

Avatar 1161

Chapter 1161: River's End

The water in Broken River rushed rapidly. If a character stopped moving in the middle of the water, they would certainly be swept away. Zhou Guangyi's Cold Seasons was forced into the water by Lord Grim's slash. His first priority at this moment was figuring out how to escape Ye Xiu and Fang Rui. Fighting against the water's flow could come later.

Once they entered the water, Lord Grim and Boundless Sea hadn't stopped attacking, and the two characters had taken control of all the advantageous positions.

What were the advantageous positions? In the midst of the rushing water, upstream positions were advantageous. Attacks that followed the flow wouldn't be as impeded by the water, and these attacks would in fact travel faster than normal. With how swiftly the Broken River flowed, the effect of the additional speed was quite significant.

At first, Zhou Guangyi was worried about these two forcing him to the end of the river and out of the map, but a few moments later he realized he was overthinking. If the current situation continued, he would be a dead body long before he reached the river's end.

Knowing that he was in a difficult situation, Zhou Guangyi finally sought help. Not long afterwards, he heard the splash of someone entering the water. His heart sped up, and he thought, this must be the backup arriving to help. And this splash had come from upstream, meaning that this person had seized a position advantageous to those of both Lord Grim and Boundless Sea. He could use the flow of the water as a buff to increase speed.

As expected of an experienced veteran like Zhang Wei, when he arrived at the riverside, he didn't enter the water immediately. He had followed alongside it for a while, carefully studying until he confirmed everyone's position. Only then did he choose the most favorable position to enter the water.

Once he came down, Zhang Wei's Witch Endless Forest began attacking. With a Broom Tornado he twisted downstream, arriving right in front of the two and battering them. Ye Xiu and Fang Rui would have wanted to dodge to the side and let him sweep past, but if they dodged, they would be letting Cold Seasons go free.

But would Ye Xiu and Fang Rui be beaten up that easily?

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim flashed to the side, making way for Endless Forest, but then he swept his sleeve, sending a Night Cloak toward Endless Forest and Cold Seasons.

Zhang Wei himself was a Witch. If he were taken down by his own class's skill, that would just be too embarrassing. He watched the attack coming, and Endless Forest waved his broom in a knocking motion.

In the air, a Witch could use their broom to jump six times. Now in the water, Broom Mastery also helped movement. With this knock, Endless Forest suddenly sank toward the bottom of the river, and the Night Cloak swept through empty water. Zhou Guangyi's Cold Seasons now had more space than

Endless Forest. Borrowing the flow of the water to help his movements, he was also able to sink down and dodge this attack.

Endless Forest, who had sunk lower, now waved his broom again to propel himself upward toward Lord Grim. And Lord Grim waved his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, turning it into a spear and casually parrying his attack. To the side, Boundless Sea's hands were moving, water rippling between them, and he suddenly thrust downward. The qi swirled in the water, its trajectory clear, and Endless Forest immediately swept his broom again to dodge.

Happy's two players were toying with Endless Forest. It was now as though they had completely forgotten about Cold Seasons.

Zhou Guangyi was once again depressed.

When he had dodged downward earlier, he had also had some plan in mind. He thought that by sinking down, Happy's two would follow him. Zhang Wei's Endless Forest would only need to wait for a moment in the lower position before immediately being able to seize the upstream position.

But who would have thought? As soon as he swam aside, those two didn't even look at him, instead starting to fight Endless Forest.

Cold Seasons had escaped. But Zhou Guangyi couldn't just stand by and watch Zhang Wei be beaten down! His earlier little plan was too straightforward, in front of these two it was far from enough!

Zhou Guangyi's Cold Seasons obediently came back to attack. But Ye Xiu and Fang Rui, in this short moment of 2v1, had managed to once again seize the upstream position. When Cold Seasons returned, he was downstream with Zhang Wei's Endless Forest.

Their position was downstream, their situation was also downstream...

On the riverbank, Zou Yuan and the others were worried about Zhang Wei and Zhou Guangyi as they fought Happy. Wind Carving's summons legion had taken up the task of blocking the opponents, but in the face of the long-range firepower of the Launcher, the typical summon was already essentially dead by the time it reached close-range. The Undead Knight was a little stronger, but because it was so slow and couldn't coordinate with anything else to block the opponent, it could easily be avoided and wasn't much use.

Watching his summons being summoned and then blasted to death, Zhu Xiaoping felt his heart hurt. The death of a summon didn't hurt Wind Carving's health, but every summon used up mana. So in every battle, every summon had to be carefully calculated so that it served a useful purpose. It was like how other classes had to use their mana-consuming skills carefully, to cause damage, or disrupt rhythm, or thwart a target. No matter what it was, it had to serve a purpose.

And now, although Wind Carving's summons served the purpose of protecting them, they were used up rather too quickly. Zhu Xiaoping, judging from past battle experience, could tell that his usage pacing this match was a little too fast.

They couldn't continue like this, or else he would run out of mana, and Wind Carving would become a useless person on the battlefield.

"You guys go first, I'll cover you!" Thus, Zhu Xiaoping resolutely sent this to the team chat.

He had decided. He needed to spread out their formation and thoroughly tend to these three from Happy. He was a Summoner, so he could call forth many dear helpers; he should have this ability. To just avoid them and let his summons act as cannon fodder didn't seem wise. Zhu Xiaoping even felt that, judging from Dancing Rain's attack rhythm, the opponent was purposefully trying to waste all his summons.

"Alright!" Zou Yuan and Mo Chuchen didn't doubt him. A Summoner had the ability to take on two or even three people at once, because he was never fighting by himself.

Directly facing against his opponents, Zhu Xiaoping could carefully control all of his summons, and they wouldn't be defeated so easily by his opponents. He summoned an Undead Knight, who lifted his shield, and Wind Carving himself closely followed along behind. This time, he wouldn't summon from afar. He wanted to directly control his summons, so under the protection of Undead Knight, he would approach closer to his opponents before calling forth a summons legion.

Of course, the Undead Knight moved rather slowly, and it would be easy enough for the opponent to maintain distance. But even if that happened, Zhu Xiaoping would complete his mission of obstruction. At most he would be sacrificing one Undead Knight, a far cheaper price than all the summons he had lost earlier one after the other.

Boom boom!

Cannon fire exploded relentlessly upon the Undead Knight's shield. Although the Undead Knight wobbled, his steps were still resolute. As Zhu Xiaoping predicted, the opponent wouldn't split apart just to kite Undead Knight. They didn't slow down as they ran forward. But this time, now that he himself was here, there was no way he was letting them go around him.

One Inch Ash waved his sword, and a ghostly aura flickered along the length of his blade.

Was he about to lay down a Ghost Boundary?

Zhu Xiaoping saw clearly and summoned a Phantom Cat not far from where One Inch Ash was. Under the protection of the Undead Knight, Zhu Xiaoping wasn't afraid of being interrupted.

The summoned Phantom Cat immediately rushed toward One Inch Ash. Whether he was hit by an attack or tried to dodge, the casting of the Ghost Boundary would be interrupted. Dancing Rain went to attack the Phantom Cat, meaning that the attacks on this side lightened, and they could rush forward with their momentum.

Controlling the summons truly made a difference!

Zhu Xiaoping was extremely satisfied with his condition. He really felt pretty good today! How was he defeated by a rookie in the group arena? He didn't understand... Or maybe, today was that pretty girl's lucky day! Even Yu Feng had lost in a direct fight against her. Now that he thought about it, that pretty girl was Happy's sixth player right now. What would happen if she came out to battle?

Zhu Xiaoping felt that he had good control over the situation. Things were progressing as expected, and he even had the time to ponder other things. Phantom Cat's fast harassment prevented One Inch Ash from laying down a Ghost Boundary. This sort of fast and small close-range attacker wasn't an easy opponent for the Launcher and Ghostblade classes. Zhu Xiaoping seized the chance and controlled Wind Carving to summon more creatures, quickly creating an army. He didn't bother with Demon Flowers or other summons that weren't nimble. These summons would be limited in their usefulness in front of a Launcher and Ghostblade.

Right. Launcher and Ghostblade.

...Huh? Launcher and Ghostblade?

Where'd the other person go? Where was Happy's Cleric?

Zhu Xiaoping suddenly discovered that Happy's Cleric Little Cold Hands was nowhere to be found. Wind Carving was hidden behind the Undead Knight this whole time, so even though he paid close attention to the situation at hand, his vision was limited. It wasn't until now that his army was formed that Wind Carving majestically walked forward, only to discover that one of his opponents was missing.

"The opponent's Cleric escaped!" Zhu Xiaoping immediately warned the others in the team chat.

"Escaped" was really giving himself a lot of credit. In reality, he was just trying to cause a disruption, not trap them entirely.

Attack!

As Zhu Xiaoping directed his summons forward, he studied his surroundings, trying to find Little Cold Hands. And then, he found an entrance to the stone forest nearby. Had Little Cold Hands entered there?

If he entered there... Zhu Xiaoping's mind spun. This was a map that everyone knew, and as a pro player, he could clearly visualize it in his mind.

If he entered there...

He would pass the spawn point!

The spawn point, or in other words, the support zone. In Happy's limited match data, they had used this strategy before, letting their healer exit the battle, replacing him with an attacker.

And the attacker that Happy could use as replacement was someone that no one, certainly not Hundred Blossoms, would dare underestimate anymore.

All this flashed through Zhu Xiaoping's mind, and he frantically sent another message. "Healer went to player exchange area, Soft Mist might enter battle!"

"Soft Mist entering battle? Right now? To do what?" Seeing Zhu Xiaoping's message, the Hundred Blossoms players weren't as alarmed as he was. They even sent this message to the public chat as mockery.

Zou Yuan and Mo Chuchen had finally arrived, easily helping Zhang Wei and Zhou Guangyi to escape their predicament. Now that they had turned the situation around, they were prepared to bully Happy.

"To come fight, of course," Ye Xiu replied in the chat. "What use is a healer here?"

Behind Lord Grim, the riverbanks were blocked by insurmountable walls, and the Broken River became a waterfall plunging downward. Looking through this gap, one could see a beautiful expanse of scenery. But it was no use, for right here was the end of this world...

Chapter 1162: Specious Memories

The expressions on the Hundred Blossoms players became strained at Ye Xiu's words. Their characters in the game couldn't show this though. Their four characters stood in a very standard offensive formation. Zhang Wei's Witch Endless Forest and Zhou Guangyi's Assassin Cold Seasons stood at the front. Zou Yuan's Spitfire Bright Blossoms was positioned behind them in the middle. Mo Chuchen's Cleric Arrogant Flowers was to the right of Bright Blossoms.

They seemed to just be standing where they pleased, but in reality, the distance between each team member, the view that each team member had of the field, and the vigilance towards their opponents were all strategically arranged. The possible variations and tactical thinking inside this formation couldn't be explained in just a few words.

But after hearing Ye Xiu's words, the four players couldn't help but make a few adjustments.

Their previous formation had been a practiced one that they had instinctively arranged themselves in after seeing Lord Grim's and Boundless Sea's positions. However, they suddenly realized that the end of Broken River, the edge of this map, was an instant death spot that needed careful consideration before entering.

There used to be all sorts of strategies on how to play around the end of Broken River. However, this map had been played on so many times, and it had been so long since this map had been chosen in competitive play. What team specifically practiced for these strategies nowadays? Perhaps they might have some memory of the strategies involved, but their teammates back then definitely weren't the same today. Different classes meant different ways of coordination. If they tried to play from what they remembered, it was possible that it would conflict with their current team structure.

Thinking of this, the Hundred Blossoms players suddenly realized how terrifying it was for Happy to choose this map.

For familiar maps, coordination and whatnot could be accomplished without much thought.

However, unfamiliar maps required more carefulness and observation to minimize mistakes.

As for Broken River, this map had once been a familiar one, but was now an abandoned one. Everyone had seemingly correct but actually incorrect memories. Were these memories accurate? When victory or defeat depended on these memories, the Hundred Blossoms players were hesitant. Doubt started to wel up within them. They were afraid that those fuzzy memories might lead to a fatal mistake.

