blue Rain. One of the two powerhouses was doomed to be eliminated in the opening round. This was quite the shame. In the end, Team Tiny Herb managed to win this match. What had influenced the scales of victory, in the end, wasn't the tiny home advantage that Team Tiny Herb held. In the match, Team Blue Rain's rookie, Lu Hanwen, made a serious mistake which became the turning point for the match.

This optimistic and energetic young man finally shed tears in the post-match interview, causing the reporters to be unable to blame him at all. No one would forget, this was a teenager who wasn't even

fifteen yet. But would Blue Rain be hindering his growth, letting such a young player bear the weight of such a heavy responsibility?

"Next time, I'll be stronger!"

No one would've thought that in the end, Lu Hanwen would wipe away his own tears and say this to the reporters with determination.

He was truly an amazing rookie!

The reporters were surprised. They had seen plenty of players be finished for good after experiencing a setback, especially those that had dragged down their team in important matches like this. But this young man wouldn't. He would be regretful enough to shed tears for his mistake, but this didn't dishearten him. He turned this all into motivation to get stronger.

A player like this, full of positivity, wouldn't just get stronger, but someday, he'd become a role model for all pro players, wouldn't he?

Everyone had full confidence in this in that moment.

The quarterfinals of the playoffs came to a close there. Tyranny, Samsara, Wind Howl, Tiny Herb. The top four of the regular season had all defeated their opponents, reaching the semifinals.

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

The TKA OVA will be coming out on 4/27 and it'll be covering the season eight All Stars arc! For more information + trailer: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/18394462/>

Chapter 1064: Bleak and Desolate Excellent Era

The playoffs advanced like wildfire. Happy's group had received invites from Lou Guanning and stayed over at Club Heavenly Swords for a few days. The two sides scrimmed with each other every day and watched the matches together. Apart from that, Lou Guanning started a discussion for any possibilities of continuing their collaboration with Happy.

The two sides would be direct opponents in the league next season. There would be a direct collision of interests unlike before. Lou Guanning could be considered as starting off as a commoner and later becoming a nobleman. They first discussed and did a gentleman's agreement of what would be appropriate and what would be inappropriate for future collaborations in order to avoid any future disputes that would ruin the good relationship between them.

After a hanging around for a few days, Happy returned home. When they left, Lou Guanning carefully told Ye Xiu a piece of news: "Excellent Era seems to want to sell One Autumn Leaf. They're currently making inquiries of our thoughts on the matter."

"Oh?" Ye Xiu's expression was the same as always, "So what are your thoughts?"

"20 million..... I think that's too much..." It wasn't known if Lou Guanning intentionally gave Ye Xiu the price. Lou Guanning laughed bitterly, "At our current level, having this type of character is too much of a waste."

"You're quite rational now!" Ye Xiu felt moved.

"One step at a time!" Lou Guanning smiled.

"That's good. See you!" Ye Xiu called out and got ready to leave.

"Then..." Lou Guanning hesitated, but still spoke, "One Autumn Leaf..... If you're short on cash, just say the word."

"No need." Ye Xiu smiled, "It's the same as Excellent Era. It's all in the past."

"But what about Little Tang!" Lou Guanning pointed at Tang Rou.

"If she wants it, then she can buy it herself." Ye Xiu said half-jokingly.

Lou Guanning stared blankly. Then, he remembered Tang Rou's background and suddenly let out a laugh. Finally, he shook Ye Xiu's hands and bade farewell.

City H, Club Excellent Era.

It had been several days since the commotion. The current Club Excellent Era felt cold and desolate despite the scorching summer heat. There were no fans gathered outside the club. The signs scattered everywhere had already been cleaned up by the sanitation workers. There were only a few traces left in certain areas.

The main entrance to Club Excellent Era was still shut tight. The surrounding people all said that the gate seemed to have never opened these past few days.

In front of this entrance, Ye Xiu raised his head and looked at the Team Excellent Era emblem hanging there. Before, the team emblem was cleaned twice a week. Now, the team emblem hadn't been cleaned in several days and looked a lot duller.

Zhi zhi zhi....

The main entrance was carefully opened a tiny bit. Half a head peaked out and looked at Ye Xiu. That person was slightly surprised and then opened up the door a bit wider.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng walked in. The main entrance was immediately closed afterwards. The interior of Club Excellent Era seemed just as cold as the outside. Not a single person could be seen in the entire yard. The two walked towards Excellent Era's training center. Over here was where Excellent Era's players lived most of their daily lives: eating, sleeping, practicing... apart from away matches, it was completely possible for a player to not leave a step out of this area. Ye Xiu had lived that type of life for many years.

They entered the building and went upstairs to the player residences. When they passed by the practice room, Ye Xiu heard the tapping of a keyboard and the clicking of a mouse.

It was Glory.

Ye Xiu could tell. This was a game that he was incomparably familiar with. When he heard the rhythm of the keyboard taps and mouse clicks, he could even imagine what that player was doing.

There was still someone playing Glory in the Excellent Era practice room at this time?

"You go pack up. I'm going to take a look." Ye Xiu said.

"Okay." Su Mucheng nodded her head and continued onwards to her room in the player residence area. Ye Xiu walked into the practice room.

The door to the practice room wasn't closed. Ye Xiu walked inside gently and saw someone in front of a computer. He was playing Glory, the online Arena. This person was playing a Battle Mage and was currently in an intense battle with an opponent. However, with just a few glances, Ye Xiu had a rough idea of the situation. Everything went like he expected. Not even a minute passed and the Battle Mage was killed by the opponent.....

"You suck." Ye Xiu said.

The person sitting at the chair suddenly turned his head. When he saw Ye Xiu standing behind him, he stared blankly at him. For a long time, no words came out of his mouth.

Tao Xuan.....

At this moment, the person playing Glory in the Excellent Era practice room was actually Excellent Era's boss, Tao Xuan. That Tao Xuan who usually stood up high and only came to the practice room for inspections.

Ye Xiu took out a cigarette box and nimbly shook a cigarette out towards Tao Xuan: "Did you stop smoking?"

Tao Xuan was surprised at first and then extended his hands out: "I'll take one!"

After lighting up the cigarette, Tao Xuan immediately sucked in a deep breath. It was as if he had found something to place his burdens on.

"How's the sale going?" After smoking until about half a cigarette left, Ye Xiu suddenly asked.

"Not too well." Tao Xuan said, "There's too much. There are very few people who could even take it all in the first place. We aren't in the Alliance either, so the risk is too great. I've talked to several people, but the price was pushed down too much. It was impossible to negotiate."

"So?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Split it up." Tao Xuan said.

"And then?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Then....." Tao Xuan stared blankly, "There is no then."

Yes, there was no then.....

Whether he sold the entire Excellent Era at once or parts of Excellent Era at a time, he would still be able to earn a huge amount of money. However, the timing was too poor. A situation where the seller must

sell. There was no situation that could be worse than that for a seller. Any buyer who understood this point would calmly drag it on up until the price was satisfactory.

Tao Xuan had always been trying to maximize profits, but in the end, he could only quietly watch as the originally high prices were pushed down. It was a huge mockery to him.

But in any case, Tao Xuan would still be earning a considerable amount of money. But then what? Nothing. There was no place for him anymore in the Glory scene. The only thing that would accompany him would be the money that came from selling Excellent Era.

And then.....

Tao Xuan had thought about it, but he couldn't come up with anything. Having so much money should have been something that anyone would be overjoyed about, but he was at a loss. He seemed to be trapped in that painful situation where he had nothing but money. He didn't know how to get out of it. Invest? Start a new business? Tao Xuan had thought about it, but he always felt dispirited and downcast. He might as well just play Glory and have some fun.

Glory. He had obviously been a player once. If not, how could he have gotten to know Ye Xiu and Su Muqiu? But his skill level was limited and he was old. He wasn't someone who could stand on stage. In the end, he became a team manager.

One charged out onto the battlefield. One operated the logistics of the business.

Tao Xuan had originally thought that they would be the best partners together, but he realized after a while that they were moving farther and farther apart.

Business is business. He began pursuing profits, while his partner only knew how to fight on the battlefield, not keeping up with his path.

Gradually, Tao Xuan began thinking that if it wasn't for this partner holding him back, where would Excellent Era be at now?

As Excellent Era failed to make profits year after year, this thought started to grow firm and take root in Tao Xuan's mind. The best partner that he had once envisioned had become the greatest hindrance to Excellent Era's growth.

