

Avatar 1191

Chapter 1191: Swift Hand Speed

The tip of the sword dropped down, but... it was a miss.

Afterwards, Flying Sword was already flying out.

Tyrant's Destruction!

Liu Xiaobie's triangle Triple Slash had been extremely fast, but what about Tang Rou? Her speed was no slower. Her Dragon Tooth turned into a Tyrant's Destruction, keeping up with the dizzying Triple Slash. Before the sword could strike her, her spear thrust into Flying Sword's body, throwing him to the side.

Whoa!

Liu Xiaobie was shocked. In the Happy versus Excellent Era Challenger League finals, he had a very deep impression of Tang Rou's hand speed. Xu Bin had asked how he would compare, but Liu Xiaobie hadn't replied.

And now, Tang Rou had been able to catch his triangle Triple Slash, hitting him first before he could hit her...

Although his triangle Triple Slash required more inputs, the difference in attack speed between Soft Mist's spear and Liu Xiaobie's sword could not be ignored.

Spears usually had low attack speed; most had an attack speed of 2. On the other hand, the Blade Master's lightsabers were the fastest weapons; most had an attack speed of 10.

In Glory, the attack speed on weapons were rated from 1 to 10. However, the difference between a 1 and a 10 wasn't by a magnitude of ten. In reality, the difference between a 1 and a 10 was around 20%.

Glory was an input-heavy game. What truly decided an attack's speed was the player's hand speed. But the difference between having a weapon with an attack speed of 1 versus a weapon with an attack speed of 10 indicated that if you wanted to match the speed of a 10 attack speed weapon with a 1 attack speed weapon, your hand speed would need to be 20% faster.

Thus, a faster weapon attack speed was never a bad thing. However, the game was set up such that weapons with lower attack speed had higher physical attack. Finding the right balance was an issue every player had to consider. Blade Masters tended to use lightsabers and tachis, but there was no shortage of greatsword and broadsword users.

The weapons used by Soft Mist and Flying Sword:

Soft Mist's spear, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, had an attack speed of 4. Among spears, it was already a very fast one. Along with the bonus stat of attack speed +1, it's total attack speed was 5.

Flying Sword's Lightsaber, Chasing Spirit, had an attack speed of 10. It had a bonus attack speed of +2.

In total, Chasing Spirit had an attack speed of 12, 7 points higher than Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, a 14% difference.

With this difference, for Soft Mist to match Flying Sword, Tang Rou's hand speed had to be above Liu Xiaobie's. However, in a fight, the two sides wouldn't be starting their attacks at the same time and checking to see who reached the other side first. Because of the inputs required for skills, variations between skills, and differences in attack speed, it wasn't easy to make a simple comparison. Most players used their intuition to make a judgement.

Liu Xiaobie's intuition surprised him. In this match against Tang Rou, he had actually been quite mentally prepared for it. Because of the 1v3 bet, Tang Rou was always first to go in the group arena. Because of this order never changed, it was easier for opponents to prepare for. For example, Liu Xiaobie knew that he would be playing against Tang Rou, so he focused his preparations towards her.

She really is fast. She can completely keep up with me.

But if you think this is the fastest I can go, then you're very very wrong!

As Flying Sword was thrown aside by Tyrant's Destruction, Flying Sword also made his move. A sword light flew out, leaving a sword mark on Soft Mist.

What a fast sword! Tang Rou saw the attack. She wanted to dodge, but her hand speed couldn't keep up.

Wow!

Tang Rou couldn't help but be astonished. Flying Sword had been thrown aside by Tyrant's Destruction, but in that split second, Liu Xiaobie had been able to leave an attack behind.

Although... the attack was more for show? I still have the initiative!

Dancing Fire Flowing Flame moved, drawing afterimages one after the other in the air.

Dragon Tooth, Double Stab, attacks that couldn't be more normal, thrust fiercely towards Flying Sword.

Clang clang clang!

Clang clang clang clang!

The weapons of both players collided with each other repeatedly. The two competed speed against speed. Sword light and spear shadows collided and separated. Blood blossomed in the air.

Everyone stared in awe. The commentator and guest in charge of commentating the match were speechless too.

What was there to say?

With how fast the two were fighting, by the time they finished talking about a point, victory might have already been decided. There was no chance for them to say anything.

This was where the difficulty in commentating a Glory match lay. When the two sides started fighting, there were too many small details and mix-ups involved. And if the pace was also fast, there was no

room for commentators to give a detailed analysis anywhere. And with how fast Tang Rou and Liu Xiaobie were playing, the commentators couldn't even use the "list the skill names" strategy.

By the time he finished calling out the name of a skill, both sides had used another three skills.

"Too fast..." Pan Lin was able to squeeze in two words. It was truly somewhat embarrassing to not be able to point out anything.

"Overly fast." Li Yibo was an experienced person with a professional experience. There might not be time to talk about the details, but he could talk about the overall picture. He didn't look at the interactions between the two, just their skill trees.

There seemed to be a bunch of clocks on their skill trees. More and more of the icons on their skill trees were going on cooldown.

Rhythm?

There was no rhythm. These two people were constantly playing catch up. You're faster than me, I'm faster than you, you chase, I chase. It became a competition of pure speed. If they continued to use skills at this pace and this quantity, there won't be any skills to use soon. Or perhaps only low-level skills would be left...

Li Yibo wasn't wrong.

Stab stab stab!

Slash slash slash!

Liu Xiaobie was putting in inputs like crazy, but he still wasn't able to thoroughly suppress his opponent. At this moment, he put in inputs, but the attack he had wanted to get failed to come out. Flying Sword's offensive suddenly halted.

How?

Liu Xiaobie was only astonished for a second before he immediately realized the problem.

The skill was on cooldown, so it couldn't be used.

But the skill was still on cooldown?

Not good!

Liu Xiaobie realized that his hand speed had gone out of control. His blind pursuit of speed had put him in this awkward position of being unable to connect skills because they were still on cooldown. It was because of this imbalance between hand speed and rhythm, a frequent mistake in the past, that he had been seen as a player who was wasting away his talent.

Fortunately, he noticed it and fixed it. He started learning how to effectively utilize his hand speed, going as fast as he could when he needed to, but also suppressing it when he needed to be slower. This imbalance in rhythm stopped appearing after being aware of it.

After fixing the problem, Liu Xiaobie improved immensely. Last season, he was just a bit away from making it into All-Stars. This season he hoped that he could breakthrough. But in this match, his old problem had unexpectedly returned. Without him being aware, his hand speed had sped up to such a level already.