The Hundred Blossoms players hesitated, and at the same time, they now understood why Happy had chosen this map.

These situations depended on their resolve. And judging from the current situation, they clearly weren't resolute enough. After Ye Xiu spoke those words, Hundred Blossoms kept on adjusting their positions. They were clearly having trouble parsing through their memories.

"At that time, our team still had Sun Zheping and Zhang Jiale!" The old general Zhang Wei recalled Hundred Blossoms' golden age and the scenes of their battles at Broken River.

"At that time, battling alongside our captain was truly fun..." Zhou Guangyi recalled his time with Tyranny and his days fighting with Han Wenqing's Desert Dust.

At that time... Zou Yuan didn't have an at that time. He had joined the league in Season 7. By then, this map had already fallen out of use. He really didn't have any competitive experience with Broken River.

As for Mo Chuchen? Mo Chuchen was also nervous because of Ye Xiu's words. At this spot, if the opponent pushed them off the waterfall, they would instantly die. What would be the point of healing? How was he supposed to help his team?

The Hundred Blossoms players each had their own thoughts. For a moment, their positioning became even more disorderly.

How could Ye Xiu or Fang Rui miss this opportunity?

Sky-Piercing Strike!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea leaped up and a powerful wave of qi shot out through his hands towards Hundred Blossoms.

The Hundred Blossoms players clearly reacted slowly to this sudden attack. Anyone could see that their priority was distancing themselves from the waterfall.

They only dodged. None of them thought of counterattacking. After Fang Rui's Boundless Sea shot out a Sky-Piercing Strike, he didn't receive any interference, so he swiped his two hands and slashed out a Qi Blade.

This Qi Blade was formed from the Qi Master's breath, so it was without form or light. The only trace of it was the stream of air left behind when it sliced through the air. It was a very concealed flying weapon type skill. Even if the opponent noticed the attack, because of its immaterial form, it was difficult to judge the distance, making defending and dodging more difficult to time. The only way to dodge was to dodge as soon as you noticed it. Safety first.

Zou Yuan saw Boundless Sea swipe his two hands against each other, forming a ripple in the air. He knew it was a Qi Blade, so he immediately had Bright Blossoms dodge to the side. But to his surprise, the trajectory of this ripple wasn't a straight line, but a cunning arc that deviated from Zou Yuan's prediction. In the end, the Qi Blade struck Arrogant Flowers, Team Hundred Blossoms' Cleric.

Ye Xiu just said that healing in this battle was pointless, yet Fang Rui's attack had been aimed at Hundred Blossoms' healer.

Mo Chuchen was completely caught off guard. The Qi Blade connected squarely with Arrogant Flowers. There was no eye-catching explosion or spurt of blood, but the damage dealt was no worse than those

flashy attacks. Plus, it had quite a strong knockback. After taking this hit, Arrogant Flowers immediately stumbled.

As Boundless Sea fell from the skies, he stretched out his hand towards Arrogant Flower and grabbed.

But then a flash of light swept over. Zhou Guangyi's Assassin promptly attacked from the side to cut off Boundless Sea.

"Lord Grim!!"

The old general Zhang Wei had experienced hundreds of battles. No matter how ferociously Boundless Sea attacked, he would never fail to pay attention to Ye Xiu's Lord Grim. While everyone was focusing on Boundless Sea, Zhang Wei saw Lord Grim lift his two hands and get into a certain position. Wasn't that the Qi Master's Cloud Grasping Fist?

He hastily warned everyone in his channel. Zou Yuan reacted the fastest. Before even understanding what the situation was, Bright Blossoms turned and started firing at Lord Grim.

Ye Xiu had no choice but to cancel his sneak attack and dodge.

"Come this way!!" The rescued Mo Chuchen directed his Arrogant Flowers to the stone forest to the side. His thought process was quite simple. Since fighting at the end of Broken River was so confusing, why not just fight further away from it.

"Go." Vice-captain Zou Yuan approved of Mo Chuchen's thinking and ordered the team to shift over there. In truth, Zou Yuan didn't like these sorts of special terrain, but he could see the hesitation from his teammates towards their current battlefield.

Hundred Blossoms had the numbers advantage, 4 to 2, yet they did not confront the other side directly and took the initiative to shift the battlefield away. Arrogant Flowers ran the fastest. The other three also moved towards this direction. Seeing the waterfall leave their sight, their hearts just started to steady when a boom suddenly came from ahead of them. Arrogant Flowers, who had just run into the stone forest excitedly, was directly thrown out.

Soft Mist burst out with a Dragon Breaks the Ranks. Arrogant Flowers had been sent flying by this attack already, but that didn't seem to stop the dragon's momentum.

Zou Yuan and the two others hastily dodged. Ye Xiu and Fang Rui saw this and immediately became spirited.

"Grab one over!!!" Ye Xiu yelled.

"Okay, which one?" Fang Rui replied.

Hundred Blossoms' four players were greatly alarmed. They thought Cloud Grasping Fist was about to come at them again, so they kept rolling on the ground refusing to get up. But after looking towards that side, they knew that they had been duped. Lord Grim and Boundless Sea were running rapidly towards them, and Cloud Grasping Fist was not a skill that could be used while moving.

Their target was still Team Hundred Blossoms' Cleric, Arrogant Flowers. Lord Grim, Boundless Sea, and Soft Mist had quickly formed a triangle with Arrogant Flowers in the middle.

Counting on a Cleric to break out of an encirclement alone was unfair. Hundred Blossoms' other three players immediately tried to rescue him. Zou Yuan's Bright Blossoms shot a Flash Bullet. However, Happy's three players responded by rushing towards the middle. Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened up with a whoosh. The Flash Bullet knocked against the umbrella and exploded. However, the three behind the umbrella were unaffected by it and continued to pummel Arrogant Flowers.

Zou Yuan wanted to cry, but no tears came out. If he had known they would do that, he would have thrown a Burst Grenade...

There were no ifs, but it wasn't too late now. Zou Yuan threw a Burst Grenade.

"DON'T!" Zhang Wei shouted, but he was too late.

The Burst Grenade exploded on the umbrella's canopy. The powerful shockwave sent Happy's three characters flying, but... where was Arrogant Flowers. Teammates were exempt from allied skills, so he should still be there!

"Thanks!" Lord Grim expressed his thanks. Zou Yuan composed himself and then took another look. He had located Arrogant Flowers; he was in Lord Grim's hands.

Zou Yuan's view had been blocked by the umbrella, so he didn't know the situation. However, Zhang Wei, who was at a different angle, could see things. When Zou Yuan threw a Burst Grenade, Lord Grim just happened to grab Arrogant Flowers.

Fling!

Grabs had the highest priority out of any skill. Even the shockwave from Burst Grenade failed to interrupt Lord Grim's grab, leading to Arrogant Flowers being pushed out along with Lord Grim.

And Burst Grenade did nothing but send people flying away. The airborne Lord Grim was free to move around. As a result, he continued his combo with a Fling, throwing Arrogant Flower away. Where to? Towards the waterfall of course...

"Ah!" Zou Yuan cried out, but unfortunately, no one could hear him. None of the other three Hundred Blossom players were able to intercept him in time.

"Don't panic! Figure out the direction of the flow and swim back!" At the crucial moment, it was still the old general Zhang Wei who was the calmest. He deduced that at Lord Grim's height, it was not possible for him to directly throw Arrogant Flowers outside of the waterfall. Arrogant Flower would fall into the water, but as long as he figured out the direction of the flow fast enough, he wouldn't be pulled down the waterfall. However, he needed to be fast because it had to be done in an instant.

Calm down!

Mo Chuchen nervously reminded himself. He could see the surface of the river and the scenery outside the map, which looked quite beautiful.

I can't go there!

Mo Chuchen encouraged himself, boosting his confidence. He was ready to drop into the water.

Bang!

What was that? That wasn't the sound of a splash? Where am I?

His screen violently shook. By the time Mo Chuchen finished adjusting himself, he realized that the Broken River was far away. Arrogant Flower was already heading down towards that beautiful world on the other side...

Chapter 1163: Get Out!

How could this be?

Mo Chuchen still didn't understand, but Arrogant Flowers' name was already gray in the team list.

"Nice snipe."

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea said in the public chat.

"I can't stay rusty forever :)" Ye Xiu replied with a smiley face.

Just before Arrogant Flowers would have fallen into the water, Mo Chuchen had been prepared to swim against the current. At that moment, a bullet fired from the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella, sniping Arrogant Flowers and sending him off the map to his death.

What was the point of a healer here?

Ye Xiu's words hadn't disappeared yet and could still be seen in the public chat! Yet in the blink of an eye, the player he killed happened to be this "useless" healer.

Perhaps a healer was useless here, but what about elsewhere? The healer's value would be very high. However, Hundred Blossoms no longer had the chance to experience the value of having a healer.

Right now, Hundred Blossoms hadn't dealt any major damage to the enemy team nor were they in an advantageous position, yet they had already lost their core player and their important healer. Hundred Blossoms' current situation was extremely bad. In a normal match, teams in this situation might just directly call GG and forfeit the match.

However, Hundred Blossoms didn't want to forfeit.

They had already lost quite terribly in the individual competition and the group arena. Right now, they only had a single point. Typing "GG" and losing would be disastrous.

If the enemy team can use this instant kill zone, so can we!

We have no healer, but the enemy team doesn't either!

In terms of numbers, both sides each have three players. Neither side has the advantage!

Zou Yuan, Zhou Guangyi, Zhang Wei. The three Hundred Blossoms players would no longer retreat. Without a healer, playing tug of war with Happy was not wise. Right now, they needed this instant kill

zone more than Happy. They needed to instantly kill these Happy characters to come back from this terrible situation.

"Attack!"

Zou Yuan ordered in the team chat. The three Hundred Blossom players sprinted forward.

The Burst Grenade explosion, Lord Grim grabbing, flinging, sniping Arrogant Flowers off the map had all happened in an instant. The three Hundred Blossoms players also instantly examined the situation and made a clear decision. While the three Happy players were still steadying themselves, they immediately pounced on them and attacked. Their target was the character closest to the waterfall, Lord Grim.

Broom Tornado!

Zhang Wei liked to use this Witch skill. This time, Endless Forest flew into the air. As his broom spun, he shot towards Lord Grim like a tornado.

Below, Zhou Guangyi's Assassin was using Shining Cut to move. However, this time, he wasn't using it to attack, but to coordinate with Zhang Wei and restrict Lord Grim's movement options. Along with Zou Yuan's Bright Blossoms firing non-stop, they forced Lord Grim towards the waterfall.

"You guys learn fast!"

Ye Xiu still had time to type a few words. It seemed like he wasn't worried about his current situation. And just like this, Lord Grim confidently ran towards the waterfall as if to satisfy Hundred Blossoms' desires.

If only we had a Burst Grenade right now!

Zou Yuan looked at Burst Grenade's cooldown and felt annoyed. If he had a Burst Grenade, the shockwave would be more than enough to send Lord Grim off the stage. How convenient would that be?

But right now?

What do I do now?

Zou Yuan quickly thought about this question and realized that it wasn't easy for the three to do something. While Lord Grim could just grab Arrogant Flowers and throw him, the three of them didn't have that type of skill.

This situation gave Zou Yuan a greater understanding of why Happy chose Broken River. It seemed like a map that everyone knew, but in reality, because of each team's class composition, it was unfavorable for Hundred Blossoms. In addition, Team Hundred Blossoms only had fuzzy memories of how to play on this map. The impact of this fuzziness could now be deeply felt.

This was a map that fully utilized Happy's home field advantage!

After seeing Lord Grim confidently retreat towards the waterfall on his own accord, Zou Yuan smelled a scheme. Happy had come to this map prepared. They had definitely practiced tactics revolving around this special terrain.

What is it?

Zou Yuan watched Lord Grim's movements closely, while constantly taking note of Boundless Sea and Soft Mist.

Those two were on their way back after being blown away by Burst Grenade.

What are they going to do?

Zou Yuan truly didn't have any idea. Truthfully, he didn't have any experience with this map.

"Careful." Zou Yuan could only remind his two teammates.