Finally, he set out to kick Ye Xiu from the team. But when he thought about it now, was that really for the sake of profits? Or was it due to envy? Tao Xuan didn't know. He only remembered that everyday, when he thought about how that guy was holding him back, he would often think about how if he were the Battle God, if he were One Autumn Leaf, he would certainly have led Excellent Era to even greater heights.

He also longed for glory. After all, he had once been a Glory player too.....

But what was the point of thinking about all of that now?

Tao Xuan laughed bitterly and shook his head. Suddenly, the sound of the practice room door creaking could be heard. A person pushed the door open and walked in.

Ye Xiu thought it was Su Mucheng. When he turned his head, he saw that it was Qiu Fei.

"Senior..." Seeing Ye Xiu, Qiu Fei was startled.

"It's been awhile." Ye Xiu smiled and gave a greeting.

But then he saw Qiu Fei wrinkle his eyebrows at the two of them: "No smoking is allowed in the practice room."

No smoking is allowed in the practice room? The two stared blankly. Yes, those were club rules, but at this moment, who cared if you followed the rules or not?

One person was the boss of the club. The other was the team's former captain. They slowly put down the cigarettes in their mouth. Afterwards, they saw as Qiu Fei walked to his seat and sat down. He opened the computer and then started practicing.

Practice?

Ye Xiu looked at the clock in the practice room. It was 9 AM. Yes, this was when Team Excellent Era would start practicing in the morning. Usually, the morning was targeted tech practice through a customized practice routine. In the afternoon, they would start practicing Glory for real. Qiu Fei was currently doing this morning routine, despite not knowing if Team Excellent Era even existed anymore.

Ye Xiu was stunned for a long time. Finally, he let out a smile. He got up and left the practice room. As for Tao Xuan, he just watched as Qiu Fei practiced with single-hearted devotion for a long long time.

Not long after leaving the practice room, Ye Xiu saw someone flash by him like a ghost. That ghost suddenly stepped back three times and rewinded back to that corner. He turned his head and looked carefully at Ye Xiu.

"Old Ye? You're back?" That person suddenly asked.

"I'm just passing by." Ye Xiu chuckled, "What are you doing?"

"All club operations have stopped. I've got to go too. Sigh, it's a pity for that new plan I just had..." This person sighed. Club operations had stopped. All employees would be dismissed. They would clearly be facing unemployment soon, but this guy was more worried that his new plan wouldn't be able to implemented.

"Alright then, why not go to my place to continue doing research, Rongfei!" Ye Xiu said.

"Your place?"

"Yeah, Team Happy." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh, research what?"

"A lot of things like the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. Have you heard of it?" Ye Xiu said.

"The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella!" This person's eyes instantly lit up. Immediately afterwards, he asked: "So when do I start?"

Chapter 1065: Never Come Back Again



For his job, Guan Rongfei was just an ordinary member of Excellent Era's R&D team. However, if you were considering his importance, he was the true core member of the research and development team. He was passionate about researching all sorts of Silver weapons, and this passion didn't lose to the passion that all pro player had for victory. Hearing the words "Myriad Manifestations Umbrella", Guan Rongfei immediately became impatient to leave, making Ye Xiu uncertain if he should laugh or cry as he said, "Wait a moment!"

As he said this, he saw Su Mucheng coming out of her room, carrying a large suitcase. The reason they came back this time was mostly because she had to pack up.

"Rongfei is coming with us, too," Ye Xiu told her.

"Really?" Su Mucheng gazed at Guan Rongfei cheerfully. "You're in luck then, there's a lot of stuff for you to do there."

"Can we go now?" If any Excellent Era members saw Guan Rongfei's impatience, they would probably be absolutely heartbroken. He had worked at Excellent Era for so long already, but he didn't seem to have any feelings for it at all. This had coincided with Excellent Era's members disbanding, but considering this guy's response, even when Excellent Era was all well, he would have probably been immediately lured away with a "Hey, we're researching the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, you coming?"

It had been rather early on when Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had been reported back to the club by the guild department. Excellent Era's R&D department had also done some research and that was when Guan Rongfei was first introduced to this prodigious creation. However, since this weapon was only useful for unspecialized, it didn't have much value to Excellent Era, so they didn't look into it too deeply. This wouldn't stop Guan Rongfei looking into it in his spare time to try and figure out how this thing was created.

"You're just leaving like that? Is there nothing you want to take with you?" Ye Xiu looked at Guan Rongfei, a little lost for words.

"Oh yeah!" Guan Rongfei smacked his own forehead and then ran off.

Yet it wasn't long before he was back, his hands empty and apparently having not packed anything, but his expression was relieved as he said, "It's all good now."

"What... did you pack?" Su Mucheng asked.

"The research and data I've done on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. I almost forgot it." Guan Rongfei took out an external hard drive from his pocket, waving it in front of the two for a bit before putting it back into his pocket. He looked at the two with eagerness, his face clearly asking: why aren't we leaving yet?

"Let's go," Ye Xiu decided and took Su Mucheng's luggage for her. The three left together, but bumped into Tao Xuan, who was just leaving the training room, on their way out.

Seeing Guan Rongfei with the two, Tao Xuan seemed to understand and didn't say anything, just nodding in greetings. It was Guan Rongfei, who didn't even glance at the boss that had given him his paycheck all these years, already leaving.

"So about Dancing Rain. Why don't you name a price?" Ye Xiu said to Tao Xuan.

Tao Xuan was puzzled for a moment before remembering the promise he had made when he had first gone to Happy to find Ye Xiu. At the time, he had thought Ye Xiu would ask for One Autumn Leaf, but never expected that it would be Dancing Rain instead.

"How about 450,000?" Tao Xuan suggested.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng exchanged a glance.

This price obviously wasn't Dancing Rain's true value. As the Number One Launcher character, Dancing Rain was extremely valuable. Even ten million wouldn't be unexpected.

450,000! If any passerby heard this, they'd probably think they were hallucinating, but Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng knew where this price came from. 450,000 was the price Tao Xuan had originally bought out this character for in Excellent Era's name.

During the very beginnings of the Alliance, the characters were all brought into the club by the players. These were all characters that the pro players had slowly built up themselves. Back then, the club management had already realized that strong characters would be an important asset of the club, so they arranged for the ownership of these characters to be removed from the players and given to the club early on. That's how the system today was created: the ownership of characters all belonged to the club, and there were rarely any characters that belonged to the individual. Then, after that short period of time in the beginning, these resources were able to be utilized. If any new players joined, the club would provide characters directly. These characters would usually be far stronger than the characters that the players originally used in the game.

Su Mucheng joined the Alliance in season four. By then, it was rare for powerful characters to be brought into the club by the player. However, there would be special circumstances where players would continue using their online characters. Because the characters that the players had brought with them wouldn't be that strong, the clubs wouldn't buy them for an exceptionally high price. They treated it as giving that the player a small money bonus for signing the contract.

Dancing Rain was bought by Excellent Era under these circumstances. 450,000 wasn't a price that any random character in the online game had. It was because Ye Xiu had already put some effort into strengthening this character that it was worth more. But for a completely unknown character, that was the most it could be sold for.

The Dancing Rain back then couldn't be compared to the Dancing Rain today.

Apart from powerful equipment, the current Dancing Rain also had the accumulation of all the effort put into her all these years as well as the halo of the title of Number One Launcher. This sort of character wouldn't just increase the strength of a team, but also how influential they were.

Situations like during last the summer, when Team Samsara had bought the Tiny Herb Grappler Flying Drops and dismantled him into equipment, were extremely rare. In the end, it was because Flying Drop's influence wasn't enough. He wasn't like Hundred Dazzling Blossoms who could send his player into the All-Stars purely through the nostalgia fans held of him.

Flying Drops wasn't so grand, so what if he was dismantled? If it was a God-level account, never mind the fans objecting, even Samsara themselves would never bear the thought of dismantling it.

Dancing Rain had only been bought for 450,000. After so many years, even if Dancing Rain's strength hadn't been raised at all, just through sheer renown, the character's price would definitely be higher.

The 450,000 Tao Xuan had given today was undoubtedly a friends rate.

"Okay, that's settled then!" Ye Xiu nodded and didn't say much more.

He could tell that everything ended here. This 450,000 RMB transaction would probably be the last interaction they had that bore any sort of emotional investment. After that, they would go their separate ways. They wouldn't know if they would ever interact again, but the past would never repeat itself again.

"Good luck." Tao Xuan offered his right hand to Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu glanced at it before finally stretching out his hand to shake.

"I never need luck." After that, he turned and left.

Guan Rongfei didn't let up with the impatient looks at all as they left, forcing Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng to hurry. Getting to the ground floor, the entrance of the training center, they saw two people walking in from the front door.