She really is an opponent that's hard to stay calm against!

Fortunately, Tang Rou had been chasing after his hand speed, so she had also been recklessly wasting her skills too to reach that speed. Even though this should have been a huge mistake and a huge opening, it wasn't really one in this match because both sides had committed the same mistake.

"Haha, really..." Liu Xiaobie had wanted to say something in the chat, when Dancing Fire Flowing Flame flashed before him.

A normal attack?

Liu Xiaobie swiped his mouse and Flying Sword blocked this attack. Soft Mist wasn't done though. She attack again, this time with a Dragon Tooth. Since the vast majority of their mid-level and high-level skills were on cooldown, the two sides were mainly using low cooldown sub-Level 20 skills or normal attacks.

She's still attacking even in this situation. How stubborn! Liu Xiaobie sighed, while warding off Soft Mist's attacks. But he gradually realized that something wasn't right.

Normal attacks had no cooldown and could be used at any time.

Low-level skills had short cooldowns. After a few exchanges, they would be back up and could be used again.

Soft Mist was relying on this offense. It was just like before, dense and fast.

As a result, Liu Xiaobie that when he noticed his excessive speed and prepared to control his rhythm, Soft Mist continued to stubbornly commit this mistake.

She was still keeping up with her previous hand speed, or it could be said that she was still burning, still trying to think of a way to go faster.

This...

Liu Xiaobie didn't know how he should assess her. All he knew was that he was starting to have trouble warding off her attacks.

What is this girl thinking?

Liu Xiaobie was astonished, but he felt like he had discovered something.

Among these were memories of the past. When he failed to meet expectations by blindly utilizing hand speed, he made adjustments had made huge improvements. Tang Rou was like the him, who hadn't realized the issue and continued to charge through wildly.

If I had continued along this path, how would things have turned out?

Liu Xiaobie discovered that he had never thought about this question before. After not getting the results he wanted from this playstyle, he had quickly made changes.

As for Tang Rou? Did she know? Or was she just stubborn?

Liu Xiaobie didn't know. He only knew that he was having trouble defending. A feeling rose in his heart. The two used to be speeding along neck and neck, but midway through, he suddenly realized that there was perhaps a better way to win, so he stopped speeding along and went to study. The person who kept on speeding along instantly overpassed him...

Was this limited to just this match? Or... his entire professional career?

Would the one who won in the end be the one who continued to speed along or the one to study a better way?

Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword fell with this confusion in him. He didn't fall to Soft Mist's normal attacks and low-level skills, but rather her overwhelming tempo.

Chapter 1192: Imaginary Enemy

I lost!

The instant Flying Sword fell, Liu Xiaobie collapsed against his seat in a daze.

His adjustment after slowing his rhythm had become opening for the opponent. He had figured out this "correct" method with difficulty, only for it to be broken. Was this method not actually the best choice?

Liu Xiaobie now began to doubt himself, just like he had doubted himself when he had used his explosive hand speed time and time again and yet was unable to achieve victory.

Carrying this shock, he walked out of the player booth, offstage, returning to Tiny Herb's player area.

"You played well." His teammates tried to cheer him up, and Liu Xiaobie managed a weak smile. They patted him on his shoulders, but they didn't worry about him too much. It was normal to be disappointed and melancholic after a defeat. If he had come back in high spirits, that would be more worrying.

Liu Xiaobie sat in his seat. Lowering his head, he looked at his two hands.

His hands were still very warm, fatigued after the high-speed playing in that match, and they were still trembling nonstop. Suddenly, a cold drink landed in the palm of his hand.

Liu Xiaobie lifted his head and saw Xu Bin's face.

"Still feeling the aftertaste of that match?" Xu Bin chuckled.

Liu Xiaobie shook his head. There really wasn't too much of an aftertaste. It was just two players losing control of their hand speeds, making two different choices. One didn't care and continued to go wild, while the other recognized the problem and immediately corrected himself.

No matter how you put it, the second option sounded like the correct one. But the victory had gone to the one who continued to go wild.

"It's not a big deal if you lose a match. But don't lose your conviction with it!" Xu Bin said.

Liu Xiaobie was startled.

Conviction!

What was his conviction?

Liu Xiaobie looked at this player in front of him. Xu Bin hadn't even been in Tiny Herb for a whole season, he wasn't any more senior than him here, but he had integrated into Tiny Herb extremely well. And his playstyle was distinct and unique in the professional scene, a style that grinded away at time. Even the audience would become impatient watching him, so despite his skill, he wasn't a very popular player. Before he transferred to Tiny Herb, he always lost by a large margin in the All-Star poll.

Tiny Herb's stage allowed him to shine more, but he didn't abandon his usual style. This was his choice. No matter where he was, he would perform this style unwaveringly.

"Sometimes a choice isn't right or wrong. It just depends on whether or not you have the conviction to carry it out." As Xu Bin spoke, his gaze landed upon another person.

Wang Jiexi, captain of Tiny Herb. Ever since he entered the team, he was Tiny Herb's soul, a presence that every person here respected and admired.

When Liu Xiaobie had been unable to get the results he wanted with his early methods, he made changes with a determined resolve. Because there was this successful role model in front of him, he had complete faith that he could make these changes.

Wang Jiexi, the one called the Magician. But he threw away this title, and it wasn't until he changed many of his battle methods that he led Tiny Herb to its summit.

Wang Jiexi's story was the source of Liu Xiaobie's faith. It was what gave him the determination to change his style and make a breakthrough. But after this battle, his determination was now wavering.

This just showed that he wasn't determined enough. It also showed that he was far from mature enough.

The road was still long!

Liu Xiaobie cracked open the drink and took a long gulp.

By this time, Tiny Herb's second player of the group arena had taken to the stage.

Xiao Yun, Tiny Herb's Battle Mage, Euphorbia.

Number two!

Tang Rou quietly counted in her head.

1v3. After that day, she hadn't made any speech on the matter. Even on a normal day at Happy, it was never brought up, as though it didn't exist. But in her heart, she hadn't forgotten this for even a second.

I have to complete this! Tang Rou didn't know how many times she had repeated this in her heart. And now, this was the final chance in her bet.

This was opponent number two, and Soft Mist had 57% health remaining.

To take down an opponent in the group arena and still have over half health remaining was generally an extremely pleasing result, but for Tang Rou, this was far from enough, because her goal was to take down all three opponents by herself. But now, after only defeating Liu Xiaobie, she'd already used up 43% of Soft Mist's health. This 57% remaining to her was a tired remnant.