Zhang Wei wasn't a particularly talented player. However, having been a pro player for so long, he was well-practiced. In this instant, he also felt like there was some deeper meaning behind Lord Grim's calm retreat. He pondering over what it could be, when he saw Zou Yuan's warning in the chat.

Zhang Wei was greatly alarmed. Had something happened already?

He looked around in a panic and swept over the three Happy characters one by one, but he didn't discover anything unusual. He woke up immediately afterwards. The warning had been because Zou Yuan felt like there was something fishy about Lord Grim.

A communication error between teammates wasn't good. Zhang Wei realized that his condition was off. However, he was powerless to fix it. Without having a clear understanding of why they were at a disadvantage, they couldn't help but hesitate.

In any case, we have to try!

In the end, Zhang Wei made his decision. They were already at a disadvantage. In this sort of situation, if they didn't struggle and gamble, how could they win?

"Forward!" Zhang Wei feared that the other two would fail to coordinate properly because of the hesitation in their hearts, so he let everyone know before acting.

"Forward!" Zou Yuan knew that they could not drag this on. After replying to Zhang Wei, his Bright Blossoms threw a grenade.

Seeker Grenade!

This grenade came with its own propeller like a mini-helicopter. After it flew out, it locked onto Lord Grim and flew towards him.

Boom!!

Lord Grim held up his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and shot down this Seeker Grenade in mid-air.

But this was just the start of Bright Blossom's assault. Another two grenades were thrown, normal ones that could also be used by an unspecialized. Lord Grim jumped backwards to dodge them, but another grenade followed closely behind. Lord Grim once again opened up his umbrella and also wanted to shoot down this grenade. To his surprise, that grenade had yet to reach him, when it suddenly exploded.

Timed Grenade!

Ye Xiu immediately recognized it as a time grenade. To put it simply, it was a time bomb. The timer could be set as long as 8 seconds, but the one Bright Blossoms threw was at most set to 2 seconds. Zou Yuan linked it together with his other grenade and had it explode before Lord Grim could respond.

But at such a distance, let alone damage, Lord Grim wasn't even affected by the shockwave from the explosion. However, the smoke produced from the explosion temporarily blocked his sight.

Ye Xiu immediately had Lord Grim roll. Sure enough, a Magic Ray pierced through the smoke, but it missed because Lord Grim had preemptively dodged it.

"This old fox..." Zhang Wei was helpless. He was already one of the oldest players in the Alliance, but his opponent was even more senior than him. There was probably nothing Ye Xiu had never seen before. It just depended on whether he could react in time.

Unfortunately, their coordinated attack wasn't effective. Zhou Guangyi's Cold Seasons had originally been lying in wait for an opening, but Ye Xiu wasn't their only opponent. Fang Rui and Tang Rou promptly joined the battle. Cold Seasons wasn't able to act in time before the two interfered.

Zhou Guangyi could defend against Tang Rou's Soft Mist wild frontal assault, but the problem was that the cunning Fang Rui was lying on the sidelines. It was truly unbearable.

Zou Yuan and Zhang Wei saw this situation and knew that it would be bad if they didn't help. Zhang Wei's Endless Forest threw a Lava Flask over to that side. Zou Yuan had Bright Blossoms turn around and fire a few bullets, but most of his attention was still on Lord Grim.

He's coming!

Seeing Lord Grim stop retreating towards the waterfall and instead charge at them, Zou Yuan didn't panic and started eagerly looking forward to it. Bright Blossoms held a tiny remote control in his left hand. Previously, he had thrown not three but four grenades. A Remote Control Grenade was three units away from Lord Grim right now. One step, two steps...

Boom!

The Remote Control Grenade exploded. The shockwave sent Lord Grim flying back. Zou Yuan felt a surge of excitement in his heart. Zhang Wei also noticed it and knew that this was a rare opportunity. In this instant, he and Zou Yuan displayed a high-level of tacit understanding. Zou Yuan's Bright Blossoms turned towards Soft Mist and Boundless Sea, helping Cold Seasons ward them off. Zhang Wei's Endless Forest, on the other hand, rode on his broom and chased after Lord Grim.

The Remote Control Grenade's power wasn't that high. The knockback wasn't enough to knock Lord Grim off the waterfall. What's more, Lord Grim could use skills to prevent that.

Broom Tornado!

Endless Forest flew into the air and immediately came down like a tornado. He aimed precisely. At this angle, he could send Lord Grim towards the very edge of the map while retreating with a jump backwards.

"It's been so many years and you're still doing the same trick!"

A message from Ye Xiu popped into the chat. Zhang Wei suddenly felt that the situation wasn't good. However, the Broom Tornado had already been activated. Lord Grim's umbrella was faster though...

Circle Swing!

Endless Forest was knocked into the air. His Broom Tornado had been broken, and Zhang Wei was helpless. This was the difference between them. He was just an experienced veteran, but Ye Xiu? He was one of the players who stood at the top of Glory. If Broom Tornado was done correctly, it could completely avoid this type of interrupt. Over Zhang Wei's professional career, he had always favored this skill, but in the end, it was still blocked by Ye Xiu.

The umbrella drew a circle in the air. The one thrown out of the map wasn't Lord Grim but Endless Forest. However, Endless Forest was a Witch. With the skill Broom Mastery, he had plenty of room to maneuver. This was why Zhang Wei, although feeling helpless, was not yet panicked. But who would have thought, when the Circle Swing finished, Endless Sea hadn't even had the chance to move yet before the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella retracted and shifted from spear to gun form.

Bang bang bang!

Three Anti-Tank Missiles exploded onto Endless Forest, pushing him far out. And then, the shockwaves from the explosions pushed him even farther along.

"FUCK!" Seeing the distance between the inside of the map and his position outside of the map, Zhang Wei lost all hope. Witches could somewhat fly in the air, but it was impossible at this distance!

Team Hundred Blossoms' Witch, Endless Forest, killed!

Chapter 1164: The Strongest New Team in History

They had waited with high hopes for the chance to push Lord Grim off the map, but all that happened was that their own side lost another powerful general. Zou Yuan and Zhou Guangyi were agonized. It wasn't even one defeat, it was a combo. Just after Endless Forest's icon grayed out, Zhu Xiaoping's Summoner Wind Carving fell as well.

For one person to last this long against Su Mucheng and Qiao Yifan was quite a feat; Zhu Xiaoping already proved himself a worthy Summoner. But he didn't have the ability to both stall and defeat two players at once. In all of Glory's history, there had never been such a powerful Summoner before.

In the team competition, Happy's roster was still whole and perfect, while Hundred Blossoms had already lost four players.

At this moment, Zou Yuan and Zhou Guangyi stopped moving. Under these conditions, was there any point in continuing fighting? They lost this match, completely and thoroughly. 1 to 9 wasn't a total sweep, but it wasn't far off, either.

Zou Yuan and Zhou Guangyi didn't say anything to each other. They just stopped at the same time, and it was clear that they were in agreement.

"GG"

"GG"

Each player sent a "GG," and then Bright Blossoms and Cold Seasons withdrew from the battle. Happy officially won the battle. The roar of the crowd was like thunder - this was a huge victory, 9 to 1!

Happy's team competition players walked out of the player booths together to greet the audience, and the stadium reached a new high of excitement.

Hundred Blossoms' players walked out as well. As the losers, it was best for them if they left this stage quickly, but they still had to follow some customs. Hundred Blossoms politely acknowledged the applause they received from the crowd, and with the spirit of "friendship first, competition second," they spoke to their opponents.

"Congratulations, you played well." Yu Feng took the initiative to congratulate Happy's players, displaying Hundred Blossom's grace.

"Haha, continue to work hard," Ye Xiu said casually as he shook hands with Yu Feng. After hearing this, Yu Feng was a bit depressed. What do you mean, "continue to work hard"? That made it sound like Hundred Blossoms' only goal was to surpass Happy.

"Haha, you too." Yu Feng forced a chuckle, then led Hundred Blossoms offstage. They met up with the rest of their teammates, and immediately left through the player tunnel. It was the winner's stage, let the winner enjoy it!

The Alliance mandated that pro players must attend the post-match press conference of every match. To the losers of the match, this was another torture to endure. Reporters were merciless, always rubbing salt into their wounds. Hundred Blossoms knew that this conference would be particularly excruciating, so aside from their captain and vice captain, they sent out their veteran player, Zhang Wei.

"It's a shame that Hundred Blossoms lost this match. Could you talk about some of your thoughts?" The opening question was rather ordinary.

"Our team members all worked hard, but unfortunately the opponent played better." Hundred Blossoms Captain Yu Feng also gave a very standard answer.

"Did you at all predict that you would be crushed by Happy like this? Please forgive my usage of the word "crushed," but judging from the final point score, the match was incredibly one-sided." A harsh question followed, deliberately attacking the Hundred Blossoms players.

"This outcome was unexpected for everyone, and I admit that we never thought this could have happened. But I don't believe that Hundred Blossoms was crushed. We won one point in the individual round, and we had the upper-hand for part of the group arena. As for the team round, maps like Broken River that have instant-kill points will often lead to a result that seems very skewed. The points are only the result, but looking at the process, I truly cannot see where Hundred Blossoms was crushed." Yu Feng didn't reveal any anger, but he replied sharply to this question.

"Captain Yu, what do you think about Team Happy's Tang Rou?" Immediately, another reporter asked a pointed question to counterattack. Tang Rou certainly wasn't a name that Yu Feng would be happy to hear right now. It was another knife to the wound.

"She's very skilled," Yu Feng replied. "She will become an outstanding pro player."

"Could you be more specific? For example, outstanding in what way?" Someone asked.

"To win a 1v2 in the group arena and help the team earn the overall victory, isn't that enough to show her outstandingness?" Yu Feng clearly saw the reporter's purpose in asking about Tang Rou. He had lost to a rookie, which was truly shameful, but he wouldn't try to hide. He had the courage to face any challenge directly because he was the captain and core of Hundred Blossoms. He had to be able to shoulder any difficulties that Hundred Blossoms had.

"Then what about Hundred Blossoms' Zeng Xinran? This was his first time playing in this season, but both the result and the process were unsatisfactory." For comparison, another reporter brought up the rookie on Hundred Blossoms' side, Zeng Xinran. In the entire match, aside from Mo Fan, who had committed a foul and was disqualified from the game, Zeng Xinran's performance was the most abysmal. This was the incontestable truth.

"It was his first official match ever, so he was inevitably nervous. It takes a while to get used to the professional scene, but he will be able to display his ability," said Yu Feng.

After that, there were more questions targeting specific details about the match. The good thing was that Hundred Blossoms was prepared for this, and the players they sent out for this conference were all experienced in this area. Finally, they made it through the questioning.

"I'd like to ask the three Hundred Blossoms players, after this match, could you talk about your opinion of Team Happy?" At the very end of the press conference, Chang Xian from the City H branch of Esports Home had the opportunity to ask the final question.

"For this question, I don't think we each need to say our own opinions. Our view of Happy is unanimous." From Hundred Blossoms, Zhang Wei was the one to answer. "Regarding their roster, they have three All-Star players - I don't think I need to say any more about that. Regarding their characters, aside from their two All-Star characters, the Silver equipment on their other characters is enough to make an opponent hesitate. During the transition stage after the game update, level 75 Orange equipment narrowed the gap between the smaller teams and the powerhouses. We were stuck for too long at level 70, so we need to take another look at the so-called gap between all of the teams. With this situation, combined with Happy's status, I think it's safe to say that Happy is the strongest new team in the history of the Alliance!"

Zhang Wei's answer brought forth even more questions that the reporters wanted to ask, but after answering this final question, Hundred Blossoms' three players ignored the reporters' shouted questions and abruptly left the press conference. Afterwards, it was Happy's turn to come out: Ye Xiu, Fang Rui, and of course the shining star of this match, Tang Rou.

The press conference opened with the typical congratulations and question about their thoughts on this match.

"Hundred Blossoms also worked hard, but we played better." Ye Xiu's answer was essentially the exact same as Yu Feng's, just switching around the pronouns. The reporters didn't care much; no one really hoped to gain anything out of this question. In post-match press conferences, this question was essentially a "hello."