"Ms. Su Mucheng... Ye Qiu... I mean, God Ye Xiu." The person on the left slowed down upon seeing the three and greeted them. Then he looked at Guan Rongfei and, not recognizing him, didn't greet him.

Ye Xiu looked at Su Mucheng, feeling a little lost. Though he was a God as well, he was so discreet all these years that he wasn't at all used to this sort of celebrity situation where others recognized him and he didn't recognize them. It was Su Mucheng who smiled at the newcomer and greeted him with a hello.

The person didn't introduce himself, just starting a conversation with Su Mucheng, "I hear you're joining Team Happy?"

"Yes."

"What a shame. I really hoped that we would get a chance to cooperate." The other replied.

Su Mucheng simply smiled.

"Then... I wish you three a good day. Excuse me." The person didn't have the intentions to chat for too long and left with that.

"That person from Tiny Herb is probably here to negotiate some sort of transaction..." Su Mucheng didn't wait for Ye Xiu to ask before explaining. Since Ye Xiu was so lowkey in the past, he mostly only knew pro players in their circle. Apart from that, he would keep his interactions with other members as low as possible. This was one person he had never seen before.

"Oh..." Hearing Su Mucheng's explanation, Ye Xiu nodded.

"It's probably... about Qiu Fei's transfer?" Su Mucheng guessed. Team Tiny Herb had never hid their interest in Qiu Fei. They had expressed interest during the Challenger League. It was evident that it didn't matter if Excellent Era was eliminated or not, Qiu Fei was someone they would be interested in transferring over regardless. However, Tiny Herb probably felt that they had more of a chance with Excellent Era's current situation!

Thinking of that figure still in the training room, Ye Xiu realized that Qiu Fei did have that sort of 'I won't give up even if the world is ending' demeanor to him. Tiny Herb... Would he join them?

As they were thinking of this, the door was opened once more and someone else entered. This person wasn't just someone Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng recognized, even Guan Rongfei recognized him. In the past year, this was the person who took the position of Excellent Era's vice captain. With his eyes set on the future, he was like coal in the harsh winter for Excellent Era. Yet the coal hadn't even flickered to life yet before they had all frozen to death together. Xiao Shiqin's figure seemed to hold that sort of desolation. It hadn't even been a month since the end of the Challenger League Finals and this guy seemed to have already gotten thinner.

The two sides met at the door and spent a long time in silence, enough so that Guan Rongfei began to look impatient again.

"You haven't left yet?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Yeah." Xiao Shiqin nodded.

"What are your plans?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I don't know." Xiao Shiqin shook his head. He had sacrificed a year and made a resolute decision. However, he had completely failed. The defeat at the Challenger League wasn't a small blow for Xiao Shiqin.

"How about you come to Happy?" Ye Xiu suggested. Xiao Shiqin's contract was only a year long. That meant, he was the same as Su Mucheng. His contract ended at the end of June and he could transfer for free. Happy was willing to try and get a player that didn't require a transfer fee.

"Happy?" Xiao Shiqin thought for a moment before smiling bitterly and shaking his head, "What can I do in Happy? Happy doesn't need me."

Ye Xiu didn't know how to react to that. Xiao Shiqin's talent was tactics, but Happy had Ye Xiu. The loss in the Challenger League, in reality, was also Xiao Shiqin's loss to Ye Xiu in tactics. This loss had killed his confidence in Ye Xiu's presence. It was clear that he didn't think he would be of any value in Happy.

"I still have something to do. Excuse me." Xiao Shiqin didn't seem to want to speak with Ye Xiu further and quickly excused himself and left.

"What a shame." Ye Xiu gazed at Xiao Shiqin's retreating figure with disappointment.

"Are we leaving or not!" Guan Rongfei wouldn't hold in his impatience any longer.

"Alright alright alright, let's go." Ye Xiu didn't know if he should laugh or cry, leaving Excellent Era with this guy. After walking out of the doors, he couldn't help but glance back.

This place... he'd probably never come back again.

Chapter 1066: Needing To Be Formal

By the time the team members returned, Happy Internet Cafe had returned to normal.

When the Challenger League ended, players and reporters swarmed there to see if they could catch a glimpse of anything. Unfortunately, the protagonists weren't there. And now that the finals had started, the reporters wouldn't be missing this annual meeting, and the players couldn't stick around the Internet cafe endlessly. As a result, people gradually took their leave.

Ye Xiu's trio didn't return to Happy Internet Cafe after they left Excellent Era. In fact, ever since they rented the gaming house in Forest Park, everyone apart from Chen Guo rarely went to the Internet cafe. This included Ye Xiu and Tang Rou, who previously worked in the cafe. Chen Guo employed new people to take their place, so they could commit their efforts wholeheartedly towards Glory.

Chen Guo felt that the house in Forest Park was no longer enough for them though.

The terraced houses were two stories tall: the bottom floor was used as a training room, while all the rooms in the top floor became the bedrooms, which accommodated two members each. In the beginning, Chen Guo thought this was enough, but after thinking about it now, she realised that she thought too simply of a team's structure.

Nowadays, players were the main core of the team. To keep up their fighting power, the guild and R&D departments were necessary.

Wu Chen was now completely committed towards Happy's guild department. The players they had met in the tenth server like Seven Fields didn't originally plan on joining the Heavenly Domain again. However, after seeing how successful Team Happy became, their hearts were moved. All of them planned on completing the Heavenly Domain Challenge, so they could fight their way through Heavenly Domain and assist in the team's expansion.

However, members like Seven Fields could only support part-time. Happy only had Wu Chen to take care of the guild full-time. However, the team would grow. No team would only have the guild leader alone in the guild office. Just from the number of people alone, the guild department would be the largest group in a club. There would be both full-time and part-time members. But since their job was limited to the game, most of them wouldn't come to the club for work. In the end, it didn't matter whether they worked at the club or not. But because they belonged to the club as permanent or contract employees, their numbers would be great.

As for the R&D department, it was the department requiring the highest confidentiality, so they appeared to be the most absolutely necessary part of the internal affairs for the club. So even though the number of people working in there would be far less than those in the guild department, it was required of them to work at the club.

Happy wasn't that large yet, but as it continued to grow, they would eventually have to build these up. After taking in all these factors, the terraced houses in Forest Park wouldn't be enough to fit all of them in.

Should we rent another house?

While Chen Guo was thinking about how she should solve this problem, Ye Xiu brought a person before her.

"Guan Rongfei, the core God of Excellent Era's R&D department." Ye Xiu introduced Guan Rongfei to Chen Guo.

"Hi, welcome!" Chen Guo took the initiative to go up to shake his hand. She was extremely excited, because she knew that the person Ye Xiu brought here wasn't here to just look around.

"Hi." Guan Rongfei greeted Chen Guo simply. He didn't even bother to ask about her identity before he turned his head to ask Ye Xiu. "When should we start? Where's my computer?"

"Uh, over there." Ye Xiu had to search around the living room before he could finally point out a position. In the training room Chen Guo set up, there were twelve computers in a circle. If Happy included Su Mucheng, as well as Chen Guo, who was always using one, there was only one unused computer left. This remaining computer was allocated to Guan Rongfei by Ye Xiu.

"Oh." Guan Rongfei replied and quickly moved towards the computer. When he reached there, someone sat in the middle seat between the three computers and didn't even look at him when he went over.

"I'm Guan Rongfei." Guan Rongfei introduced himself.

"Mo Fan." That person only reported his name without even turning his head.

After that, Guan Rongfei sat down to turn on the computer and didn't pay attention to Mo Fan's reply. The two sat together without any bit of interaction as they did their own work.

The first thing Guan Rongfei did after the computer turned on was to connect to his external hard drive. He went through the documents as he controlled the keyboard and mouse with familiarity. He would occasionally murmur "This can" and "This can't."

Chen Guo followed along earlier. She saw Guan Rongfei move all the "can" documents into the computer while he instantly deleted the "can't" documents.

"Why can't we use those?" Chen Guo couldn't help but ask out of curiosity.

"Those are confidential, so they can't be used." Guan Rongfei said.

"Huh?" Chen Guo didn't really understand.

"It's the R&D department's NDA." Ye Xiu came over to explain.

Members of the R&D department definitely needed to sign an NDA, otherwise there wouldn't be any secrets about Silver equipment; a person could leave a club and take away large amounts of information.

The club couldn't stop the people from leaving, so signing the NDA was required. Although the agreement couldn't completely prevent the club's information from being taken, at least it wouldn't be

used in such a broad and open way. People would often find loopholes, but it hadn't gone far enough that they could not tolerate it anymore and took it to court.