To clash head-on with a player who relied on his hand speed, the burden on her own two hands was unimaginable. Added to the crazy intense training Tang Rou had undergone these past 35 days, it would take a toll on even the youngest and most fit people.

And now, she still had to face two opponents, one of whom was Wang Jiexi. Tang Rou had known for a very long time just how fearsome this opponent was.

But now, there was not a trace of fear in her heart.

Defeat the one before her, and then, Wang Jiexi. Her thoughts about Wang Jiexi stopped there, nothing more.

At the start of the second battle, Xiao Yun's message appeared in the chat. "Pretty girl, your show ends here."

There was a taunt in Xiao Yun's words. 1v3? In his eyes, it was just a show.

Xiao Yun had strong feelings of hostility toward Tang Rou. In the team, he had heard that Tiny Herb was interested in Tang Rou and wanted to recruit her, but she had unfortunately turned them down.

Tiny Herb already had a Battle Mage player, himself, Xiao Yun. And yet, the team was now looking at another Battle Mage player. Xiao Yun wasn't at the point where he needed a successor. The fact that Tiny Herb had their eye on her, did that mean that this girl was better than himself?

Such a conclusion wouldn't sit well with anyone. Towards the team, towards Tang Rou, Xiao Yun was rather dissatisfied. And now he had a chance to face off against her. Tang Rou had made that promise of quitting if she couldn't complete a 1v3 in five rounds or whatever, and it just so happened that he was in the fifth round, stuck right in front of Tang Rou.

Xiao Yun was rather excited. To be able to send this Tang Rou, this player who had threatened to replace him, out of the professional scene, it was his pleasure. But he didn't dare to underestimate Tang Rou. In fact, ever since hearing the news that the team had interest in recruiting Tang Rou, he had started paying a lot of attention toward her.

Tang Rou became a powerful competitor in his eyes. Any of her matches, any reports about her, Xiao Yun paid particular attention, so much so that his teammates thought that he was trying to make some advances toward this pretty girl.

"Advances, hell! She'd better hope she doesn't fall into my hands!" This is what Xiao Yun said to Zhou Yebai, one of his teammates with whom he was close. And now, Tang Rou really fell into his hands.

I won't let you have a good time!

Xiao Yun reaffirmed his determination and controlled his Euphoria to walk out of the spawn point. Although Soft Mist only had about half health remaining, Xiao Yun still hoped to move strategically if possible, instead of meeting her charge directly. Even if he didn't like Tang Rou, he had to admit her ferocity. Direct attacks weren't his forte, he didn't want to use his weakness against her strength. But the problem was, this Windy Pavilion map had hardly any cover on it. There was no way to strategically move to launch a sneak attack. Xiao Yun was helpless and could only direct his character to charge forward. At the opposite corner, Tang Rou's Soft Mist was doing the same thing as always, rushing without any hesitation.

What advantage did he have over Tang Rou?

Imagining Tang Rou as his opponent, Xiao Yun had thought about this comparison consciously and unconsciously many times now.

Experience.

Compared to Tang Rou, he was introduced to Glory earlier, he trained as a Battle Mage earlier, he became a pro player earlier, he played pro matches earlier. Even though he wasn't a very stable core member of Tiny Herb, he was still in Tiny Herb, this powerhouse that had won two championships. Even a casually discarded rookie from this team was picked up and treated like a treasure at Happy. To have a piece of land in this kind of team, this was already something of which to be proud. And a mere rookie wanted to replace him?

Xiao Yun grew angry.

He didn't care that this was just the subjective will of Tiny Herb, or that Tang Rou's refusal had in some ways helped him. He didn't dare express any of his feelings toward Tiny Herb, but this dissatisfaction accumulated in his heart until it finally found its target, Tang Rou, as though she had been the one who actively wanted to steal his position.

The more Xiao Yun thought, the more hatred and rage he felt.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

This was an opening move that Tang Rou liked to use, but in this battle between two players of the same class, it was Xiao Yun who used it first. Not only did he want to win, he wanted to win beautifully. He wanted to show his team that he was far superior to Tang Rou. Anything she could do, he could do better.

This Dragon Breaks the Ranks came very suddenly. But a powerful attack at the beginning rarely hit the opponent because the starting animation for such powerful attacks was generally more noticeable than the ones for smaller attacks. Tang Rou was now a skilled Battle Mage player, and as soon as she saw Euphoria's pose, she immediately controlled Soft Mist to dodge. Even though Xiao Yun also immediately made adjustments, when his spear shot out, it didn't manage to land on its target.

Soft Mist dodge to the side, and after Euphoria's powerful attack whistled by, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame leapt out.

Sky Strike!

Soft Mist's first attack in this round was rather plain.

Euphorbia immediately leapt backward, as though still carrying some remnants of the Dragon Breaks the Ranks. After avoiding this Sky Strike, his spear was already sweeping wildly toward Soft Mist.

From top to bottom, this was a Draconic Crusher, a level 50 Battle Mage attack. If this attack landed, the target was guaranteed to fall over on the ground. And the priority of a level 50 skill was much higher than low-level skills, so even if Soft Mist was able to adjust the angle of her Sky Strike, she wouldn't be able to parry this Draconic Crusher.

So Xiao Yun was completely confident. But Soft Mist's Sky Strike continued toward him.

Ridiculous, I'll flatten you!

Xiao Yun's mouse moved faster. The Draconic Crusher pressed down on Soft Mist and her Sky Strike.

Ping!

The two spears met in the air, and the result was decided in an instant. The parrying effect of Sky Strike didn't seem to exist and was immediately smothered by Draconic Crusher.

What about Soft Mist? It seemed that this attack was too strong, so strong that she had no way of bracing herself against it, instead rolling to reduce the force.

But that movement wasn't necessary, Xiao Yun was very clear. The Sky Strike was just crushed by the Draconic Crusher, but there was suddenly a jump, and a Dragon Tooth leapt towards him like a viper.

Chapter 1193: What's Fearsome Is Her Overwhelming Determination

She's so fast! No wonder Liu Xiaobie lost.

Xiao Yun had Euphorbia dodge. Although he had been mentally prepared for this situation, when it actually happened, he became a bit nervous.

Indeed, this was not an opponent he could take head-on! With this, Xiao Yun's prediction was confirmed. And since he knew this long before, of course he had prepared a strategy.

If she wants to be fast, then I can't let her be fast. With my understanding of the Battle Mage class, I can definitely suppress her rhythm!