After the greetings, the reporters immediately went to Tang Rou. The team battle hadn't at all distracted from her astonishing 1v2 performance in the group arena.

"An exciting victory, a grand reversal!" The reporters gave their praises without restraint. "What are your thoughts on this thrilling performance? How would you judge your own performance?"

"I hope that I can still do better," Tang Rou said, smiling.

"Still... do better? Are you referring... to a 1v3?" The reporters were in shock.

"Of course." Tang Rou continued to smile.

The reporters' feelings were mixed. Some approved of Tang Rou's courage and confidence, while others immediately turned against her. After managing a 1v2, this rookie knew no modesty and immediately entertained delusions of a 1v3? This was just too arrogant! With these thoughts, these reporters took another look at Tang Rou onstage and felt that she was just like those typical self-righteous pretty girls that often showed up in novels and television.

This was the Glory competitive scene. Being pretty wasn't worth anything. Many of the gazes on Tang Rou were now hostile and disdainful, even those who had previously chased Tang Rou with their praise.

"God Fang Rui also performed very well today, could you talk to us about it?" a reporter asked.

"It was just so-so," said Fang Rui. "A little worse than I had expected."

"What were you expecting?" someone asked.

"To sweep the group arena?" Fang Rui said, but he didn't wait for the hostile glares before immediately adding, "Haha, I'm just kidding. I did want to take some more of Yu Feng's health in the second round of the group arena, but sadly I couldn't pull it off."

"Oh, then regarding the second player to come out in the group arena, Mo Fan, what do you think about his performance? Was he too nervous about his first time playing onstage?" a reporter asked.

"That was entirely Ye Xiu's fault!" Fang Rui's face immediately twisted in grief and indignation.

"Ah? What do you mean?" Everyone was suddenly interested, and they all looked at Ye Xiu.

"It was my fault," Ye Xiu said, also wearing a bitter expression. "I didn't clearly explain to him the competition rules."

"Clearly explain? You didn't explain at all!" Fang Rui said.

"I saw that he was looking at them himself!" Ye Xiu said.

"What use is looking at them himself! Are the rules that easy to digest? You need to properly teach him how to exploit the loopholes in the rules."

"You shut your mouth, is exploiting loopholes and whatnot something that a respectable pro player should do?"

"But there will always be a few sneaky players that do this. To defeat their sneaky tricks, you first have to understand how they'll be sneaky!" said Fang Rui.

After hearing this, the reporters instantly became excited, all turning toward Fang Rui.

"By 'sneaky players,' who are you referring to?" the reporters asked.

"That was just an example, a general reference," Fang Rui said.

The reporters were disappointed, but they still felt that Fang Rui was targeting someone specific. Quite a few people were already racking their brains for a player that Fang Rui didn't get along with. Meanwhile, others continued to seize this time to ask questions.

"In today's team competition, we saw that once again, Happy's healer didn't serve any big purpose. Is this because his skill level still isn't at the professional level, so Happy has to rely on these strategies that don't rely on a healer?" someone asked.

"That's nonsense," said Ye Xiu. "He didn't serve any purpose? How was Blossoming Chaos taken down in one wave? If we were missing a single person, we couldn't have pulled it off."

"Zhang Wei of Hundred Blossoms named you the strongest new team in history. What do you think about that?"

"He praises us too highly. Zhang Wei is truly too honest," Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 1165: Damage Leaderboard

Xiaoshan Stadium.

With Excellent Era's liquidation, their lease contract was terminated early and this stadium recovered its old name. But to the workers of this stadium, it was as though nothing changed. After a year, the stadium once again was hosting Glory Pro League, and the work they had to do was the same.

"Pardon, Miss, we need to clear the stadium." A worker quickly walked up to an audience member who was standing just below the stage.

"I'm sorry, I'm just about to leave." Chen Guo immediately apologized to the worker, and prepared to leave. But after taking a few steps, she couldn't help but turn back and look again.

The audience seating, the player prep room, the competition stage...

It had already been two hours since the end of the match, but as she looked at all of this, Chen Guo could clearly picture the scene as it was during the match, even which seats had the passionate Happy fans who stood and waved their arms in the air as they screamed and cheered Happy on. She remembered it all.

"This... is our home stadium?"

Happy's first home game was already over, but Chen Guo's heart still hadn't calmed down. Of course, she had watched matches here and felt the atmosphere of a home game before, but this time, compared to when she watched Excellent Era's matches, the feeling was completely different.

"Miss..." The worker, seeing how Chen Guo took a few steps and then suddenly stopped again, reminded her again.

"Oh, I'm sorry." Chen Guo quickly turned around again. Without looking back, she walked outside through the only exit that was still open.

We'll return to this place, and we'll earn victory after victory, all the way until the end. Chen Guo's footsteps were rapid, and her heart surged.

9 to 1!

Even though she had somewhat greedily hoped for a perfect 10-0 victory, the result they got was enough to please anyone. Chen Guo picked up her phone and dialed a number.

"Hey! Where'd you all go!" Chen Guo said loudly.

"We should be the ones asking you that question..." the person on the other end of the phone answered.

"I just stayed a bit longer at the stadium, to feel the atmosphere of the home stadium," Chen Guo said.

"Everyone else probably left already, right Boss?"

"Yes, it was empty. So we can go out without worrying! Let's go, let's celebrate!" Chen Guo said.

"Isn't it too late right now?"

"We'll make an exception this time! This was our first home match! And we won so beautifully," said Chen Guo.

"Alright..." On the other end, Ye Xiu hung up the phone.

At least here, this was a night that completely belonged to Happy.

The strongest new team in history. A huge 9 to 1 victory over Hundred Blossoms.

Happy's pretty female rookie won fame through the group arena.

The next day, as expected, news about Happy vs Hundred Blossoms filled the headlines on the front pages of every major esports publication. Chen Guo was elated. During breakfast, she clutched a cup of warm milk and sat in front of the computer, scrolling through the web. She just sat there with a silly grin, completely forgetting about her milk until it had already gone cold.

The dizzying praise felt exhilarating to her. To the occasional critical comment, she swept by with a laugh of "you people wouldn't understand." In the midst of the praise, the one who was mentioned the most often was undoubtedly Tang Rou. Her thrilling performance in the group arena was truly unforgettable, and quite a few people were already discussing the question of Best Rookie for this season. One Glory player made a poll about this, and Tang Rou was at the top of the list by a large margin.

But Chen Guo knew that selection of the Best Rookie wasn't like the All-Stars, where they were determined by fan vote. Best Rookie was awarded by the Alliance based off their performance throughout the entire season and took into account many factors. Just because a rookie was popular

didn't mean that they would be chose. This poll was just for the players' amusement; it meant nothing to the officials who would actually decide.

Even though that was the case, Chen Guo was still happy to see all of the favorable comments about her friend.

After reading her fill of all this excitement, Chen Guo went to the official Glory Alliance page to investigate the various technical statistics of the season so far.

There were countless official statistical records: damage dealt, damage boosted, damage taken, heal amount, damage reduced, longest combo, final kill, and so on and so forth.

A player's strength and performance could be judged from these technical statistics. However, most viewers paid attention not to the raw numbers but to the relative rankings.

The leaderboard for damage dealt received the most attention. There were separate group arena and team competition categories. As for the individual round, that was directly compared by win-loss records. There was a separate win rate leaderboard that didn't count by damage.

Tang Rou had played a strong game, and so Chen Guo came here to see her ranking on the group arena damage leaderboard.

But two rounds of the season had already passed. Although Tang Rou's performance in this round was stunning, she had lost to Sun Xiang in the first round, and her damage dealt wasn't very high. After two rounds, Tang Rou's ranking wasn't as high as Chen Guo had anticipated. The current number one of the group arena damage leaderboard was none other than Sun Xiang.

In the first round of competition, Sun Xiang had faced a 1v2 in the group arena, and his performance in terms of damage dealt was no worse than Tang Rou's this past round. And in the second round of competition, Samsara played an away game at Seaside, once again winning in a clean 10 to 0. And this time, Sun Xiang had truly completed a full 1v2. After two rounds, his 142546 far surpassed Tang Rou's 70421.

It could even be said that comparing Tang Rou with the current number one was a mistake in and of itself.

Of the 84 players that appeared on the group arena damage leaderboard, Tang Rou was only number 31, slightly above the middle. The 30 players ahead of her, including Sun Xiang, had dealt more damage in the group arena after two rounds of competition.

And this was only for the total damage output rankings. If they looked at average per match, Tang Rou's ranking was a bit lower, number 41 out of 84, very ordinary.

Chen Guo was a bit disappointed after not seeing the results she had hoped for. She scrolled the mouse wheel, searching for the names of the other Happy players. When she scrolled to the bottom, she saw Mo Fan and Deception at number 84. That 0 was particularly glaring.

"Looking at these things now, isn't it too early?" Ye Xiu's voice sounded from next to her.

"I'm just looking for fun," Chen Guo said, turning her head to look at him.

"It's only been two rounds, the leaderboards haven't stabilized. Who's number one?" Ye Xiu was eating breakfast right now, drinking from a cup of milk as he asked this question.

"Sun Xiang," Chen Guo said, scrolling back up to show him.

"140000, that ferocious? That's pretty much a 1v2 in both rounds!" Ye Xiu said.

"I know!" Chen Guo was quite depressed. She had hoped that Tang Rou was the only one to 1v2, but looking at the leaderboards, it was clear that many players had outstanding performances.

"If he played that ferociously, doesn't that mean that some people wouldn't be able to deal their share of damage?" Ye Xiu laughed.

Chen Guo blinked, and then began scrolling down again. In the end, at number 80, she found Zhou Zekai's name. Not much farther ahead flashed the names of Huang Shaotian and Wang Jiexi.

Zhou Zekai, Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi.

Who would dare say that these three had poor DPS? But on the leaderboard after two rounds, each of them seemed weaker than the next. The reality of course wasn't that they were doing poorly, but that they hadn't yet had much chance to perform onstage. In their respective teams, each of these three was the powerful player anchoring the group arena. To take Zhou Zekai as an example, in the first round he had faced Lord Grim at low health, and it only took a few attacks to end the battle. In the second round, he hadn't even gone onstage, since Samsara's second player ended the group arena.

Under these conditions, of course Zhou Zekai's damage output would be low.

Thus, although the raw numbers of the Glory statistics leaderboards could reveal a few things, they had to be analyzed with context. Glory's competition system had its own characteristics, such as this situation where because a teammate was too strong in the group arena, a player didn't have the chance to deal damage.

Chen Guo casually flipped through a few other leaderboards. Because they were swept in the first round, whether in the overall standings or the average standings, Happy was fairly low, nowhere near as exciting as the news reports today.

"How are the point rankings?" Ye Xiu asked from the side.

"You haven't looked yet?" As she spoke, Chen Guo flipped to the team points leaderboard.

"Not yet." Ye Xiu leaned forward a bit. Evidently, he was more interested in this information.

"Samsara's in first," Chen Guo said, looking at the leaderboard. "They swept again, 20 points."

"Mm." Ye Xiu looked further down. Samsara was in first with 20 points after two rounds, followed by Wind Howl, Blue Rain, and Tiny Herb with 18 points each. Fifth was Tyranny with 17 points, sixth was Misty Rain with 15 points. This seemed to be the cutoff for the upper tier of the points rankings, as there was a large gap between Misty Rain and the seventh place Thunderclap, who earned 13 points over two rounds. Eighth and ninth were Royal Style and Void, each with ten points. Then after that, Happy made a dazzling entrance, placing tenth with nine points. And Happy's neighbor happened to be the team they just defeated, Hundred Blossoms.

After two rounds, Hundred Blossoms had also earned 9 points. If ordered alphabetically by the pinyin of their names, then they should be placed before Happy - Baihua (Hundred Blossoms) before Xingxin (Happy). But because the two teams had fought and Happy had won against them, Happy ranked ahead of them. After Hundred Blossoms was 301 Degrees with 7 points, and then there were the various mid-to-low-tier teams. After two rounds, none of these teams broke through to the upper tier. They all obediently stayed in the bottom.