Guan Rongfei dove into his job without having a second word spoken. His increasing enthusiasm was rather shocking for Chen Guo. This God of the R&D department from Excellent Era... What sort of compensation was needed to keep him up and going?

For the past days, Chen Guo had constantly been pondering about these problems. However, it would be underestimating Boss Chen if her mind was completely blank. During the days they stayed at Heavenly Sword's place in City B, Chen Guo had humbly asked Lou Guanning about managing a team. As for Lou Guanning, he had even gathered the actual managing team of Heavenly Sword to help Chen Guo analyse Happy's current situation.

From what the professional team saw, Happy's current situation was excellent.

After defeating Excellent Era and advancing forward to enter the professional scene, no new team had ever received such widespread attention. How could Team Happy not get any sponsors in the new season? For them, this was simply impossible. In their current situation, sponsors might come to their doorsteps without even having to search for them.

The fact that Excellent Era might possibly split and be disbanded was very beneficial news for Happy's development. For sponsors in the same city as Excellent Era, if they still prized Glory as a good way to advertise, it was very likely for them to directly switch their sponsorship to Happy. By having a sponsor that was in the same city, they would naturally be able to establish a regional reputation. Since Glory was a popular esports, a team that won the championships would give pride to the whole city. By supporting a team in the same city, it would naturally give them a beneficial foundation in their local region.

Heavenly Sword taught a bunch of everything here and there to Chen Guo, and she was genuinely determined to learn this time. If there was anything she didn't understand, she made sure she could ask and be clear about it. She gained a lot within the few days. Even though she would constantly ponder about matters such as the compensation towards the team members, she was finally able to ease her heart. According to what the professionals in Heavenly Sword had said, Happy was a project that could not fail.

"What if we become the champion?" Chen Guo asked.

The professionals of Heavenly Sword looked at one another speechlessly. After a while, a glasses dude pushed up his spectacles before speaking. "If that really happened, I think this is probably what we call lucrative....."

After returning from City B, Chen Guo was enormously proud and was thinking about how she could improve their training environment. Now that Guan Rongfei was brought here, it really reached the point where they couldn't stay unchanged. The twelve computers were all used up. If someone else joined, where should they be distributed? In addition, it was unpresentable for a team to have the guild and R&D department to sit together! For technological jobs like Guan Rongfei's, they probably needed peace and quiet, right? However in guilds department, there would constantly be yelling and screaming.

After Chen Guo made up her mind, she pondered on the different kinds of ideas. From what she saw, now was the right time to discuss this matter, so she looked for Ye Xiu.

"Hold on, I'll give this to him first." Ye Xiu was organising Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's information for Guan Rongfei. Guan Rongfei was the one being impatient, not Ye Xiu. When he was finished with his external hard drive, he started to hurry Ye Xiu up with his eyes.

"It's nothing important. I was just thinking that since we have become a formal team, team members would increase in the future, which is why I think this place is a bit unsuited. I currently have two ideas. Hear me out." Chen Guo spoke.

"Sure, go on." Ye Xiu nodded as he continued to import the documents.

"I am personally leaning towards the first idea, as it's also more homely. I was planning to clear out the whole of floor 2 in Happy. That level would become the training center and no longer be used for the Internet café business. After visiting Heavenly Sword, I feel it's enough for our training center and as well as some space for the guild and R&D department." Chen Guo said.

"Mm, not bad." Ye Xiu nodded.

"The other idea is to find a proper workplace and hire three to five rooms as our base. I keep feeling like it wouldn't be proper though." Chen Guo said.

"Are you telling me that you were planning on having us practice in an office?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's not proper, right?" Chen Guo asked.

"Not at all!" Ye Xiu said.

"Then we'll go along with the first idea. We're currently unable to build another floor anyways!" Chen Guo said.

"The first idea is pretty good. Did you know that when I first started, the place where the team trained was in an Internet cafe. I'm merely walking through the same path from before again. However, we didn't have such good conditions at the time. The most we could do was to reserve a row of computers just for us in the Internet cafe." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh... Speaking of it, what did Tao Xuan used to do?" Chen Guo asked.

"Him? He used to be a boss of an Internet cafe as well..." Ye Xiu said.

#### Chapter 1067: Sponsorships

Tao Xuan used to run an Internet cafe as well?

This answer was shocking for Chen Guo. She had never felt a lick of anything but distaste for Tao Xuan, yet now she found out that this guy used to be in the same line of business as she was and immediately felt shame for him.

"I really couldn't tell." Chen Guo said in disgruntlement.



Ye Xiu smiled, but didn't say anything.

"And after that?" Chen Guo then pursued because she suddenly realized that Excellent Era's rise to power back then was something she could probably learn a lot from.

"After? After that was going around competing in competitions. By then, the Alliance might've already been created, but it was just starting out and didn't have the same influence and renown as it does today. There were plenty of Glory competitions just like it and we would enter them all. Online matches, offline matches, so long as there was no scheduling conflict, we wouldn't miss a single one," Ye Xiu said.

"To train the team?" Chen Guo guessed.

"No... to win the prize money and make sure the team lived on and make sure the players lived on." Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo was stunned. Though she was older than Ye Xiu, she hadn't been a part of Glory for as long as he had. She had started out playing casually to pass the time to becoming a fan to follow the pro scene. By then, the Alliance had already been well established, and the teams and players had become shining stars. At the very least, Club Excellent Era had already settled opposite to Happy Internet cafe and the resplendent team logo was already hung up. It was no longer what Ye Xiu described, needing to play in all sorts of matches to win enough prize money to live on.

"I no longer remember how many matches we played that year, how much prize money we won, how much prize money we won but never received. However, the Glory Pro Alliance was the most stable competition, which also gave the heftiest cash rewards. A year later, it had already gained much attention from the populace. More sponsorships, promoting it far and wide meant that the competing teams would get larger bonuses and more prize money. With this cycle, the teams and the Alliance began to grow rapidly, side by side.

Chen Guo nodded. She understood now. Even some of the things Ye Xiu didn't explain explicitly, she could guess. Excellent Era had successively won the first three championships of the Alliance. Without a doubt, disregarding the Alliance itself, they were the organization that took the greatest share of profit from the Alliance's first years. It was with this that Excellent Era managed to go from an Internet cafe team, a team that sounded downright poverty-stricken, to a top powerhouse.

As for the current Happy?

Chen Guo suddenly realized that the most difficult section of Happy's journey had somehow gone by without notice. Recalling their journey, from nothing to something, and then to the Challenger League, facing a massive powerhouse like Excellent Era, this was an impossible journey. But they did it. Would there be anything as difficult as this?

Taking the championship title?

Of course it would be difficult, but winning or losing the championships didn't affect the continued survival of a team. Team Happy had even managed to get through a life and death situation. Wouldn't the future be smoother?

In that moment, Chen Guo's confidence returned to her in full. She immediately left the house and returned to the Internet cafe. From now on, she was going to focus completely on doing the best she could for her team.

Before, she had turned part of the second floor of their Internet cafe into a training center, but she was still a little anxious inside. After all, the Internet cafe was her most stable source of income. But now, Chen Guo wasn't afraid anymore. Happy had come this far; there was no reason they'd fall now.

On the way over, Chen Guo had already picked up her phone to make a call and booked for renovators to come and take a look at the Internet cafe. After getting back to Happy and welcoming said renovators, they all went to the second floor together. She relayed her requirements to the renovators as they looked over the place of discussion. After discussing for almost a full day, the other went back to begin on blueprints. As for Chen Guo, she took her second big step after this first one.

"Is this Little Chang? It's Sis' Chen!" Chen Guo dialed the City H Esports Home reporter's number.

Of the two Esports Home reporters assigned to City H, one was in heaven and the other was in hell.

Glory was currently the hottest esports in the country. Although Esports Home was a comprehensive esports media group, they still focused primarily on Glory. The reason for the construction of City H's reporter base was entirely because of the local Team Excellent Era.

Logically speaking, there was no longer a reason for City H's reporter base to exist anymore with Excellent Era's relegation. However, no one had ever doubted Excellent Era's ability to immediately slaughter its way back into the Alliance from the Challenger League, not even Esports Home. Thus, the City H reporter base remained. Even though this year was a desolate one for the renown reporter Cao Guangcheng, he didn't despair, patiently waiting for the day Excellent Era would return to the Alliance.

But no one had ever thought that Excellent Era would fail just like that. What was even more awkward for Cao Guangcheng was that the one to defeat Excellent Era was Team Happy, Chang Xian's treasure, but a team that Cao Guangcheng didn't approve of.