In a battle between two players of the same class, each side had a greater understanding of what changes could be made in battle. If Tang Rou weren't a Battle Mage, Xiao Yun wouldn't have this confidence, but since she was a Battle Mage, he believed that he could control the flow of battle. After all, his opponent was still a rookie, with limited understanding and control of the class. In this same-class battle, he had a slight advantage, Xiao Yun believed.

He calmly controlled his character to jump backward and avoid Soft Mist's Dragon Tooth.

Another jump let him avoid Soft Mist's subsequent Double Stab.

After the Double Stab, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame suddenly flipped up to a Sky Strike, the skill's cooldown having just ended. But Euphorbia stuck his spear downward and this Sky Strike was suppressed. None of Soft Mist's consecutive attacks managed to succeed.

The corner of Xiao Yun's mouth twisted into a cold smirk. He felt like a cat toying with a mouse.

But a Magic Chaser was already flying toward him, a Light Chaser accumulated from the earlier Sky Strike.

As expected, not a second of rest!

This Light Chaser wasn't outside of Xiao Yun's expectations either, and he very calmly dodged it. Soft Mist immediately came with another attack, even faster, with the speed bonus granted after firing a Light Chaser. This, too, Xiao Yun had accounted for, and after he dodged the Chaser, he was already defending against the sudden attack that would come next.

And his responses to her attacks weren't just ordinary dodges, as that would just give Tang Rou more space to increase her speed. Xiao Yun relied more on parrying attacks, limiting her ability to chain attacks and ruining her rhythm.

He did fairly well. After all, he was a member of Tiny Herb, and he had trained with the Battle Mage class for several years now. He was very clear on where and how to attack to maximally interfere with her attack rhythm.

This again...

Tang Rou was no stranger to this current situation. In fact, it could be said that she had just experienced this.

Last round against Heavenly Swords, even though Happy had won the two points from the group arena, Tang Rou, who was the first to come out, was defeated by the second person on their team. Heavenly Swords' second player, Wen Kebei, was a Battle Mage.

Tang Rou had just experienced a same-class battle last round, and this round she once again fought against a same-class player. Xiao Yun and Wen Kebei both fought with this interference style that could only be executed by someone familiar with the class. But Xiao Yun, compared to Wen Kebei, was more practiced, and Tang Rou was suppressed harder than she was last round.

It was harder, but she knew it better.

Tyrant's Destruction! Tang Rou still refused to give up on attacking.

That smirk continue to hang on the corner of Xiao Yun's mouth. With a practiced motion of the mouse, his Euphorbia also unleashed a Tyrant's Destruction, crashing toward Soft Mist's.

An instantaneous control, an instantaneous attack, and in an instant, the spears were about to collide once again. But suddenly, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame suddenly shot upward.

In the last moment, just before the two skills were about to hit, Tang Rou adjusted the direction of her skill. No time to delay, the timing couldn't be off by a hair.

She did it!

Dancing Fire Flowing Flame and the spear that Euphorbia swung toward her slipped past each other. And Soft Mist jumped into the air, and in the same way, with hardly a second to spare, she just barely dodged his attack.

Barely, but she managed to dodge it. And Xiao Yun? After discovering this change, it was already too late to react.

Tang Rou pushed her change all the way to the end, leaving no time for Xiao Yun to make any follow-up move.

Not just him, even someone with ten or a hundred times the hand speed wouldn't have been able to keep up with Tang Rou's change at that moment.

Shit!

Xiao Yun only had time to shout in his mind. He didn't even have the chance to retract the smirk on his mouth when Euphorbia was hit by Soft Mist's Tyrant's Destruction. At the same time, flames burst forth and landed upon Euphorbia's body, as Dancing Fire Flowing Flame's special effect "Flowing Flame" was activated.

After one attack succeeded, things got easier. The next skills came one after another in a combo.

This was a combo. If this offense could be casually broken, then it wouldn't be called a combo.

Xiao Yun's Euphorbia and the Dancing Fire Flowing Flame in Soft Mist's hands met over and over again. Tang Rou was completely immersed in the controls. Of course, she hoped with this one chain of combos she could defeat her opponent, but sadly, things didn't turn out that way.

Xiao Yun, who understood Battle Mages well, quickly found a flaw in Tang Rou's combo.

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart!

Seeing the flaw, Xiao Yun directly used a powerful attack. Tang Rou hastily responded, Soft Mist drawing back her spear, but she had no way of completely parrying such a high-level attack.

Soft Mist's offensive came to an abrupt end, and Xiao Yun used this Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart to retaliate with a new high of attacks.

Tang Rou's response to this offensive was completely different from Xiao Yun's. Xiao Yun would observe, anticipate, search for an opportunity. But when she faced each of Euphorbia's attacks, she would always try to make a move, she controlled her character nonstop, as though Euphorbia's attack sequence contained flaws everywhere.

But in reality, Euphorbia's attacks were not interrupted. Tang Rou struggled endlessly, but to no avail.

But her struggling like this gave her opponent a lot of pressure. Xiao Yun felt a strong sense of danger, as though if he made the tiniest slip, it would immediately cause him to lose this match.

This state was unexpected for Xiao Yun. He was nervous, he didn't dare become careless, but the more he felt this, the more flawed his controls became, often scaring himself into a sweat. Thus, Xiao Yun was

unable to maintain his offensive for long before he, too, finally revealed an opening. The unrelenting Tang Rou instantly seized the opportunity. Even death wouldn't have stopped her as she surged forward. One attack landed, and immediately a chain of attacks followed. If Xiao Yun seized a chance and interfered again? No worries, she'd just come again!

The two sides traded the initiative back and forth, but whether or not she was attacking or being attacked, Tang Rou's Soft Mist always maintained an offensive stance. When attacking, she was always moving forward; when being attacked, she caused a constant fear of counterattack in the opponent, like a thorn in the back. The sweat on Xiao Yun's forehead accumulated, and the string in his heart was wound tighter and tighter.

The tighter he was, the more he didn't dare relax his hands or legs, and Xiao Yun's apprehension only increased. The more he didn't want to make a mistake, the more often a mistake would come find him. The battle seemed like a continuous exchange of attack and defense positions, but Xiao Yun's attack periods grew shorter and shorter, and Tang Rou was seizing opportunities and attacking for longer and longer periods of time.

Under these exchanges, Xiao Yun watched as Soft Mist slowly closed the gap between their health levels. He grew panicked, and he started making more mistakes. He once again reminded himself to stay calm, stay stable, but his two hands were so stiff, so unresponsive, it was as though they were no longer his own. Where did his normal casual and easy controls go? Xiao Yun wanted to stuff his hands in his mouth and bite down hard.