Heavenly Swords, the team that Happy was friendliest with, had earned 3 points in two rounds. They were currently in second to last place, in danger of being relegated.

After Heavenly Swords, last place was held by Seaside. Zhao Yang retired, Boundless Sea was sold. The team that had once been solidly mid-tier had directly slid to the bottom.

However, only two rounds had passed so far. It was still too early to talk about a team's chances. After all, Heavenly Swords and Seaside, the two teams at the bottom, had faced strong opponents in the first two rounds. Heavenly Swords had faced Hundred Blossoms and Blue Rain, while Seaside faced Misty Rain and Samsara. Losing to these teams, they couldn't be accused of not trying hard enough.

But Heavenly Swords, who had lost 2 to 8 to Hundred Blossoms, saw how Happy defeated the same team in a drastic 9 to 1, and they couldn't help but have mixed feelings.

"They really are something else!" Lou Guanning sighed.

Chapter 1166: Point Evaluations

Saturday was match day. On Sunday, all sorts of discussion on Saturday's matches could be seen in the various Glory forums, although most of these discussions were focused on the players. The news reports, on the other hand, were either impartial descriptions of the how the match went, or remarks from interviews. The truly professional analysis generally required a day to fully digest the previous day's matches. The most reputable Esports Home would only start reporting any detailed analysis in their Monday issue.

On Monday, Chen Guo hurried to buy a copy of the Esports Home weekly issue. But when she took a glance at it, she was slightly disappointed. The Esports Home's praise for Happy wasn't as earth-shattering as she had imagined.

Tang Rou's outstanding performance in the group arena had received positive evaluations, but Steamed Bun's performance in the individual competition and Mo Fan's send off in the group arena had not been neglected by the respected media group. Chen Guo still felt her spirits stir when she saw the high praise for Happy's performance in the team competition though, which particularly lauded the team's coordination in killing Blossoming Chaos in one go. The Esports Home called it a classic textbook example. This description couldn't help but make people think of the Glory Textbook, Ye Xiu. Sure enough, while the popular comments on the forums didn't talk much about Ye Xiu relatively speaking, the praise for Ye Xiu by Esports Home was no less than their praise for Tang Rou. Even the class-changed Fang Rui received quite the commendation.

The news related to the match were mostly done by City H's reporter Chang Xian. However, the professional analysis had been done by several special analysts. To be a part of an organization as respected as Esports Home, these analysts weren't just people who talked big. Their analyses were very on point.

One of Chen Guo's favorite parts about the Esports Home was their point evaluations for every player in the highlight match. This section was usually done by specialists too. But the analyst was different and the style was different. The writer could write more freely as well, so this section was quite popular.

From the broadcast of the second round, the highlight match was Team Thunderclap versus Team Void. However, the good thing about print media was that they could look at things in retrospect. As a result, they picked the Team Happy versus Team Hundred Blossoms as the highlight match.

Chen Guo quickly flipped to this section in glee. Sure enough, it was in the style she liked.

Individual competition, Ye Xiu versus Zeng Xinran.

Ye Xiu 5 points. Zeng Xinran -4 points.

Yes, this section was sometimes just this unconventional. Points were usually given from 0 to 10, but the writer actually gave Zeng Xinran negative four points. The writer's disgust for Zeng Xingran's performance could clearly be seen. The short commentary on it wrote: Team Hundred Blossom's Zeng Xinran played his first ever match. Through this match, he told us one thing: he was here. Apart from that, he also told God Ye Xiu one thing: it doesn't matter if your hands are rusty. Against some opponents, you could cut your hands off and still win. Zeng Xingran is a rookie though, so I'll be more lenient. Instead of -5 points, I give him a -4! As for God Ye Xiu, without a worthy opponent, there's not much for him to show off, so 5 points!

It was quite a biting remark, even referencing Ye Xiu's "rustiness." Chen Guo very rudely let out a laugh and checked the name of the writer for this point evaluation.

As expected, it was Zuo Chenrui. Chen Guo was no stranger to this name. He was famous for his sharp and unkind words. His evaluations were very subjective, not conforming with Esports Home's reputation. These point evaluations were clearly marked out as "special commentary that did not represent the newspaper's views," making it the one place where Zuo Chenrui could shine in the Esports Home. And as it turned out, his exaggerated and sharp remarks became the most popular parts of this section.

As for Chen Guo, she rather liked this person's commentary because they were often very funny.

After Ye Xiu and Zeng Xinran was Steamed Bun and Zhang Wei's battle.

Bao Rongxin 10 to 0, Zhang Wei 5.

Chen Guo laughed again just from this evaluation of Steamed Bun.

The puzzling rookie Bao Rongxing has a mind that no one can comprehend. Perhaps he doesn't even know what he's doing himself. For the first half, he receives full marks. He utterly dominated Zhang Wei. For the second half, his incomprehensible feebleness proves my bewilderment for him. Zhang Wei 5 points, facing 10 points, can only be crushed. But facing 0 points, it becomes the other way around! Bao

Rongxing receives 10 to 0 points. His loss is because his performance didn't go the reverse from 0 to 10 points.

Evil! How evil!

Zuo Chenrui was just like this. He spared no efforts in ridiculing someone. If you weren't mentioned much, then that's pretty much praise for you. The mockery towards Hundred Blossoms was rather light. Those familiar with Zuo Chenrui knew that he was a Blue Rain fan. His negative bias towards Tiny Herb was truly deep. When the Esports Home did a points evaluation for a Tiny Herb match, they definitely didn't dare have him do it.

After these two rounds was Su Mucheng's and Zou Yuan's match.

Zou Yuan wanted to fight with Su Mucheng in a direct confrontation, but he took the wrong turn and ended up being completely suppressed. Zou Yuan's attempt to directly eliminate Su Mucheng's suppression ended up in failure. To put it simply, Zou Yuan underestimated Su Mucheng. In terms of technique, experience, and awareness, Su Mucheng is not any worse than Zou Yuan. On the other hand, her good looks surpass Zou Yuan 10000 times. Such a dominating victory makes complete sense. Su Mucheng's performance is a beautiful 10/10, her looks 10000/10. Zou Yuan's performance is a 5/10, his looks... forget about it, I won't attach a point value to him. I'll just say it's on the poorer side!

After that was the group arena.

Fang Rui did a good job. His simple trick worked again and again. It has to be said that even though this master of playing dirty has changed classes, his ability to dig holes is still as high as ever. But his inexperience with his class can clearly be seen. His methods for digging holes isn't rich enough. In the second half of the match, he was forced into a direct confrontation with Zhou Guangyi. Fortunately, he dug a deep enough hole earlier, so he didn't fall. The round ended in this way. Fang Rui 6 points. But his Qigong Blast against Yu Feng deserves a 10. $(10+6)/2$ gives him a total of 8 points.

Zhou Guangyi was pretty much dancing around in Fang Rui's palms. If Fang Rui was still a Thief, Zhou Guangyi might have lost in an even uglier fashion, or perhaps he might have done better because he understands Fang Rui's Thief better. I'm inclined to think the former, so Zhou Guangyi gets 2 points.

Yu Feng should have been able to take down Fang Rui without losing much health, but that Qigong Blast proved that he miscalculated against Fang Rui, 2 points. In the next round, he stood heroically in the center of the map, a well-deserved 5 points, but he won just like that by standing there, so only 5 points. In the third round, he met Happy's rookie head-on, but was blown out. Yu Feng made the same mistake as Zou Yuan: he underestimated his opponent. But compared to Zou Yuan, as an All-Star, he had the qualifications to look down on a rookie. Thanks to Yu Feng's negligence, we were gifted a spectacular 1v2. As such, he deserves another 2 points. $2+5+2=9$ points? That doesn't seem right. Oh, I forgot, Yu Feng played a total of three rounds, so we have to divide by 3, 3 points. Speaking of which, if I didn't say anything, would people have noticed that Yu Feng played three battles, also playing a 1v2?

There's not much to be said for Mo Fan. He's Happy response towards Hundred Blossom's rookie, Zeng Xinran. Zeng Xinran said he was here, so Mo Fan said he was also here. I have to give him two points though, because without him, there wouldn't have been that beautiful 1v2.

Zhu Xiaoping, as a Summoner who is said to hold back 2 or 3 people with his 1, was blown out by the enemy. Still, we can't say that's Wind Carving's fault. Zhu Xiaoping, 3 points.

Tang Rou beating Yu Feng, 10 points! Beating Zhu Xiaoping, 10 points! Looks, 10000 points. There's no need for any explanation.

For the most spectacular performance by Tang Rou, Zuo Chenrui only said a few short words, proving that he loved to mock people but was too lazy to give praise.

For the final team competition, Zuo Chenrui continued with his subjective evaluations. He started off by firing shots at Yu Feng's early send off. It looked like the Team Blue Rain fan Zuo Chenrui had quite the opinion of Yu Feng, who had abandoned Team Blue Rain.

"What's making you so happy?" Everyone had arrived at the Internet cafe and was ready to begin their new week's practice, only to see Chen Guo laughing uncontrollably.

Chen Guo gave the paper to everyone. Everyone was familiar with Esports Home. They knew that there was nothing really that funny to look at besides that section.

Sure enough, it was that section. And looking at the writer, everyone understood.

"Who's he going at this time?" Fang Rui took the paper and started reading it.

The player being ridiculed certainly wouldn't be laughing, but to others, reading Zuo Chenrui's remarks were quite fun.

"Hehe, hehe, hehe..." Fang Rui took the newspaper, looked over Zuo Chenrui's commentary, and soon started laughing.

"Hey, he was quite nice to me." Fang Rui was surprised when he saw the group arena evaluation of him. "Let's see what he wrote about Little Tang." He continued reading. Since this guy very rarely praised anyone, a lot of people would be curious to see his views on someone who had performed exceptionally.

"Tsk tsk, to make Zuo Chenrui not give any explanation for his evaluation, Little Tang, you've got a bright future ahead of you," Fang Rui said to Tang Rou after reading over it.

"Really?" Tang Rou would also read over the Glory analysis in the papers, but she was mainly doing it to learn. She searched for material she needed in a targeted manner. Someone like Zuo Chenrui, who was extremely subjective and wrote exaggerated remarks, wasn't inside Tang Rou's study list, so she didn't know much about him.

"He's always been quite nice to girls. Have you ever seen him go all out to tear at a female player?" Ye Xiu said.

"This..." Fang Rui thought about it. It really had never happened before. He checked today's paper again and read over Su Mucheng's evaluation. Sure enough, Zuo Chenrui's usual style wasn't there.

"This guy actually has a bottom line, huh. I never noticed," Fang Rui said.

"Even though he exaggerates a bit, his evaluations can sometimes be very on point. If not, did you really think the Esports Home would have him someone as irresponsible as him writing just to make jokes?" Ye Xiu said.

"True." Fang Rui nodded his head in seriousness, while reading the paper aloud: "'His Qigong Blast against Yu Feng deserves a 10.' This guy's evaluation is truly on point."

Chapter 1167: Steamed Bun's Review

"Zuo Chenrui got a lot of things right. Perfect timing, let's use his evaluation as a starting point for our discussion!" Ye Xiu said, taking the paper from Fang Rui and lifting it in the air.

Soon afterwards, whether they came onstage the previous round or not, everyone in Happy went to the strategy room. The always quiet, cold, and lonesome Mo Fan seemed quite eager this time. He was the first to go into the room, although his expression was as apathetic as always.

In the strategy room, everyone sat down at their own seat one after the other. After Ye Xiu came in, everyone stopped chatting.

The projection screen rolled down. Ye Xiu sat in front of a computer to the side and opened up their previous match.

"The first round of the individual competition... Yeah, there's not much to say here. That Hundred Blossoms kid was too nervous. This issue..." Ye Xiu looked at his teammates. At Happy, there was only one person who would be nervous. Ye Xiu look around the room. In the end, his gaze landed on a laptop.

The new season started in September and so did school. Having a young genius mathematician push his academics aside to focus on a professional gaming career was somewhat of a waste, but in this past year, Luo Ji had come to love Glory deeply. He was also unwilling to give up on his position as a pro player. After weighing the two options, Luo Ji decided on staying at school. When he was needed for a match, he would fly over to the stadium.