Team Happy had Ye Xiu, so this shouldn't have been a team that Cao Guangcheng would look down on. However, Cao Guancheng did, because he had thought he knew more than anyone that it didn't matter if Ye Xiu was there or not since he couldn't be interviewed anyways. If he couldn't interview Ye Xiu, then what value did Team Happy have to him? What, you think they would actually win the Challenger League?

But they did.

Happy became the champions of the Challenger League and Chang Xian had a monopoly over Happy's interview resources. His publications continuously appeared on Esports Home. He had even gotten an exclusive interview from Ye Xiu. Everyone knew that Ye Xiu no longer shied away from this sort of thing, but, why didn't that asshole show this attitude earlier? If Cao Guangcheng had known that Ye Xiu would be willing to accept interviews, would he have so easily given Happy's lane to Chang Xian to run? Of course not!

Unfortunately, there were no 'ifs.

The Excellent Era that Cao Guangcheng had his bets on and followed was now facing the problem of disbandment. And Happy, having defeated Excellent Era, was now a news hotspot. Chang Xian's attitude towards him hadn't changed any, still treating him respectfully as a senior, but Cao Guangcheng understood clearly that their roles had changed. In the future, City H's reporter base would be Chang Xian's turf because if the reporter base in City H were to remain, then it would be there for Happy. Chang Xian was on good terms with Happy and this was no secret in their circle. Through his connections, Cao Guangcheng had also gotten wind that the higher ups had no intentions of switching out Chang Xian and instead couldn't stop praising him.

During this period of time, Happy was a news hotspot and Esports Home had the best reports of all things Happy. This was entirely thanks to Chang Xian. The people in their circle were all too satisfied with Chang Xian's work and didn't have any intentions to try for his place.

Cao Guangcheng despaired. None of the higher-ups even tried to take this chance to pick peaches. It was probably impossible for him to replace Chang Xian. Follow around and wait on his past disciple? Cao Guangcheng couldn't bring himself to do that. He had already applied to his higher-ups, using Excellent Era's absence as a reason, to be switched to a different place.

Cao Guangcheng's application hadn't been accepted by Esports Home yet, but he was set on not staying in City H. He had already begun preparing Chang Xian to take over.

"Ah ah, Sister Chen, hi!!"

The sound of Chang Xian taking a call met Cao Guangcheng's ears. He knew who Chang Xian was talking to: Team Happy's boss, Chen Guo.

A call from the boss of a team. Little Chang really had it good. Even though he knew Happy's current situation and the boss personally calling wasn't anything big, Cao Guangcheng couldn't help but be a little jealous.

"Oh oh, I think we should have some of that! I'll look into it for you and call you later?"

"Okay, I'll do that then. Bye, Sister Chen."

The call was hung up. It sounded like Chen Guo had asked for Chang Xian to look into something.

"What did Happy want?" Cao Guangcheng asked casually. Usually, a question like this meant that he had eavesdropped on Chang Xian's phone call. Even though Chang Xian had no intentions to hide it from him, this still wasn't very good, especially between reporters. It was a sort of taboo. However, Cao Guangcheng was down-in-the-dumps and didn't care to consider this.

"Oh, Brother Cao, I was going to ask. It'd probably be more convenient for me to just ask you," Chang Xian said.

"What?" Cao Guangcheng asked.

"Happy wanted to ask, what sponsors does Excellent Era have, big or small. The more details we have the better," Chang Xian replied.

"That? Do they really need us to help them look into that?" Cao Guangcheng couldn't help but laugh at the answer he had gotten. What was a sponsor? They were the ones who gave you money and in return,

you had to promote them. Thus, sponsors wouldn't be any sort of secret. Excellent Era had to find every way to show the world what sponsors they had. If you took a look at that, wouldn't Excellent Era's sponsors become clear?

"Uh, she wants to know all the sponsors they've ever had, including ones that backed out, so I think I should still take a look for her," Chang Xian said.

"Oh, I'm not too certain about that either. How about you look into it!" Cao Guangcheng said. As for the reason Happy wanted to look into this information, never mind him, even Chang Xian could easily guess that. It couldn't be anything but that Happy was starting to look for sponsorships, and they wanted to take the sponsors from Excellent Era, who were facing disbandment. This was an appropriate move to make.

However... wasn't Happy simplifying everything too much? If a sponsor sponsored Excellent Era, then that showed where they stood. Now, Happy had defeated Excellent Era and blocked them out of the pro alliance, pushing them to the dire situation they were in. Happy was Excellent Era's enemy. Those who were only just sponsoring Excellent Era a moment ago would turn around and sponsor Happy instead? Businesses cared about how they looked. Doing this would be no different from calling whoever had milk mother. Who would want that sort of image?

Taking Excellent Era's sponsors was a good idea.

However, Happy's boss Chen, it seems like you really don't understand. Glory is a competitive scene. If anyone were to invest in this area, it was a little different. Especially for local sponsors, it would be more than difficult for them to turn to Happy the moment Excellent Era fell.

"Oh yeah..." Cao Guangcheng suddenly remembered something, calling out to Chang Xian. "If Happy wants sponsors, there's one I recommend."

"Ah? Who?" Chang Xian asked.

"Dry Tea Green," Cao Guangcheng said, a barely perceptible smile flashing over his face. He didn't want to compete for anything anymore, but, maybe watching Happy humiliated would help get rid of the frustration in his heart.

Chapter 1068: Dry Tea Green's Sponsorship

"Dry Tea Green?" Chang Xian stared blankly. He wasn't a City H person, but he had worked as a reporter here for quite some time. He was no stranger to this name. It was a name that could be seen everywhere in City H.

Dry Tea Green was a privately owned tea beverage company in City H. The various tea drinks that they produced were best sellers in the country. In City H, it occupied a large market share.

Beverages had an extremely wide range of uses. They could sponsor practically anything. However, for esports, the goods that gained the most benefit from sponsorships were tech-related products. As a result, the vast majority of team sponsorships were tech-related products.

Cao Guangcheng said that he had a good recommendation. Chang Xian originally thought that it was a tech-related product, but it turned out to be a tea drink? How could you say that was a great recommendation?

Cao Guangcheng saw Chang Xian's hesitation and obviously knew what he was hesitating about. He smiled: "Go do some research!"

"Okay!" Chang Xian replied and went to look up related information. Since Cao Guangcheng had recommended Dry Tea Green, he would naturally pay particularly close attention to it.

"What do you think?" Cao Guangcheng asked a short while later.

"This Dry Tea Green really is Excellent Era's most faithful sponsor!" Chang Xian was moved. The data showed that Dry Tea Green had sponsored Excellent Era for a good seven years. Starting from season three, Dry Tea Green had been Excellent Era's most loyal sponsor.

"Take a look at this season." Cao Guangcheng said.

"Oh?" Chang Xian checked the season nine data. Dry Tea Green was still a sponsor. Although the amount wasn't as high, Excellent Era had been relegated this season, so all their sponsors substantially lowered their sponsorship amounts. That wasn't anything strange, no?

"Dry Tea Green still sponsored them during season nine." Cao Guangcheng said.

"Yeah! Most of Excellent Era's sponsors stayed. After all, with Excellent Era's position, these sponsors probably hadn't included any clauses in their contract that would nullify it as soon as they were relegated." Chang Xiang said.

Yes, clauses that cancelled the contract once the team was relegated. Whether it was sponsors or players, these types of automatic clauses would show up. However, those were for mid-tier and bottom-tier teams. For a powerhouse like Excellent Era, adding in that sort of clause was an insult. How could Excellent Era get relegated? Not long before, no one thought it was possible. As a result, whether it was sponsors or players, no one would be concerned about adding in this clause in the contract. It was a groundless fear!

"Haha, the vast majority didn't, but there are exceptions." Cao Guangcheng said.

"Could you mean Dry Tea Green..." Chang Xian realized what Cao Guangcheng was getting at and immediately checked the data.

"We don't have any of the details of the contract here, but I know that the contract between Dry Tea Green and Excellent Era has always included this clause. However, in season nine, even though the contract could be cancelled because of the clause, they did not cease their sponsorship. They only reduced the sponsorship amount. This at least shows their determination in sponsoring Glory!"

Chang Xian nodded his head. Cao Guangcheng's words were reasonable. But after looking at the data some more, he asked again: "But this Dry Tea Green..... Their sponsorship amount isn't really that high!"

"Dry Tea Green is determined to sponsor Glory, yet the sponsorship amount isn't high. What does this mean? It means that there's room for negotiation! After Excellent Era won three championships in a

row, they fell on the decline. Their performance was just passable. But Happy has instantly become famous. Their reputation is rising accordingly. There really is an opportunity for them to get a deal with Dry Tea Green." Cao Guangcheng said.