His 43% health lead was pulled to a tie, and then, he started losing.

The more Xiao Yun played, the more chaotic he became. He no longer had a fraction of the confidence he'd had at the beginning of this match. All he had was overwhelming panic.

How could it be like this?

Xiao Yun didn't understand. He had prepared thoroughly to face Tang Rou, he was confident, so how come as soon as he was onstage, he couldn't perform? How was his condition today so bad?

Xiao Yun couldn't stabilize himself or control the situation. He could only lose.

Tang Rou completed the 1v2, successfully entering the third battle of the group arena.

The crowd was silent.

1v2. This result was already valiant, but because Tang Rou promised a 1v3, she wasn't done yet. Tiny Herb's next player onstage was their captain Wang Jiexi. And Tang Rou? Soft Mist, after this battle, only had 16% health remaining.

"Coach Li, what do you think... this..." Commentator Pan Lin spoke haltingly. To challenge Wang Jiexi with 16% health, it was very difficult for anyone to have hope!

"Haha, the wonder of competition is its unpredictability! Perhaps we will witness a miracle!" Li Yibo laughed.

"That's to say, Coach Li still looks favorably on Tang Rou?" Pan Lin said.

"We've already reached this point. Tang Rou is a player full of energy, so who knows, she might achieve the inconceivable!" Li Yibo said.

"Alright, let's look forward to the result of what has been the focus of the past five rounds! Team Happy's Tang Rou versus Team Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi!" Pan Lin announced.

The television broadcaster made this announcement, and the live screens in the stadium displayed the next player from Tiny Herb who was about to play. But Wang Jiexi didn't hurry to go onstage, and instead waited for Xiao Yun to return.

Seeing the captain looking at him, Xiao Yun lowered his head, and looked for a corner in which to hide.

"What's most fearsome about Tang Rou is not her technique, nor her hand speed, but her overwhelming determination." After Wang Jiexi spoke, he stepped toward the stage.

Happy versus Tiny Herb, third match of the group arena.

The final opponent in the 1v3. Win this, and she would complete her promise. Just one last step.

However, Tang Rou was already powerless.

Vaccaria slid down from the sky, trailing behind him the glittering remnants of starlight from the dance of Star Extinction.

"A 1v3 is not so easy!" Wang Jiexi said.

In the third battle of the group arena, Wang Jiexi won. No damage taken.

The audience was once again silent.

If Tang Rou's 1v3 had succeeded, they would have been dissatisfied. But seeing her defeated so swiftly by Wang Jiexi, everyone felt a bit disappointed.

They themselves couldn't say for what sort of outcome they had hoped.

In Happy's player area, everything was even more still. Failing to complete a 1v3 was nothing. In fact, in terms of the match progression, for their first player to meet the opponent's third, they held a great advantage. But, the outcome that this 1v3 failure implied...

At this moment, no matter how hard Chen Guo tried, she couldn't squeeze out even a half-corner of a smile.

Chapter 1194: I Don't Agree

She lost...

In the end, Tang Rou was unable to complete her promise of a 1v3 within five rounds. Chen Guo couldn't muster even the barest of smiles, but when Tang Rou returned, she was still able to smile at all of them, just like after her losses in all of the previous group arenas. That smile was to let them know that they didn't need to worry for her. But if they didn't worry now, when would they? Five rounds had already passed, there were no more chances!

Seeing how Tang Rou was still wearing such a smile, Chen Guo only felt more miserable. She wanted to go up and say something, but she didn't know what she could say. Tang Rou quietly sat back down in her seat, and her face finally revealed a trace of exhaustion. 35 days of crazy training, and a frenzied performance in every match. This time, facing the powerhouse Tiny Herb, she defeated two opponents in a row, but in the end, she fell so swiftly at the hands of Wang Jiexi.

Was everything already over?

Chen Guo felt a numbness in her nose. She looked at Tang Rou, whose head was lifted, staring at the replays on the screens, just like normal. They were all displaying shots from her match that had just ended.

Ye Xiu stood up, but he didn't say anything to Tang Rou. He still followed the progression of the match and said something to the next player who was about to go onstage. Chen Guo was right next to him, and yet she couldn't hear a thing he said.

Happy's second player in the group arena was Steamed Bun, a player that many people thought shared some traits with Wang Jiexi. This time, facing Wang Jiexi, he lost speedily.

Two opponents defeated consecutively, yet Vaccaria had barely lost any health. The audience's eyes were wide.

Everyone had been focused on whether or not Tang Rou could complete a 1v3. But now, it was actually shaping up to be a total reversal like this?

Amidst everyone's guessing, Fang Rui went onstage...

In the group arena, Tiny Herb won.

The dead silence in the crowd only belonged to Happy's reporters. The Tiny Herb fans supporting their away team were thrilled, excited, and screaming crazily. Even Pan Lin, in the middle of the broadcast, was nearly incoherent.

"This... This is truly..." Pan Lin tried to organize his words. "Just when Tang Rou defeated two Tiny Herb players and everyone was wondering whether or not she could create a miracle, Wang Jiexi, Tiny Herb's Captain Wang Jiexi, the Magician Wang Jiexi, with a crisp and clear 1v3, tells everyone: impossible! Tiny Herb maintains its record of never being 1v3'd! Wang Jiexi is truly one of the most reliable players in the Alliance! An awe-inspiring reversal!"

The excitement of the Tiny Herb fans conquered the entire stadium.

Tang Rou failed her 1v3, and the opponent pulled off a 1v3 to reverse the situation and win the match. One could only imagine how low Happy's spirits were.

How would the upcoming team competition play out? Very few people could concentrate on this question, as everyone was still worrying about Tang Rou's future. On the other hand, after Wang Jiexi's 1v3 to win back the group arena, Tiny Herb's morale reached its peak. With this shift, in the end, Happy lost the team competition to Tiny Herb as well. The match ended, 2 to 8.

To be honest, Happy losing to Tiny Herb wasn't any big news. The most attention-grabbing part of this match was Tang Rou's promise of completing a 1v3, and this too was a large reason why the live

broadcast chose to show this match. And now, the dust settled. The reporters had all already gathered at the post-match press conference, discussing in a chaotic manner, some regretful, some gloating.

Esports Time's Ruan Cheng, of course, would not miss this press conference. It could even be said that he was the star of this conference. Right now, he acted like a victor, delightedly moving through the crowds of reporters, chatting with some here and some there, leaving the sound of his hearty laughter throughout.