Fortunately, this was esports. Even if Luo Ji wasn't personally with the team, as long as he was online, he could still practice with everyone else. However, since Luo Ji was at school, he obviously had to spend a lot of time on his academics. He couldn't completely keep up with Happy's pace. Happy tried their best to arrange for more important matters when Luo Ji was free. Everything else could only be communicated online. For example, right now although Luo Ji wasn't here in-person, a laptop was placed where he would be sitting. Though a bit strange, he could participate in the meeting through a video call.

"There's not much to say about this issue. Dealing with it is mainly dependent on you. From my experience, try to focus on the match as much as possible and don't think too much about other things. It'll help a bit." Ye Xiu said.

"Yes yes yes..." Luo Ji spoke through the laptop. Everyone felt weird seeing it.

"The second round was Steamed Bun's. Steamed Bun, you see how he evaluated you? He gave you 10 to 0. Do you know why?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Why?" Steamed Bun asked back.

"Because you played very well at the start, but then played badly at the end." Ye Xiu said.

"No wonder I lost!" Steamed Bun suddenly understood. He lowered his right fist to his left palm.

"Yeah... let's look at Steamed Bun's match!" Ye Xiu said as he opened the VOD of Steamed Bun versus Zhang Wei.

A huge display of Steamed Bun's match started playing on the projection screen. This wasn't a recording of the broadcast, but Glory's own specialized VOD. By using a special video player, they could change the viewpoint and the speed however they pleased.

Ye Xiu fast-forwarded until the point where Steamed Bun and Zhang Wei met.

Zhang Wei threw a Lava Flask, while Steamed Bun flew over with a Powerful Knee Strike...

For the first half, Zuo Chenrui gave Steamed Bun 10 points. What was 10 points? Perfect play was 10 points. For any other analyst, giving out 10 points was extremely rare. But for someone like Zuo Chenrui, who could give 10000 points for looks, what was 10 points? He wasn't stingy about that, just like how he wasn't stingy about jabbing at someone.

10 points...

Ye Xiu took the newspaper and for a moment, he didn't know where to start. Steamed Bun and Tang Rou were the same. Both of them had started playing in the tenth server. Ye Xiu had personally watched over these two blank pieces of paper as the papers were drawn on. For Tang Rou, her lines were crisp and clear. Her thought process was distinct. Ye Xiu could see the logic behind every stroke. He could see her thoughts. However, for Steamed Bun, his art was the legendary abstract art. His playstyle and his logic did not coincide much, if at all, with those of a normal Glory player. However, sometimes he could produce surprising results.

As Steamed Bun's skill continued to grow, in his practice, there were times where even Ye Xiu was caught off guard. As for Ye Xiu, he had constantly been trying to understand Steamed Bun's thoughts. For example, he would frequently review the VOD after practice together with Steamed Bun and have him explain his logic when Ye Xiu didn't understand.

Lots of times, Steamed Bun also scratched his head in wonder. He had clearly already forgotten about his thoughts at that time. This wasn't Steamed Bun getting derailed, it was simply due to the nature of this game. Glory was fast-paced. Oftentimes, inputs could not be carefully thought about and were done instinctively. There were very few players who could remember every detail in their match perfectly. In Happy, the only one who could do this was named Luo Ji, definitely not Steamed Bun.

Even though he couldn't get an answer for everything, from the places that Steamed Bun could explain, Ye Xiu gradually started to get a feel for it.

Steamed Bun wasn't playing without any logic whatsoever. It was just that his logic was rather bold and imaginative. It was born from wild creativity and observation. In this point, he was very similar to Wang

Jiexi. The difference was that Steamed Bun had only played Glory for a year, while by the time Wang Jiexi became a pro player, he had been playing Glory for far longer than Steamed Bun. His foundation in Glory had been more solid than Steamed Bun's.

As a result, Wang Jiexi's creative playing was precise, sharp, and unpredictable. It was why he was called the Magician.

As for Steamed Bun, he was limited by his foundation. His creative playing would sometimes crash into a dead end, leading to noobish mistakes.

Once he understood Steamed Bun's situation, Ye Xiu couldn't help but sigh. If Steamed Bun had started playing Glory sooner and had more time to grow, he would definitely be even more terrifying today. But he had only just started now and suffered for that. It was true that Steamed Bun was quite talented, but this was no longer the game. Compared to the in-game Glory, everyone in the Pro Alliance was brimming with talent. And those who became Gods were the best out of all those talents.

Every rookie found by Ye Xiu in Happy had a certain amount of potential, but in Glory, because of all sorts of reasons, all of them had been delayed. Sun Xiang and Tang Hao, these new generation Gods, were only 20 years old. They were even younger than Tang Rou and Steamed Bun, yet they were already the stars of this era.

It wasn't the first time that Ye Xiu had thought about this. If he had discovered them earlier, or if they had found Glory fun earlier and started practicing systematically, would their current selves have already joined those at the top of the pyramid?

Unfortunately, there were no ifs. He could only dream. Right now, Ye Xiu could only do his best and help these latecomers grow faster. However, towards Steamed Bun, the amount of help that Ye Xiu could provide was becoming less and less. Steamed Bun's playstyle was special, his unique talent. If Ye Xiu forced him to follow the conventional logic of Glory, it would kill his talent. Ye Xiu could not help Steamed Bun develop his unique talent. As the saying went, what came next would depend on Steamed Bun's own good luck.

As a result, Ye Xiu would generally just help Steamed Bun make as few mistakes as possible. Those obvious dead-ends would help remind him not to make the same mistake next time.

In Steamed Bun's match against Zhang Wei, he was bold and creative in the first half, but in the next half, he regressed back to the ordinary and confronted Zhang Wei head on. When he asked for the reason why, Steamed Bun's answer couldn't be refuted.

"I had more health!" Steamed Bun said.

Everyone in the room stared blankly. They wanted to laugh, but they felt like it was nothing to joke about. In the first half, gain the upper hand and get a health lead. Then, in the second half, there was no need to use any special tricks, just directly trade blows. It was a very common and logical strategy. Even the master of playing dirty, Fang Rui, had the same idea in his match against Zhou Guangyi. After successfully pulling off the cooldown method twice and gaining a health lead, he immediately started fighting against Zhou Guangyi directly.

"Yeah, that..." Ye Xiu also hesitated. He fast-forwarded to the middle. "Okay, then let's take a look at how you played after you had more health than him."

Steamed Bun had more health, yet he still lost to Zhang Wei. It wasn't hard to realize that Steamed Bun had made many mistakes. The strategy meetings weren't just Ye Xiu lecturing them. During this time, everyone was free to speak up. The rookies and Qiao Yifan were rather quiet, though. Su Mucheng just listened more often than not. She would typically only raise an issue if something was missed. Today, no opportunities had appeared yet. Ye Xiu wasn't the main speaker either. So, after they started analyzing the latter half of the fight, Wei Chen and Fang Rui were the ones dominating the discussion.

"Here, here. At 2:41, you hesitated! Don't you think you could have just thrown your Brick at his forehead?" Wei Chen pointed at the projection screen. His tone of voice and attitude didn't seem like he was discussing tactics. It sounded like he was telling him how to fight like a gangster.

"You're right!" Steamed Bun again put his right fist to his left palm. He had taken a liking to his movement recently.

"The hesitation is okay, but you shouldn't have leaped back and retreated afterwards. Why not just use Tiger Flips the Mountain?" Fang Rui said.

"That's not necessarily correct. After jumping backwards, you should have followed up with a Powerful Knee Strike. It would have been very strong too," Wei Chen said.

"Powerful Knee Strike? He could just use Shadow Cloak and wrap you up," Fang Rui said.

"That's why you need to jump backwards first to dodge Shadow Cloak before counterattacking," Wei Chen said.

Fang Rui looked distracted for a moment, but he quickly responded, "Fuck, if there's no Powerful Knee Strike, where would the Shadow Cloak come from?"

"Young people these days, do you not understand the word 'predict'?" Wei Chen said.

"Predict, my ass!" Fang Rui wasn't polite at all to this shameless senior. "Steamed Bun, don't listen to his nonsense. You should have just used Tiger Flips the Mountain and flip him."

"Peh!" Wei Chen spat. "Steamed Bun, trust this senior. Jump back first and then Powerful Knee Strike. Watch the opponent carefully. You're aiming for that small time gap. It'll definitely give your opponent the biggest surprise."

"Surprise, I like it!" Steamed Bun said happily.

"Mm, mm." Wei Chen nodded his head as if he were teaching a child. "Rhythm. What's important is the rhythm."

"Steamed Bun," Ye Xiu called out at this moment.

"Hm?" Steamed Bun looked towards his boss.

"You hesitated here," Ye Xiu said. "Don't hesitate next time. React faster."

"Okay," Steamed Bun replied.

"Alright, good." Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Chapter 1168: The Best Choice

Steamed Bun had a lot of problems in the second half of the match, so they allocated a lot of time for review until the discussion finally quieted down. After that was the battle between Su Mucheng and Zou Yuan.

Even though it was a victory, and even though Su Mucheng was already a high-level player, they didn't skip this match. No matter how good a player was, there would always be mistakes that exposed flaws during battle. Reviewing matches wasn't just to help improve the person whose battle they were studying, it let everyone learn lessons. At the same time, they could further study the opponent. Thus, no matter whom they fought against, whether they won or lost, review was always beneficial.

Reviewing Su Mucheng's battle was much easier and much lighter than reviewing Steamed Bun's. While watching the replay, Su Mucheng herself was able to notice many things about her fighting, and she would then bring them up with everyone to discuss.

After the individual round was the group arena, and first up was the battle between Fang Rui and Zhou Guangyi. Wei Chen pushed up his sleeves, but it was unclear what he planned to do.

The battle began.

Zhou Guangyi's Cold Seasons reached the center of the map, but Fang Rui's Boundless Sea wasn't there, so he began to look for him, all the way until the two returned to the center and began to fight.

"You played around too much in the beginning," Wei Chen said coldly.

"We know each other too well, I had to make him think a bit more," Fang Rui said.

"If he hadn't had doubts in his heart, your cooldown method never would've worked," said Wei Chen.

"Right." Fang Rui nodded.

In the VOD, Fang Rui was having Boundless Sea play the cooldown method, showing the moment he qi blasted Cold Seasons.

"Not decisive enough!" Wei Chen sighed.

"Me or him?" Fang Rui asked.

"Him," Wei Chen said.

"Well, of course," said Fang Rui. "This is the value of my playing around earlier."

"It's impressive enough that it worked once, but it actually worked twice," Wei Chen said.

"You guys don't understand the depth of this match," Fang Rui said.

Wei Chen made a disdainful face, but he didn't retort, because Fang Rui spoke the truth. This battle was between two players that understood each other very well. It was more of a psychological contest than

one of technical skill. Battles like this couldn't be learned, not even by the most skilled players. Without that personal relationship, you couldn't play these sorts of mental traps. And then, the technical skill was another level on top of the psychological warfare.

You couldn't follow normal logic when looking at such a match. In the end, they just found some non-psychological points to look at, and they soon moved on.

After that was another one of Fang Rui's battles, now against Yu Feng. In the eyes of the specialists, there were three highlights of the Happy vs Hundred Blossoms match. First was Fang Rui's final Qigong Blast in this battle, next was of course Tang Rou's 1v2, and finally in the team battle when they took down Yu Feng's Blossoming Chaos.

Hundred Blossoms' Captain Yu Feng was named the most tragic character of this match. In all three of the highlights, he was the victim. Boundless Sea's Qigong Blast landed on the body of his Blossoming Chaos, Tang Rou's 1v2 began by killing him, and he was the one who had been so dramatically killed in the team round...

One mischievous Glory player created a montage of these three highlights, set it to the music of "Why Am I Always The One Who Gets Hurt," and posted the video online, where it quickly went viral.

Ye Xiu of course didn't show this silly video. He selected the proper battle recording and the scene began to unfold before them.

"Too slow!" The recording had barely begun when Wei Chen suddenly let out this shout, startling everyone in the room, even Luo Ji in the laptop screen.