"You're too right!" Chang Xian was excited. He sincerely hoped the best for Happy. After organizing the information, he immediately called Chen Guo, sending her this information, while stressing the name Dry Tea Green.

Dry Tea Green.....

Chen Guo grew up in City H. She was very familiar with this name. Saying that she grew up drinking their tea was a bit too much, but she had the circumstances to. Chen Guo just didn't really like it that much, that's all.

In the beginning, Dry Tea Green was focused solely on tea drinks, but they had expanded their market into all sorts of areas now. Their tea drinks were still their most popular products though, especially in City H. This company's strength didn't need to be mentioned. If Team Happy could get a sponsorship from them, that would be a huge step forward!

Chen Guo asked about everything she could from Chang Xian. After hanging up, she smugly started to prepare her attack.

According to Lou Guanning's analysis, Team Happy just needed to wait for sponsorships to come knocking on their door. However, Chen Guo wanted to be more proactive.

Dry Tea Green was their first target! Chang Xian had told her who to contact. Chen Guo immediately contacted him. The person on the other end was clearly just an assistant or secretary responsible for taking calls. After hearing Chen Guo's purpose for calling, the secretary was slightly startled and seemed to ask someone for more instructions. Then, the secretary gave Chen Guo a reply: tomorrow at 9 AM.

Not bad!

The other side had quickly arranged for a meeting. It looked like the other side was very interested in sponsoring them. Chang Xian's recommendation was good. This Dry Tea Green valued sponsoring Glory quite a bit!

Chen Guo excitedly returned to Upper Forest Park and told the news to Ye Xiu.

"Dry Tea Green?" Ye Xiu heard the name and wrinkled his brow.

"What's wrong?" Chen Guo was a bit confused about Ye Xiu's response.

"I'll go with you tomorrow to take a look." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?"

"How did you think to contact them?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Little Chang recommended them." Chen Guo said.

"Little Chang?" Ye Xiu was surprised, "Why did he recommend them?"

Chen Guo told him what Chang Xiang said. Ye Xiu nodded his head: "That's reasonable!"

"Yeah! Then let's go tomorrow morning. We can't be late." Chen Guo said.

"Understood." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Chen Guo excitedly logged into Glory and started playing. As for Ye Xiu, his QQ blinked. He saw a message from Su Mucheng.

"Dry Tea Green?"

"Yeah... we'll take a look tomorrow and then we'll see." Ye Xiu replied.

"Okay." Su Mucheng didn't say anything more.

The next morning, Chen Guo dragged Ye Xiu out the door. She didn't want to leave a bad impression on the other side by being late. But when the two arrived at Dry Tea Green, it was only 8:30 AM. After being guided by the receptionist, the two came to Dry Tea Green's external affairs department. The person to receive them was the person who had picked up Chen Guo's call yesterday. Because it wasn't yet the appointment time, the secretary arranged for the two to wait a bit at the lobby.

Everything seemed to be going well, so Chen Guo was very excited.

"External affairs... hm, will we need this type of department in the future?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

"Of course." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, it was 9 AM. Chen Guo was looking forward to it, but then that secretary came back on time with an apologetic look: "Sorry.... Mr. Xiazong still has some business to take care of. I'll have to ask you two to wait just a bit longer."

"Oh... no worries. We'll wait then. Thanks!" A thread of disappointment flashed across Chen Guo's face, but it disappeared soon. It was just a bit longer. It was nothing.

"Then let's wait a bit!" After the secretary left, Chen Guo let out an expression of disappointment and then sat back down.

"This meeting... it's best if you don't put too much hopes on it." Ye Xiu suddenly said.

"Why?" Chen Guo didn't understand.

"Do you know who the Mr. Xiaozong she mentioned is?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Yeah!" Chen Guo nodded her head, "Xia Zongtian, Dry Tea Green's external affairs director. Dry Tea Green is his Xia family's business. He's the son of Dry Tea Green's CEO Xia Dongnan. More importantly, he's a huge Glory fan."

"Correct." Ye Xiu nodded his head, "He's a Glory fan. What's more, he's a very loyal Team Excellent Era fan."

"Oh?" Chen Guo was slightly surprised. Even though she hadn't realized anything, she could feel that Ye Xiu was hinting at something.

"How much do you know about Dry Tea Green's sponsorship for Excellent Era?" Ye Xiu asked.

"They've been sponsors for seven years, starting from season three of the Glory Alliance. Dry Tea Green's sponsorship for Excellent Era has never stopped even when Excellent Era was relegated this season. Despite having a clause saying that they could null the contract after the team was relegated, they insisted on sponsoring them and only reduced the sponsorship by a bit." Chen Guo said.

"Correct..." Ye Xiu nodded his head, "Then what if I told you that Dry Tea Green's sponsorship for Excellent Era is actually Xiao Zongtian's personal decision. What would you think?"

"Personal decision?" Chen Guo was puzzled.

"Yes... in reality, the company Dry Tea Green doesn't have much interest in sponsoring a Glory team. However, Xiao Zongtian is a big fan of Glory and also a loyal Excellent Era fan, so he stood his ground against everyone else and insisted on sponsoring Excellent Era. Dry Tea Green is the Xia family's business, so the department turned a blind eye towards it and approved his request. You can say that this sponsorship isn't a business contract, but rather a fan's personal support for the team." Ye Xiu said.

"Why do you know so much?" Chen Guo was astonished.

"Hello? If I remember correctly, I was once Team Excellent Era's former captain?" Ye Xiu said.

"So you're saying that apart from Excellent Era, Dry Tea Green isn't interested in supporting any team other than Excellent Era?" Chen Guo said.

"Yes." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

"Then why did Little Chang strongly recommend Dry Tea Green?"

"Uh, he's probably too young and didn't understand this crux of the matter!" Ye Xiu said, "From the surface, a sponsorship from Dry Tea Green truly has a lot of potential."

"Then why were we called over?"

"I'm puzzled about that too." Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo had originally been excited, but now she was nervous. In the blink of an eye, it was 10 AM. In terms of their appointment time, they had waited for an entire hour.

"Xiazong, they've already waited for an hour. Shouldn't you meet them?" In Xiao Zongtian's office, the secretary asked.

"No time. I'm busy. Have them wait some more." Xiao Zongtian didn't even glance at his secretary. He just looked at the screen as sounds of mouse-clicking and keyboard-tapping sounded incessantly.

Chapter 1069: Xia Zhongtian

Ten turned to eleven. Eleven turned to twelve.



The entire morning passed, and there were still no signs of Xia Zhongtian. Meanwhile, his secretary appeared before Ye Xiu and Chen Guo for the fourth time already, telling them awkwardly: "It's already noon. Mr. Zhong told you two to come by again in the afternoon."

"Oh? The afternoon? What time in the afternoon?" Chen Guo asked.

"We have a meeting in the afternoon." The secretary replied deftly. She did not say when Xia Zhongtian would meet with them. She only said that there would be a meeting in the afternoon.

"Miss Wang, sorry to trouble you." Chen Guo smiled at the secretary, who was putting on a fake smile. Chen Guo had started managing the Internet cafe in her teens. The industry that she fought in wasn't very high-end, but she had at least experienced many things. After hearing about the history behind Ch'ien Tea Green's sponsorship for Excellent Era from Ye Xiu and seeing that the other side wasn't sincere at all, calling him over was mostly likely just to play with them.

"Then please make yourselves at home." The secretary smiled apologetically and left first. Chen Guo looked at Ye Xiu and sighed. The two got up.

As they left, they walked past the external affair offices. Secretary Wang's office was just outside the door. She heard a phone call, entered the room, and when she went out of the room, she saw the two of them. She gave a smile and nodded her head.

"Miss Wang, do you know what Xia Zhongtian was busy with this morning?" Ye Xiu suddenly asked.

Secretary Wang was surprised by the question, but she quickly put on a professional smile: "I'm afraid that it's not convenient to say."

"Haha, he's just playing Glory. What's not convenient?" Ye Xiu laughed.

Secretary Wang was stunned. It was obvious that Ye Xiu was correct. Chen Guo had originally been pondering over whether they should come back in the afternoon. Maybe Xia Zhongtian really had been busy and was testing their sincerity? But now it looked like that guy was actually playing Glory the entire morning, intentionally having them wait there. She immediately became angry. If he didn't want to sponsor them, it would only take a few words to tell them. Instead, he felt the need to bully them. What's up with that? Chen Guo stepped forward. Accompanied by a shout from Secretary Wang "What are you doing?", she arrived at Xia Zhongtian's office and pushed the door open.