"Are you happy?" Ruan Cheng suddenly heard someone speak up beside him. He turned his head and saw this person glaring right at him.

"Seeing such a talented player forced to leave the professional scene for a reason like this. Are you happy?" When Ruan Cheng turned toward him, Chang Xian spat out this sentence word by word, syllable by syllable.

He was the reporter closest to Happy, but among all of these people, Chang Xian was still just a junior. His identity and position couldn't compare at all to Esports Time's senior writer Ruan Cheng. But at this moment, Chang Xian mustered his courage and hurled this question at him.

"Haha," Ruan Cheng laughed. "Everyone needs to take responsibility for their choices, and I'm pleased to see a player meet such a result after their own arrogant words and actions. Of course, I prefer to see that she learns a lesson from this, corrects her shortcomings, and continues to improve. Something like this wouldn't actually force her to retire, no? Haha."

"You're exactly right, take responsibility for your choices. Everyone's very willing to accept a sincere apology!" Another reporter who disapproved of Tang Rou's actions came to support Ruan Cheng's opinion.

Seeing these seniors pretending to be innocent and sympathetic, Chang Xian truly felt disgusted. These people always put themselves on the moral high ground, casually pointing fingers at other people, as though anything that didn't fit their views was automatically wrong. They spoke as though this were all for Tang Rou's good, but Chang Xian was clear, they just wanted to see Tang Rou embarrassed, see this strong and tough player bow her head before them, thus proving the authority of their right to speak.

Chang Xian didn't want to see Tang Rou lower her head before these guys, but he was even less willing to see Tang Rou quit the pro scene like this.

"They're here, Happy's people are here." After this shout, all of the reporters took their positions. Ruan Cheng smiled and organized his appearance. With all the attitude of a victor, he prepared to thoroughly enjoy this evening.

Ye Xiu, Fang Rui, Chen Guo, and Tang Rou, these were the four people from Happy that came for this press conference. The reporters were quietly delighted, since they had worried earlier that Tang Rou simply wouldn't attend. But now, it seemed this girl was quite magnanimous! Not bad, lower your head! Apologize!

As long as you come with the right attitude, everyone will gladly accept it.

Although everyone was eager to jump right in, seeing the four Happy members take their seats, in the end they all turned toward Ruan Cheng. After all, this whole affair was his creation. At this time, they had to give him face, let him complete this topic.

"Ahem!" Ruan Cheng of course wouldn't pass up this opportunity. After the signal that he could begin, he gracefully stood up to ask a question. "It's a great shame that Happy was in such condition, only to suffer such a reversal." Ruan Cheng was in no hurry, and said these perfunctory opening words.

"Yes, it's a shame," Ye Xiu answered.

"It's a greater shame that Miss Tang Rou failed to complete her 1v3 by just one step." Ruan Cheng smiled as he hit upon the topic at hand.

Tang Rou sat on the panel. Contrary to everyone's expectations, she didn't appear to be in a rush to examine her mistakes, nor did she show any sign of disappointment or loss. Like every other time she had appeared in such a press conference, she simply sat there, upright and proper.

What was the meaning of this?

More than a few reporters were already having second thoughts.

Promise?

To be honest, not many people really took this very seriously. Tang Rou, with her looks and skill as a player, had an immeasurable value in the pro scene. There was really no way to strictly enforce this so-called promise. But for the sake of the team's most immediate interests, at this point, they had to smooth over their public relations somehow, right? Even if they used the reasons Ruan Cheng had exposed earlier, "for love," "for the team," "for the supporters," or other such arguments. Or if they really had nothing else, even a reason like "to generate interest" could very well be brazenly announced!

But, with this calm and stability in front of them, as though this whole situation didn't exist, what was she planning to do? Was she pretending to have amnesia?

Everyone looked at Ruan Cheng. Stop playing around, get to the point!

Ruan Cheng was also beginning to have doubts in his heart. At this time, this player seriously didn't have any intention of lowering her head? What an infuriating person!

Ruan Cheng's mood worsened, and so he picked up the pace.

"If I've counted correctly, this is now the fifth round since your promise of five rounds. Although Miss Tang Rou only missed it by one step, the 1v3 was not completed. It seems that, Miss Tang Rou, you said earlier, if you couldn't complete a 1v3 in five rounds, you would quit?"

Ruan Cheng had initially intended for Tang Rou to stand up of her own volition to admit her wrong and beg forgiveness, but now, she was just sitting motionless at the panel, as though she would completely ignore the topic if no one brought it up. Ruan Cheng couldn't stand it any more, and so he directly dug up the promise.

Instantly, everyone's gazes swiveled to Tang Rou.

Tang Rou smiled. "Quit? I don't agree. Go on."

I don't agree, go on?

What was that?

The reporters were instantly in an uproar. Even Ruan Cheng was stunned. Chang Xian hadn't expected Tang Rou to do this, either.

Refuse to lower your head, but refuse to quit as well, what can you do?

Chang Xian hadn't expected that even this pretty girl would have delinquent tendencies. To put it bluntly, she was admitting that she was breaking her word? This this this... She was completely destroying her reputation!

A promise, no matter in what context, held significance. The words you said, the water you spilled, you could find this or that ridiculous excuse, but in the end you needed to find an explanation to give yourself a place to stand.

But Tang Rou wasn't standing on anything, she just gave that sentence: I don't agree.

Exactly!

If the player didn't agree, there was truly no one who could force her to quit, so this reason was very strong. But to do this was to burn your image and reputation to ashes. Having a good appearance couldn't save you. Character, integrity, those were forever a person's most important traits.

"You don't agree?" This response caught Ruan Cheng completely off guard. His voice had gone strangled, he had no idea how to go on. "You... you shameless!"

He couldn't hold back, Ruan Cheng just couldn't hold back. To directly hurl such insults was of course frowned upon, and these writers often had to use very roundabout ways to insult someone. But in this moment, he truly couldn't hold back anymore. This was shameless. No word could describe this more accurately.

"You can say what you will," Tang Rou said. "I will continue as always. Thank you."

Thank you? What the fuck! The reporters were instantly enraged. Are you trying to make fun of us?

Chapter 1195: Each Crazier than the Next

The atmosphere of the press conference reached a boiling point. Even those who hadn't initially harbored any ill-will toward Tang Rou could no longer hold themselves back after seeing her current attitude.

What was this? The stubbornness of a mule? You clearly lost the bet, but you don't apologize and recognize that you were overly confident, nor do you quit the Alliance like you said. You just toss the sentence "I don't agree"?