"Much too slow," Wei Chen continued. "Every second after a battle begins is extremely valuable. If you don't get in the right mindset as fast as you can, any small ripple can become the reason for defeat."

In the VOD, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea hesitated for about three seconds after the match began before he started moving.

Everyone stared blankly at Wei Chen. What he said about "every second after a battle begins" was inaccurate reasoning, even an idiot could tell he was nitpicking. But to everyone's surprise, Fang Rui actually nodded in agreement. "You're right. If not for that three second delay, Yu Feng and I would have met under slightly different conditions, and I might have been able to take the advantage."

Everyone continued to stare blankly. Those three seconds of hesitation really affected the entire progression of the battle? Wei Chen wasn't just nitpicking, he actually made a good point?

In the next moment, Fang Rui turned his head to look at Wei Chen. "Didn't I tell you this after the match that day?"

"Mm, I was worried you'd forget, so I'm reminding you," Wei Chen said, nodding.

The sound of one cough after another filled the room. Even just hearing this, everyone felt awkward, but Wei Chen was as calm as ever.

Only Ye Xiu was unaffected. He continued to watch the onscreen maneuvering, zooming out the camera view until both sides were visible, and then he began to zoom in again, finally pausing on one scene.

"Yeah, right here." Fang Rui pointed on the screen. "If I hadn't hesitated for those three seconds, then I could've reached that fork there at two o'clock. From there, if I could lure Blossoming Chaos in, then the situation could have been much better."

"Here?" Ye Xiu used the mouse to circle the position.

"Right," Fang Rui nodded.

"Hm, right here..." Ye Xiu directly switched to a map of Life-Seeking Path and began to study it.

"What if Yu Feng circled around in the ten o'clock direction?" Su Mucheng asked.

"With his speed, he couldn't catch up, I... Oh!" Fang Rui slapped his forehead. "I'm using Boundless Sea right now, not Demon Subduer."

"So he still could've gotten you," said Su Mucheng.

"Yeah..." Fang Rui nodded, but he was still studying the map intently, trying to think of another way.

"What about here!" Ye Xiu circled another position on the map.

"There, if Yu Feng took the path to the right, they would meet face to face. If prepared, Fang Rui could still maintain three steps of distance, but that's still in the attack range of a Berserker. Whether or not he could actually break through and attack would depend on the exact conditions." Wei Chen now began to give serious analysis.

"But even if he broke through, wouldn't the distance to the next fork be enough to escape?" said Su Mucheng.

"If Qi Flowing Cloud were activated, yeah." This time Fang Rui didn't mistake the character.

"What if Yu Feng used Triple Slash?" said Su Mucheng.

"He'd have to predict my move first," Fang Rui said.

The rookies listened quietly. For this kind of discussion, they would sometimes speak up, but most of the time their views and awareness couldn't keep up. Every time they went through this review and study, everyone would notice many things. The ones fighting were Fang Rui and Yu Feng, but they could imagine putting themselves and their own characters in one of those positions, and figure out how they would act in such a situation. Through analysis, they could reach an analogous answer. Boundless Sea could activate Qi Flowing Cloud, Berserker could use Triple Slash, and other classes would have their own ways of boosting their movement speed here.

Just looking at a three-second hesitation brought forth analysis of so many potential changes. But everyone also understood that all of these situations had to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The important thing wasn't being early or late by three seconds, the important thing was realizing and studying these changes. This was the significance of this review.

There wasn't too much to look at in Fang Rui's battle against Yu Feng, so in the end it finished quite quickly.

And then it was Mo Fan against Yu Feng. Everyone knew the results of this match, and there shouldn't have been much to review. But Ye Xiu still played the recording of this match. Everyone couldn't help but glance at Mo Fan, but this guy was as expressionless as ever. Only Qiao Yifan, who was sitting next to him, noticed how he was clenching his fists under the table.

Qiao Yifan was a bit worried. He didn't know what Ye Xiu was thinking. Was he purposely trying to humiliate and provoke Mo Fan by replaying this match? That... didn't seem too good, Qiao Yifan thought.

No one spoke. The recording quietly played, the screen splitting in half to show each character. Soon, Yu Feng's Blossoming Chaos reached the center of the map, and Mo Fan's Deception arrived soon after, hiding to the side.

"You chose a good position." Ye Xiu finally opened his mouth.

Everyone nodded. Mo Fan, with his background of scrap-picking, was extremely skilled in choosing advantageous positions, no worse than any pro player.

"But sometimes, the best position isn't actually very good," said Ye Xiu.

Everyone startled a bit, and there was confusion in Mo Fan's eyes.

"Because, when facing the best players, you aren't the only one who knows the best position." As Ye Xiu spoke, he switched the camera view to Yu Feng. "Blossoming Chaos' position looks very random, but in reality, he's carefully positioned a distance away from all possible ambush points. No matter where the opponent tries to launch a sneak attack from, he has enough space to deal with it."

Ye Xiu snatched up the esports newspaper issue on the table and waved it around. "Zuo Chenrui said that Yu Feng stood heroically and that was worth 5 points. That wasn't entirely mockery, his positioning was indeed excellent.

"Let's look at his use of his camera view." Ye Xiu switched the recording to Yu Feng's camera view. The display followed Yu Feng's control over his view as he turned.

"Do you see it?" Ye Xiu pointed to a position on the screen, right where Deception was currently hiding.

"The best position you had chosen was also where he was the most prepared for an attack," said Ye Xiu. "If you tried to attack from here, it would be very difficult for you to get seize an opportunity."

So that was the reason... As expected of senior! Qiao Yifan was sincerely happy. Earlier, he was truly a little worried that Ye Xiu's goal had just been to shame Mo Fan. If that had been the case, he really would have been disappointed in him. But now, he saw that Ye Xiu was giving genuine feedback and advice on Mo Fan's pitifully lacking performance in this match.

It was just a choice of position, but Ye Xiu used this to emphasize to Mo Fan what was different about the professional stage.

In this domain, anyone can have the same background and knowledge as you. The best choice might actually be the worst because everyone knows it's the best choice. As a player who likes to use sneak attacks, it's crucial that you understand this point...

Chapter 1169: Third Round

They finished discussing positioning. Next was the judge giving a yellow card to the calmly waiting Mo Fan, forcing Mo Fan to make adjustments, but the judge felt his actions were unacceptable, so he gave him another yellow card, and Mo Fan was disqualified.

"Mucheng, you talked to him about the rules already, right?" Ye Xiu asked.

"I did," Su Mucheng said with a smile.

"Alright, then that's that." Ye Xiu nodded. He didn't ask Mo Fan to report anything, and simply ended the discussion of this battle. "Let's look at the next battle."

The next battle was Tang Rou's thrilling 1v2. Because it was her own battle, this time Tang Rou participated in the discussion more. She wasn't like Steamed Bun, who couldn't figure out the situation. Her clarity of thought allowed her to gain the most from reviewing her own match.

After the group arena was the team competition. Every confrontation, every player's performance, from both Happy and Hundred Blossoms, was taken apart and evaluated in detail.

They spent the entire morning in review, which was already a relatively short amount of time. In this competition, there really wasn't much they could analyze. Ye Xiu's defeat of Zeng Xinran, Fang Rui's two battles, Mo Fan's battle, there wasn't much content to look at. Furthermore, this was Happy's big victory. A victory generally meant that there were fewer problems to study. Even though the opponent's mistakes could also be analyzed, the priority was generally figuring out one's own problems so that they could be fixed. For example, Hundred Blossoms' Zeng Xinran revealed the problem of nerves, but this wasn't something that Happy needed to focus on.

On the other hand, their complete defeat in last week's match against Samsara revealed many of their problems. The review that Happy did last Monday after that match lasted from morning all the way until night.

They finished review in the morning, so the afternoon was spent training as usual. The life of a pro player was this sort of dull repetition. Every day, they basically did the same thing. The burning passion was left to Saturday night to be released.

On days without matches, ordinary gamers could only wait around, looking back on previous matches and anticipating the next ones. In the second round, Happy vs Hundred Blossoms garnered a lot of attention, but to the viewers, the live television broadcast of Thunderclap vs Void was also a very high-level match.

In this match, Thunderclap took an early lead with Dai Yanqi in the individual round, but then they cleanly lost the next two individual battles as well as the group arena.

Losing 1 to 4, with so many consecutive defeats, it seemed as though Thunderclap was on the brink of collapse and Void would earn a big victory. But to everyone's shock, Thunderclap pulled off a huge comeback in the team competition. They defeated Void and won the 5 points of the team round, and in the end won the match 6 to 4.

Such an exciting plot was definitely worth live broadcast, but in the end, the live commentator was distracted during the whole thing, occasionally turning the subject to discuss Happy vs Hundred Blossoms. There were indeed some viewers that objected to this.

There was much commentary on the Happy vs Hundred Blossoms match, but the specialized media outlets needed to present comprehensive reports. Esports Weekly, for example, didn't neglect their analysis and discussion of Thunderclap vs Void.

All of the reporters and special commentators unanimously pointed out Thunderclap's biggest change this season: they had become more confident.

They won 7 points in the first round and 6 points this round. With 13 points, they were currently in 7th place, not a bad start. If they maintained this stable performance, then it wouldn't be a problem for them to earn a spot in the playoffs.

Their performance in the team competition received particular attention. Before, Thunderclap relied on their Master Tactician Xiao Shiqin, who had more of a chance to shine in the team competition. Now that he returned this season, he joined with his former teammates who had grown on their own, as well as new arrivals, to smoothly create a solid, unified team. Team Parade and Team Void, who had fought with Thunderclap this season, both expressed how difficult it was to face Team Thunderclap in the team competition.

Of course, some people said this was because Thunderclap didn't have Xiao Shiqin last season, so their skill in the team competition had gone down. This season, with Xiao Shiqin's return, Thunderclap was merely regaining its former ability. This view compared the current Thunderclap with the Thunderclap of last season, and said that if they compared the current Thunderclap to previous years where Xiao Shiqin was present, then it'd be more difficult to say which was better.

The pro scene was filled with such endless debates. After Happy's huge victory, there were people who looked back at their earlier performance, when they were swept in the first round, to find problems.

One match they were swept, one match they won big. These sort of up and down results were the best evidence of an unstable condition!

Regarding this kind of debate, they needed the third round to give them an answer.

One week passed, and the third round of matches were upon them. With the first two rounds to pave the way, the third round seemed much more exciting. Happy had a big loss and then a big win, so how would they perform in this round? Thunderclap was doing well as a team, could they maintain their win streak in the team competition?

The attention that these two teams received was a result of their performance in the first two rounds. But in the third round, neither of them would be in the spotlight. Because in this third round, there finally appeared a match that was an unquestionable pinnacle of showdowns. As much as people discussed Happy and Thunderclap, nothing could steal away their attention from this match.

Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 Round 3, Team Samsara vs Team Tyranny.

The champion and runner-up of last season, a collision like Mars crashing into Earth appeared in the very third round of matches. What match could rival this? None, none at all!

Even the pro players themselves were paying close attention to this match. After all, they were group of people that loved Glory the most, of course they loved to see exciting matches.

Right before the third round of matches began, in the Tiny Herb prep room, Liu Xiaobie was fiddling with his phone. This caught the notice of Captain Wang Jiexi.

In an instant, Liu Xiaobie's expression became strained. He attempted to hide his phone away, carefully and stealthily.

"What are you doing?" But in the end, Wang Jiexi still asked.

The prep room instantly fell silent, and quite a few looked over at them. Everyone knew what Liu Xiaobie was trying to do. This guy just wanted to check on Samsara vs Tyranny in the breaks between their battles. Everyone was curious about how that match would play out.

But even if the captain were curious, he would certainly restabilize his mindset. He wouldn't let himself be distracted during a competition, and of course, he wouldn't want his Tiny Herb teammates to be distracted, either.

"Turn off your phone." Wang Jiexi didn't ask further, and merely spoke in an ordinary tone.

Liu Xiaobie, dejected, took out his phone and turned it off.

Wang Jiexi's gaze swept over everyone, and the players couldn't help but stand up when he looked at them. "This match, our opponent is Bright Green. Although they aren't a very strong team, we can't drop our guard."