"What is it now?" Xia Zhongtian was sitting behind his desk. The monitor on his desk was at least 42 inches. His head was buried behind it. He couldn't be seen at all. When he heard the door open, he didn't even peak his head out to look. He simply asked a question.

"I'm Team Happy's boss." Chen Guo huffed.

"Didn't I tell you to come again in the afternoon? I'm busy here!" Xia Zhongtian didn't even tilt his head.

"Busy with what? You're almost dead." Ye Xiu also walked in with Chen Guo and suddenly spoke up.

"Sorry, Xiaozhong. I'll lead them out immediately." Secretary Wang chased after them in a panic and apologized to Xia Zhongtian first.

Xia Zhongtian didn't utter a word. The sounds of keyboard taps and mouse clicking intensified, but soon afterwards, the noise suddenly came to a halt.

"It's fine. You can go. This has nothing to do with you." Xia Zhongtian suddenly said. The secretary, who was urging Chen Guo and Ye Xiu to get out, was surprised. She quietly left the room and closed the door.

Xia Zhongtian's head finally peaked out from the monitor. He glanced at the two of them. Arrogance hung on his face: "Hey, if it isn't Ye Qiu. Wait, no, God Ye Xiu! What a rare guest!"

Xia Zhongtian held a long face and spoke in a weird tone of voice. It was as if he was trying hard to put on a mocking look. Chen Guo looked at this young person. He was like her back then. He was a big Glory fan and a big Excellent Era fan. He took advantage of his business to sponsor Excellent Era. Even though he was a bit capricious, his love and passion for Glory and Excellent Era easily showed.

This type of person probably wasn't a bad person.

Chen Guo didn't know why, but that was what she felt. Even after Xia Zhongtian made them wait the entire morning and despite his disrespectful attitude, Chen Guo realized that she really couldn't feel disgusted towards him.

"You want a sponsor? One word, no. You can go." There was no point toying around with Happy any longer, so he directly expressed his position.

"Don't be like that, Mr. Xia. It wasn't easy for us to make this trip here. We've waited for so long. Why not at least hear us out?" Chen Guo suddenly said.

This reply surprised Ye Xiu. He had thought that with Chen Guo's personality, she would definitely start arguing furiously with Xia Zhongtian. However, instead, she displayed this kind of attitude. She still wasn't giving up and still wanted to fight for a sponsor? Xia Zhongtian wasn't a normal Excellent Era fan. As someone who grew up in City H, apart from the normal dedication of a fan, he also had pride for his region. His support for Excellent Era was entirely for this team alone and would never change. He was undoubtedly an extremely loyal Excellent Era fan. Even until today, he detested Ye Xiu and hated Happy. Getting him to change his mind and support Happy would be extremely difficult. Even though Chen Guo was brave and did what she said she would do, Ye Xiu also knew that persuasion wasn't her strong point.

"Alright, go ahead! In any case, my decision isn't going to change. You can waste your time." Xia Zhongtian said expressionlessly. Then, his two hands started to move again. His actions clearly expressed: you can say yours, I'll play mine. No matter what you say, my final answer will be: no.

Chen Guo didn't seem to care and started speaking: "Then I'll be speaking. Um, let me first tell you about our Happy Internet Cafe's history! Our Happy Internet Cafe..."

Chen Guo really did start talking. After a few words, Ye Xiu laughed inwardly. This Chen Guo was great. She didn't have any intentions of persuading the other side. Happy Internet Cafe's history? Was there a need? Not at all! Happy Internet Cafe's history would have absolutely no impact on the other side's decision towards Team Happy. Almost half an hour had passed since she started talking, and Chen Guo was at Happy Internet Cafe's third year, when she was six!

Boss Chen wasn't at the level where her words were sharp enough to leave the other side speechless, but her ability to tell a long-winded story wasn't weak. It wasn't easy for someone to remember all those small details so clearly and then say it to Xia Zhongtian in a serious tone.

Was this requesting a sponsorship?

Of course not!

This was entirely to annoy Xia Zhongtian. Using rambling to waste Xiao Zongtina's time as revenge for making her and Ye Xiu wait the entire morning.

This method was kind of stupid. She was harming herself, wasting her own voice. But did it cause any real damage to the other side?

It did...

Ye Xiu knew very clearly. He could easily tell by listening. He didn't even need to look. During this half hour, Xia Zhongtian was still playing Glory, most likely PKing in the Arena. However, his playing was a mess. For someone who loved Glory for so many years, even if he wasn't at a pro level, he should at least be somewhat skilled. His movements should at least have some sort of rhythm and strategy to them. However Xia Zhongtian didn't have any at all. It was a complete mess. It was as if he didn't know what he was doing at all. He clearly wasn't focused because of a certain person rambling nonsense the entire time.

He obviously didn't want to hear it, but when her voice drilled into his ears, his brain couldn't help but listen to the contents. Once he started listening, his attention became split, messing up his playing. He played match after match. During these past thirty minutes, Xia Zhongtian played at a speed of one match every three minutes and lost every single one of them. He gave an irritated and furious glare at Chen Guo, but he didn't say anything to stop her. It seemed like he was planning on competing with Chen Guo. As a result, he pulled out his ace and turned up the sound.

This ace was too powerful for Chen Guo. She couldn't do anything about it and stopped talking.

Xia Zhongtian was delighted. In reality, his earphones didn't have sound. This was his office, after all. Even though he was the manager, he couldn't play games too openly. Even if it was just for a few minutes, he had to turn down the sound. He needed to listen for any matters that he needed to deal with even during break time. As a result, when Xia Zhongtian played Glory in his office, he never played with sound. Because of this, he dared to play games during work time. It never hindered his work, so no one could say anything about it. Of course, Ch'ien Tea Green was his Xia family's business. This point alone was more important than his work not being hindered by him playing games.

Putting on these headphones was enough for this woman to shut up. Xia Zhongtian felt a feeling of victory from his trick succeeding. As for Chen Guo, after being hit by this blow, she felt a bit dispirited. She looked around and discovered that Ye Xiu had left the room already. Chen Guo immediately got up. Xia Zhongtian saw that she was about to leave and pretended not to see as if she were just air. Chen Guo only just opened the door when she saw that Ye Xiu was right outside the door playing Glory at Secretary Wang's desk.

"You!" Chen Guo felt helpless, "Where is she?"

"She went out for lunch! I asked her if I could use her computer to play some Glory. She said I could." Ye Xiu. The boss liked the game so much, so the secretary couldn't help but follow along. It wasn't just her. Everyone in the external affairs office followed along. If you looked around, you would see Glory card readers at every desk.

"We're done here, let's go!" Chen Guo said.

"What's wrong? You ran out of things to say?" Ye Xiu asked with a grin.

"That guy's put on his headphones." Chen Guo said.

"It looks like it's my time to shine!" Ye Xiu said.

"What do you mean?" Chen Guo was startled. When she looked at Ye Xiu's screen, his character had squeezed into the Arena. He was only spectating though. At this moment, an open spot appeared, and Ye Xiu quickly took it.

"Who's this guy?" Chen Guo pointed at Ye Xiu's opponent on the screen.

Ye Xiu pointed inside the room.

"That's... that's too evil!!" Chen Guo cried out. At the same time, she started thinking. Were those two here to get a sponsor or were these two here to bully each other?

Chapter 1070: Off to a Bad Start

Xia Zhongtian was one of Excellent Era's sponsors, and he himself also played Glory. His character obviously wasn't any sort of secret to Excellent Era's people, so it was no secret to the former captain of Excellent Era, Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu took the secretary's computer and logged in with a random account card before searching for Xia Zhongtian's character in the arena, easily finding his room. The moment the Xia Zhongtian's opponent left the room, he resolutely placed his own character in the arena.

Which smurf was Ye Xiu using? Chen Guo didn't bother checking because it wouldn't affect the result. No matter what class he used, it would all just be bullying noobs for Ye Xiu, no? In that moment, Chen Guo began to feel sorry for the person inside the room. Compared to her own rambling, this was probably a far harsher attack. Chen Guo could guess that Ye Xiu wouldn't go too easy on him.

As expected, Chen Guo had just reached this conclusion when a round had been finished. Chen Guo glanced at the time. Thirty seconds? Or was it even less?

In the blink of an eye, the second round began. Chen Guo couldn't even bear to watch the process. It was like watching an adult hit a kid. Anyone with a conscience wouldn't be able to admire the process. They would only find it cruel and inhumane.

The second round quickly ended, and then the third began...