In the ten years of the Glory Pro League, there had never been a player like this before, a player who simply refused to recognize the words they had previously said.

Pro players were public figures, so it was crucial that they had a good reputation. A player like this who didn't keep her word, no matter how good her appearance or disposition, what kind of business would dare endorse her? Without these endorsements, who would be willing to use her in advertising? Even pro teams, in order to avoid affecting the image of the team as a whole, would stay far away from a player with such a bad image, no matter how skilled the player was.

Tang Rou's action was completely self-destructive. Although the reporters were boiling, aside from Ruan Cheng's accusation of "shameless," none of them could find any other condemnation. None of them had ever experienced such a situation before, they didn't have experience!

For now, the reporters were like wasps whose nest had just been attacked, filling the air with their buzzing. In the midst of it all, it was possible that a few wanted to ask some questions, but in such a noisy and chaotic situation, no one could hear anything clearly.

"Everyone quiet down, quiet!!" the Alliance's media spokesperson shouted. Normally, a pro team had its own spokesperson, who would act as the host for any press conferences a team held. Happy didn't have one, so the Alliance's employee was a temporary fill-in. A worker from the Alliance would defend a pro team to some extent, but in the end they wouldn't be as exhaustively dedicated to the team like a worker from the team itself. This worker right now just wanted to restore order and didn't particularly care about Happy itself.

The reporters' uproar lasted for almost five whole minutes. As it slowly settled down, everyone adopted faces of indignation. This time, none of them felt that they understood Tang Rou's actions. Chang Xian had been pleased at first to see the reporters utterly flustered and anxious, but after that passed, he too started to worry about Tang Rou. He understood clearly how disadvantageous Tang Rou's attitude was, and he didn't know what sort of public relations strategy this was. With his understanding of Happy, they didn't have any dedicated public relations team. Their press conferences were all very casual, otherwise this wouldn't have attracted so much hatred.

Amidst the reporters who had regained order, Ruan Cheng acted as the voice of general opinion as he stood at the front, face filled with resentment.

"Miss Tang Rou, may I ask, what the meaning of your words was just now?" Ruan Cheng asked, exceedingly sophisticated. Although he had already carefully considered this, he still feared that Tang Rou had hidden some sort of trap in her words. After all, this whole situation was too incredible and ridiculous, and had never happened before in all ten years of Glory.

"I mean that I will not quit the Alliance, I will continue to play," Tang Rou said.

Alright, this time she made herself clear. There was no way for her meaning to be twisted, was there? Ruan Cheng was suddenly full of energy.

"Then, what do you think your earlier promise was all about? You think that your simple 'I don't agree' is enough to erase it? What do you have to say to all those Glory players that cared about you, wished you well, supported you?" Ruan Cheng said.

"Oh." Hearing this, Tang Rou stood up.

"I deeply regret being unable to complete a 1v3. I have disappointed all those who have cared about me, wished me well, and supported me." As she said this, Tang Rou made a short bow, and then straightened. "However, I will not retire because of this. Even if it hurts me, I will continue, and I will bear the burden of the disgrace that results. I only worry that my teammates will be dragged into this, and I hope that the team will not be harmed by any of this, because this is all my own decision. I hope that all of the criticism and accusations will only be aimed at myself, and not at Team Happy or the other team members."

"Your behavior tarnishes the reputation of your team," Ruan Cheng said.

"Yes, you are correct, the team is implicated because of me, they are victims," said Tang Rou. "Thank you for being so reasonable."

The atmosphere of the press conference became twisted again.

What's this? She wants to bear all the consequences of her faults? After this clear spiel of words, those who wanted to defame Happy along with her could no longer open their mouths. But to take all responsibility like this, this Tang Rou, has she not considered her future?

All of the reporters sensed how insane it was for Tang Rou to destroy her reputation and future prospects like this. But they had no way of attacking this point.

"Do you know what effect this will have on your future?"

For a question like this, a simple "none of your business" was enough of a retort. If the other party really didn't care about their future prospects, it was idiotic to make this a point. So Ruan Cheng had opened his mouth to point out to her supporters how Tang Rou harmed her team. But Tang Rou accepted all of this, in a "if you want to curse me, just bring it" attitude.

Any other possible position was unsustainable!

Were they supposed to say, so many people were looking forward to seeing you leave if you failed the 1v3, so now that you really failed, how can you make it up to those who were anticipating your departure?

An attack like that would probably only make Tang Rou more earnest in breaking her word, right?

The experienced reporters actually had no idea what to say next. They could only quietly swear in their hearts that as soon as they left they would figure out how to attack this Tang Rou. But looking at Tang Rou's stance, they couldn't help but feel a bit timid again. She already made it clear that she didn't care about her reputation and that she didn't need your support or understanding. What use would their attacks have? Would it just be a catharsis?

The reporters were at a loss because of Tang Rou's toughness. Ruan Cheng had been prepared to taste the fruits of victory, only to be faced with this unexpected scene. Tang Rou embraced the situation and took everything upon herself. Then what about Happy? What do you think of this?

"To Happy's members, what do you think of Tang Rou's performance today?" Ruan Cheng said in a low voice. He finally avoided Tang Rou, he had no way of facing her toughness, he had to find a new breakthrough.

"Tang Rou's performance today..." Happy's Captain Ye Xiu opened his mouth, "was excellent." He nodded his head, filled with certainty. And then in the face of a field of dumbstruck stares, he continued, "In the group arena, she defeated two opponents and fought all the way to the third person. A performance like that is truly powerful."

The reporters felt like crying. God, could you please stop playing dumb! You know that that's not what we're asking. But then again, disregarding the promise, for one player to fight all the way to the third was indeed very strong! Some reporters fell into a trance. But the rest were just about to accuse the God of playing dumb, when Ye Xiu continued to speak.

"The ones who should be strictly criticized are the two players who went up next. Two players, and you couldn't take down the opponent's one player? Especially the third player, the great general anchoring the group arena, Fang Rui! The team didn't spend so much money to get you over here just so you could be a useless dim sum! You couldn't even take care of a Wang Jiexi?" Ye Xiu berated him. The tone of that "couldn't even take care of a Wang Jiexi" was deafening! Ever since Wang Jiexi had entered the Alliance, the reporters had never heard this kind of sentence before.

"Yeah yeah yeah." To the side, Fang Rui confessed, ashamed, "I messed up, I couldn't focus my spirits to play well. Someone like Wang Jiexi, I should at least be able to fight ten of him."

"That's a bit much!" Ye Xiu said.