"Right," everyone answered.

"Good, let's go!" With that, the Tiny Herb players walked out of the prep room. Liu Xiaobie felt at the phone in his pocket, but in the end, he left it in the room.

Focus on the match!

This is what he told himself. He lifted his head, straightened his shoulders, and followed the pace of his teammates.

All of the matches going on at the same time were affected by this pinnacle match. Even at the pre-match press conferences, many reporters went on a tangent to ask about players' views toward this match.

In Happy's pre-match press conference, one reporter hoped that Ye Xiu would make a prediction. After all, Ye Xiu was very familiar with the old veterans of Tyranny. And as for Samsara? The account One Autumn Leaf, did those ties even need to be discussed?

"Tell us! Just give us a prediction of points?" The reporter hounded Ye Xiu for an answer.

"10 to 0," Ye Xiu said.

"What!" All of the reporters were in shock. Such a big point difference! Which team did Ye Xiu favor so much?

"Who's 10 and who's 0?" someone immediately asked, sensing that there would be a story in this.

"Doesn't matter," Ye Xiu said with a laugh.

"Doesn't... doesn't matter?" Everyone was stunned. What did that mean?

"How... how can you just say this doesn't matter?" said the reporter who had hounded for an answer.

"You were the one who said to just give a prediction," Ye Xiu laughed.

"I..." The reporter was speechless, and could only stare blankly as the Happy players left the conference.

Happy's opponent this round was Radiant. After two rounds, they finally met an opponent that wasn't that strong. Some people were already saying that real gold was revealed under fire, this match wouldn't say much. They needed a strong team to test Happy's true colors.

"Who does he think he is!" The Friday issue of Esports Weekly had lots of predictive discussions, and this one in particular made Chen Guo rather unhappy. As she waved the newspaper around, she fiercely wrote the reporter's name into her memory: Cheng Jianbo.

"This is nothing!" Ye Xiu couldn't help but laugh at Chen Guo's indignation. "This just says that, to some people, we as a team are already stronger than Radiant, and so we shouldn't be compared to them."

"How childish!" Chen Guo said.

"Yes, it's extremely childish," Ye Xiu agreed. He looked around at everyone gathered in the prep room.

"I'm sure that everyone's already aware of this week's analyses of Radiant. They're never a team that places very highly on the Alliance leaderboard," said Ye Xiu. "However, they definitely aren't a team that can be defeated easily. Focus on the match, and don't think about anything else."

In the first round, Happy was swept, and they suffered a lot of discussion. In the second round, they won by a large margin, and once again were subject to a lot of discussion. All of this discussion tended to pile up and add pressure on players, and sometimes this would negatively impact a player's condition. This was especially true for rookies, who didn't have much experience in dealing with this.

"Understood!" But for now, everyone gave Ye Xiu a spirited reply.

In the third round, Team Happy fought against Team Radiant. And after 1 hour and 23 minutes of fierce fighting, the final score hung in Radiant's stadium: 3 to 7, Radiant's victory.

In the prep room before the press conference, Tang Rou said to her teammates, "I'm sorry..."

Chapter 1170: Promise

3 to 7. In the end, Happy lost this round's away game, despite the odds looking to be in their favor.

Their roster this round hadn't seen many big changes, aside from Mo Fan, who had been penalized last round and couldn't appear this round. Instead, they sent up the veteran Wei Chen for the group arena this time.

Happy won all three of the individual battles, entering the group arena with a 3 to 0 lead.

Like the previous round, Fang Rui was first up in the group arena, and he did even better than before. When Boundless Sea fell, he had taken down one and a half players. And then Wei Chen went up. As an extremely old veteran, his reaction time and hand speed had no way of competing with those of the younger players, but although his performance wasn't flashy, Windward Formation still took down the second player and half of the third player's health.

After that, what was left to Happy's powerful anchor Tang Rou was just one opponent at half health. He wasn't a star like Yu Feng, he wasn't even Radiant's core player, he was just a very ordinary player in this mid-low tier team.

The home audience had already given up on this match. No one thought that the 1v2 Tang Rou would miss a victory like this. Some neutral spectators thought this would be very boring. They were only interested in this match to see the pretty female player Tang Rou, but now she only had a player at half health left to face. What excitement was there in that?

Tang Rou lost.

The audience was incredibly quiet - it was clear that Tang Rou was already a very strong player in everyone's minds. It was only after this pause that the home crowd exploded in excited cheering!

They all thought that she would bring the end, but it turned out that she was the one who met her end.

That eye-catching 1v2 performance was of course interesting, but no one wanted to be the victim of such a scene. And this time, Radiant managed it. A character at half health used by a player who was ordinary even by Radiant's standards managed to defeat Tang Rou, the player who had become famous with a single battle.

Tang Rou left the stage. Of course, she was extremely upset with her loss.

In the team competition, she went onstage once again.

Tang Rou was undoubtedly a fierce fighter. But after two rounds of Alliance matches, the characteristics of her fierce style had been seen through. Radiant used tactics specifically to target her, which in turn affected Happy as a whole. Because of this, Happy's rhythm was thrown into disorder.

"No victory is ever guaranteed..." In the prep room, this is what Ye Xiu said to the apologizing Tang Rou. Happy could defeat a giant like Excellent Era, but other teams could defeat Happy in turn. If raw strength was the only thing that determined victory, then what would be the point of competing?

But the factor that determined this match's victory and defeat was very clear. Even the most ordinary viewers could tell that the problems were from Tang Rou.

"We'll have to analyze this carefully during our review session. Now, for the press conference..."

"I'll go!" Tang Rou said.

Ye Xiu nodded and didn't say anything else. Tang Rou never backed down. She would always face any challenges head-on.

For this press conference, Happy sent out Ye Xiu, Wei Chen, and Tang Rou.

As soon as the three appeared, the camera flashes from below lit up the area. The target was Tang Rou, whom the reporters were rather surprised to see. During their wait, they all guessed that Happy wouldn't send Tang Rou to this press conference. This level of pressure was frightening for a rookie to bear. The team would probably try to protect its new members, and have the veterans deal with this situation, right?

But as it turned out, Tang Rou just walked out at the very front, her expression unusually resolute.

Since she dared to come out, would the reporters hold back? Click click click, everyone took their fill of pictures before anything was said.

"Tsk tsk, how popular," Wei Chen remarked.

"Hm?"

"Whether good or bad, at least she's getting a lot of attention now, no?" Wei Chen said.

"How come I smell something sour?" Ye Xiu said.

"Tch, would I care about something as unimportant as this?" said Wei Chen, filled with righteousness. But no matter how you looked at it, the whispering of these two seemed very sneaky, so the reporters turned their cameras and took many pictures of these two as well.

The three took their seats, and the reporters all focused their gazes on Tang Rou, hoping to discover something from her expression. But they were disappointed, for there was no hiding, no flinching. If anyone looked at her, Tang Rou would look right back, and then give a polite smile.

"We can begin," Ye Xiu said.

In their eagerness, the reporters almost raised their feet along with their hands. Ye Xiu randomly picked one.

"Question for Miss Tang Rou! What are your thoughts on your performance in this match?" This reporter couldn't wait any longer. He was so eager that he didn't even bother to begin with the standard phrases like "this battle's loss was unfortunate".

"My performance dragged down the entire team," Tang Rou said. "Because of this, I'm deeply sorry."

Tang Rou's condition was clear to see. An apology now seemed like a very ordinary, standard, expected answer, and so the reporters were unsatisfied.

"I remember that after the last match, you said that you wanted to complete a 1v3. But in this match, you couldn't even take down an opponent at half health. Why do you think that happened?" one reporter asked, with an air of ridicule. Tang Rou's declaration last match about aiming for a 1v3 after her 1v2 was disliked by some people, who viewed her as too presumptuous. This reporter was evidently one such person.

"Victory or defeat is never guaranteed," Tang Rou said, borrowing from what Ye Xiu had just said in the prep room. "But I will definitely complete a 1v3."

"In-game doesn't count!" one reporter jeered, earning laughter from the crowd.

"Right here, on the pro stage," Tang Rou said.

To the reporters, this unparalleled determination and confidence seemed to be unparalleled arrogance. This rookie's skills weren't bad, and she'd managed to complete a 1v2, but just because of that one accomplishment, she thought she could do anything?

Victory or defeat was never guaranteed, the reporters could agree with this. But the person who just said this then said that she would 1v3 for sure. How brazen was that?

The reporters couldn't hold back anymore. After last round, there were already quite a few people who disliked Tang Rou's attitude. Then, even after such a sad performance this round, she still didn't correct herself. She was still overstepping with that bullheaded stubbornness of hers.

One reporter was particularly aggressive, directly shouting a challenge at her during this press conference. "If you can't do it, then what?"

"If I can't do it, I'll leave the pro scene."

The crowd was shocked into silence. As a result, a whispered conversation suddenly happened to become clear for everyone to hear.

"Look look, that reporter over there really looks like a dog." Wei Chen.

"Don't be ridiculous. Which one are you talking about?" Ye Xiu.

There was a pause, and then an uproar.

Evidently Ye Xiu and Wei Chen realized that the sound of their voices had suddenly been magnified. In the midst of the commotion, they each coughed and looked to the left and right, as though nothing had happened.

The reporters didn't even know which side to respond to first. Should they be amazed at Tang Rou ruthlessly betting her own pro career, or should they be amazed at these two Happy seniors, who, instead of protecting their rookie, were mocking a reporter for looking like a dog?

Say, which reporter was the dog anyway?

The reporters couldn't help but look around and size each other up, and those who were stared at for too long turned red in the face. What are you looking at me like that for? Are you saying that I look like a dog?

The thought process of these reporters was shattered into pieces by Happy's rookie-veteran combination, and it was quite a while before things got back on track.

Who looked like a dog? There wasn't much meaning in discussing this question, and in the end everyone's attention returned to Tang Rou's oath.

If she can't complete a 1v3, she'll quit the pro scene?

Everyone looked at Tang Rou, and then at Ye Xiu and Wei Chen. Did Happy's two veterans not hear what Tang Rou just said? They didn't even stop her from pledging such a thing. In fact, they looked as though it didn't matter at all.

"If you can't complete a 1v3, you'll quit the pro scene?" One reporter felt that these two had been distracted and really didn't know the current situation, so, to prompt them, this reporter repeated the statement loudly.

"Yes," Tang Rou nodded.

"Good determination," Ye Xiu said.

"Very daring." Wei Chen even began to clap for her.

The reporters were dumbfounded. These were supposed to be the reliable veterans of this team! How come it seemed like they were just here to stir up a ruckus?

"Do you two feel that Tang Rou can accomplish this?" One reporter took the opportunity to directly ask these two.

"With that kind of determination and daring," Ye Xiu said.

"Even metal can be cut through," Wei Chen quickly followed up.

What nonsense was this? The reporters who were taking notes found that they couldn't bring themselves to write down any more. These two were just out to make trouble, right? Right?

But in the midst of all the reporters who had been thrown off, one reporter was still very clear-headed and asked, "Miss Tang Rou, how many matches do you plan to use to reach this goal? Will you dedicate your entire pro career to this?"

The one who asked this question was gleeful, because he felt that he had found the key point. Tang Rou's oath here was just a game of words. If she can't 1v3, she'll quit. But without a time limit, didn't that just mean she would keep playing match after match trying to 1v3, and if in the end she couldn't do it, then she'd just retire anyway?

You think you're so clever! This reporter smiled coldly.

Tang Rou was about to reply, but Ye Xiu suddenly moved to speak before her.

Was he finally going to rescue her? The reporters all waited to see what kind of trick he would pull.

"Five matches should be enough, right?" Ye Xiu said.

Another uproar from the reporters. He didn't come to her rescue? He actually gave Tang Rou even more pressure?

1v3 was something that many pro players never accomplished in the entirety of their careers. And now, to have a rookie swear to complete a 1v3 within five matches or else quit the pro scene... Did Ye Xiu have a grudge against Tang Rou or something?

"Five matches?" After hearing this number, Tang Rou actually revealed a happy smile. "Then five matches it is!"