Chen Guo felt like she could hear the frustrated breaths through the door.

Xia Zhongtian had been a Glory fan for so long already, so even if he had no talent whatsoever, his skill wouldn't be too bad. In the online game, he had probably never lost so badly. As a sponsor, he might have fought a pro level match before, but being a sponsor meant that Excellent Era's players would take it easy on him.

However... Ye Xiu was merciless this time!

In the time that these thoughts had taken place, Xia Zhongtian had lost his sixth match already.

Chen Guo's rambling had distracted him, causing him to lose a match in three minutes. Now that Ye Xiu had personally gotten onto the field, Xia Zhongtian managed to lose six matches in three minutes. From this, it could be seen that there was definitely a reasoning behind the saying that one shouldn't make empty promises, but act on them.

Five minutes went by rapidly and Xia Zhongtian had already lost ten matches.

Five minutes, ten matches lost.

Chen Guo, as a fellow Glory gamer, could easily imagine Xia Zhongtian's current state of mind. But this guy was rather stubborn too. He had been beaten so badly, and there was an obvious disparity in skill, but he still refused to give up, unwilling to leave the room and fighting match after match.

Another five minutes passed...

The phone on the secretary's desk rang with a ringtone dedicated specifically for the boss. Ye Xiu picked the call up casually. "What?"

"How come my lunch isn't here yet!" Xia Zhongtian didn't seem to realize that the person picking up didn't have his secretary's voice at all.

"You've lost so many times and you can still eat?" Ye Xiu asked.

Silence fell. Then, Chen Guo heard the sound of a chair moving. Looking into the room, she saw that Xia Zhongtian had finally stood up, walking around his wide desk and out of the room.

"It was you just now?" Xia Zhongtian came out of the room and saw Ye Xiu where his secretary should've been. Glory was running on the computer. Even though he hadn't seen Ye Xiu's character, he wasn't dumb. It wasn't hard to guess.

Ye Xiu smiled, but didn't say anything.

"My skill level is that bad?" Xia Zhongtian looked incredulous.

"It's not that bad," Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo and Xia Zhongtian were both struck speechless. What this person was implying was obviously that he was too strong. That was just too arrogant. However, no one could retort to his arrogance. This was Ye Xiu, a God at the peak of Glory. If he were humble and said something like he wasn't so good, wasn't so powerful, then that would be equal to slapping the faces of all Glory players. If you weren't powerful, then what would we all be?

"Mr. Xia, do you want to continue?" Ye Xiu asked.

"No need," Xia Zhongtian replied. He wasn't a masochist.

"How about our discussions?" Ye Xiu asked.

"There's no need for that either..." Xia Zhongtian looked at Chen Guo with a hint of anxiousness. It seemed like Chen Guo's scolding of him just now did have its impact.

"Well, since your lunch still hasn't arrived, how about we all sit and talk it out?" Ye Xiu suggested.

"Is there a need? I feel that you know that I will never sponsor Happy. I find it strange that you would come." Xia Zhongtian said.

"As Xia Zhongtian, you definitely couldn't, but as the head of Ch'ien Tea Green's Marketing Department, I feel like this is quite a good chance," Ye Xiu said.

Xia Zhongtian paused for a moment, digesting that.

Xia Zhongtian not sponsoring Happy was because he personally couldn't accept it. However, from a business perspective, with the amount of attention Happy was receiving recently, they were a great sponsorship choice. Especially for Ch'ien Tea Green.

This was because the relationship between Excellent Era and their other sponsors was purely about business. They gave a sponsorship and naturally hoped that Excellent Era would do their best to promote their products. However, Ch'ien Tea Green was different. Since their sponsorship was more of Xia Zhongtian's personal desire, the company didn't sponsor them much, and they didn't require much from Excellent Era either. Even the most loyal local fans of Excellent Era probably didn't know that that their local famed company Ch'ien Tea Green was one of the sponsors of the team they loved.

The sponsorship given by Ch'ien Tea Green was frankly like an expenditure a rich young master had made on a whim. The money had been spent and he was satisfied. He had never hoped to profit from it. This sponsorship hadn't gained any influence so it was perfectly alright for Ch'ien Tea Green to turn around and sponsor Happy instead. They weren't like the other main sponsors of Excellent Era who had to carefully consider things if they wanted to sponsor Happy.

Xia Zhongtian was the head of external affairs so he had a professional eye for these things. It was just that when it came to Glory, to Excellent Era, he liked to act on his emotions. With Ye Xiu's reminder, he realized that, from business perspective, the current Happy truly was a good sponsorship choice. If he wrote up a feasible and professional report, the board might even accept it.

In that instant, Xia Zhongtian began to consider this from a professional perspective. However, as he began to think of the practical execution, he remembered how Excellent Era was facing disbandment, and that all this was the personal handiwork of the very team in front of him, lead by the man in front of him. Xia Zhongtian's rationality immediately burned away.

"I refuse," he said without a hint of emotion. He wanted Happy's people to feel frustrated. Although I can't influence much, at the very least, you won't be able to get a sponsorship from me. This was the only thing I can make you do in punishment for your deeds. That was what Xia Zhongtian thought.

"I see, what a shame. You've missed a good opportunity." Ye Xiu said.

"Don't worry, Ch'ien Tea Green has plenty of marketing channels," Xia Zhongtian replied aloofly.

"Oh, then how do you plan to end your sponsorship with Excellent Era?" Ye Xiu asked.

"You actually have the audacity to ask that?" Xia Zhongtian's cold demeanor melted immediately, replaced by the flames of anger. In his heart, it didn't matter what had brought Excellent Era to where they were now along the way, but Ye Xiu and Happy had given Excellent Era the final blow. This blow was the reason he couldn't forgive Ye Xiu and Happy. Even though he had gleaned the intricacies of these events from news reports, this would only fill him with disdain for Tao Xuan, but it wouldn't influence his hatred of Ye Xiu and Happy for their finishing blow.

"That's what competition is. You give and you gain. Why wouldn't I have the audacity?" Ye Xiu asked.

Xia Zhongtian didn't know how to reply. In reality, that wasn't what he wanted to express. The reason he didn't like Ye Xiu and Happy was just because they had given Excellent Era its finishing blow. In regards to how Ye Xiu used to be a member of Excellent Era and got kicked out before striking back, he didn't really feel anything. That meant, for him, in this victory and defeat, Ye Xiu was just like any other player. They won and Excellent Era fell, so he hated them, that was how simple it was.

For Ye Xiu's victory, only the competition mattered.

For Xia Zhongtian's hate, it was in reality only about the competition as well.

"Excellent Era needs help. Perhaps you could find a chance," Ye Xiu said.

"Me?" The topic brought up, Xia Zhongtian still seemed bitter. "I hope so, too, but unfortunately I don't have that ability."

"You will. You just need the right opportunity," Ye Xiu said.

"What do you mean?" Xia Zhongtian was taken aback.

"Excellent Era is currently dismantling and selling parts of its assets." What Ye Xiu said was the nightmare of any Excellent Era fan. "I hope that it's most important part won't be dismantled."

"Let's go!" Ye Xiu said to Chen Guo.

"Oh..." Chen Guo made a sound of agreement but felt that it was quite a shame. There had been a moment where Chen Guo saw that Xia Zhongtian had been seriously and rationally considering sponsoring Happy. She had held a flicker of hope, but unfortunately, Xia Zhongtian still refused in the end. As expected of a huge Excellent Era fan. In the end, he couldn't get over the fact that Happy had struck down Excellent Era. Chen Guo couldn't argue against this because Xia Zhongtian cared solely about the competition and the results. He made this decision because of the outcome. Unless they changed the outcome of that match, they wouldn't be able to change his mind, and unfortunately that was impossible.

"We're off to a bad start..." After leaving Ch'ien Tea Green, Chen Guo, who had kept on speaking for a full half hour, was melting under the sun. She bought two drinks from a vending machine and threw one bottle to Ye Xiu before rapidly downing half of her own bottle. Then she took a look at the packaging, Ch'ien Tea Green.

Ye Xiu didn't seem affected and twisted the bottle open to drink. "Don't worry about it. There's no reason for us to lack sponsors, it's just that you chose an impossible mission from the get go. It's just looking to fail!"

"That brat, Little Chang, I'll show him!" Chen Guo's aggro switched targets and she immediately took out her phone to dial Chang Xian. Speaking of, although they had been firmly rejected by Xia Zhongtian, she still couldn't bring herself to hate him.

In the end, it was all because of his love for the game. He was no different from Chen Guo, Ye Xiu and everyone else who loved Glory.