"Eight?" Fang Rui said.

"Mm." Ye Xiu nodded.

The reporters were going crazy. They had no way of reporting talk like this. Anyone could hear that it was a joke. If you actually talked about this seriously, everyone would doubt the judgment of your report. They could only record this talk while cursing this shamelessness, and when Wang Jiexi came out later, they could interview him and see if he objected to this. Only that would be reasonable.

But the main topic right now shouldn't be this!

"God Ye Xiu, as the captain of Team Happy, what are your thoughts on your teammate's retraction of her promise? I seem to remember that before, you very firmly believed Tang Rou could complete a 1v3?" One reporter, through gritted teeth, strung together a few clear keywords to spit out this question.

"Those were necessary words for the public," Ye Xiu said dismissively. "Is this your first day as a reporter or something?"

The reporters spat blood. But they had to admit that he had a point. When facing doubts about a team's player, the captain, or even any member of the team, had to defend the player, unless there was some serious conflict! Whether or not you believed in your teammate, when facing the world, the answer was always a public "yes."

But Ruan Cheng seized a flaw in Ye Xiu's words.

"That's to say, God Ye Xiu, in reality, you didn't actually believe that Tang Rou could complete a 1v3, right?" Ruan Cheng aggressively asked.

"How could that be the case? Have you forgotten, I was the one who set the five round limit?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"But now, she failed to complete it," said Ruan Cheng.

"Mm, in the end, no one can be one hundred percent certain about the outcome of competition, not even me," Ye Xiu said.

"But she made that kind of promise," said Ruan Cheng.

"And now she doesn't intend to uphold it," Ye Xiu said calmly.

"What do you think of that?" Ruan Cheng said.

"The team cannot interfere in a personal decision. I'm very glad that Tang Rou could make such a decision, allowing us to avoid losing such an outstanding player. Thank you." Ye Xiu's last two words were directed toward Tang Rou.

"You're welcome," Tang Rou replied with a smile.

Insane! Everyone on this team is insane!

The reporters were dumbstruck. Could these people not tell the severity of this situation? They were still relaxed as they responded with ridicule. If this were any other team, the public relations team probably would have already burned to ashes from this, no?

Tang Rou said that her promise was her individual decision and had nothing to do with the team. But, as a member of this team, her reputation was part of the team's reputation as a whole. Even with her statement, the team would still experience a negative effect. Regarding this, did the manager of this team, their boss, have no objection to this? She must be enraged in her heart? As it happened, Happy's boss Chen Guo was also on the panel of this press conference, and the reporters turned their fire.

Chapter 1196: The Most Challenging

At any other time, Chen Guo would have just about died laughing from seeing these reporters harassed like this. But now, she didn't feel like laughing at all, only crying. From the very first second she sat on this stage, she was trying very hard to control herself and prevent the tears from falling.

The rules of the Alliance didn't extend to a team's boss, so Chen Guo could have skipped all of the pre- and post-match press conferences. But now, she sat here, next to Tang Rou, because she wanted to be with Tang Rou, because she knew that Tang Rou was making a very difficult decision.

Chen Guo felt like she was good for nothing. She had wanted to sit up here to give Tang Rou support, only to find that she herself was the weakest. She couldn't be calm like Ye Xiu and Fang Rui, or steadfast like Tang Rou. Hold back the tears... this was all she could manage to do.

The 1v3 promise had caused an uproar in the outside world, and within Happy, it had also been a topic that everyone treated with caution. After the end of the press conference where she had made the announcement, the absolutely rational An Wenyi had said frankly that Tang Rou's actions were irresponsible to the extreme.

Tang Rou hadn't retorted, and afterwards, she spent her days and nights in intense training. Everyone saw this, and so An Wenyi temporarily refrained from expressing his opinion any further. After all, the five rounds hadn't been fought yet, perhaps Tang Rou could really pull it off. As her teammate, at a time like this, An Wenyi went along with the others and chose to encourage her and cheer her on.

35 days passed, five rounds finished, and in the end Tang Rou hadn't been able to do it. In the prep room after the match, An Wenyi didn't rush to say anything, but everyone could see from his eyes just how dissatisfied he was.

And then, Tang Rou apologized, for her earlier irresponsibility. And then, she announced her decision: revoking her promise, and continuing to play.

Everyone was stunned, especially the most dissatisfied An Wenyi. Now, this rational player viewed Tang Rou's decision as even more inconceivable.

Everyone knew the pressure she would have to bear from a decision like this.

The irresponsible Tang Rou now used this sort of method to take responsibility for her team. Why couldn't she just soften up a bit, admit some weakness?

An Wenyi couldn't understand. He just knew that if it were him, he never would have thought of this self-destructive tough method.

The prep room was quiet.

Why wasn't anyone dissuading her? An Wenyi looked at Captain Ye Xiu, at Boss Chen Guo, at his other teammates, but no one said anything. Was it because no one recognized the severity of this problem? That certainly wasn't the case. The current silence precisely demonstrated just how shocking and frightening Tang Rou's decision here was.

But no one stood up to say anything. Had everyone lost their reason? An Wenyi wanted to step forward, wanted to logically analyze the most appropriate way to address this situation. But, he couldn't open his mouth. How to address this? An Wenyi thought that she should just lower her head to the reporters, admit that her earlier words were improper, and earnestly request that everyone agree to let her withdraw her improper promise.

An Wenyi could clearly see that those reporters weren't actually very interested in forcing a player to retire, as that would generate animosity towards themselves. They were looking forward to this kind of scene, her lowering her head. With that, they could paint themselves as saviors leading a player to the correct way.

Was that what had to happen?

In his mind, An Wenyi imagined Tang Rou's voice quietly begging forgiveness, and he saw those gleeful, arrogant, puffed up faces. After that, those guys would of course generously accept Tang Rou.

"Fuck!" The rational An Wenyi actually swore, harshly kicking a locker. This was just so fucking disgusting! An Wenyi found that he couldn't find it in himself to persuade Tang Rou to act any differently than she had.

"Then... that's that!" Ye Xiu said.

"Ye Xiu, come out here for a second." Boss Chen Guo suddenly walked out of the prep room and called out to Ye Xiu.

"Hm?" Ye Xiu followed her out.

Just when Tang Rou made her decision, a terrifying thought suddenly surfaced in Chen Guo's mind.

Given Tang Rou's personality, it wasn't too hard to understand her making such a tough answer and taking greater pressure upon herself. And so, Chen Guo suddenly thought of Ye Xiu. That guy, maybe he anticipated early on that Tang Rou couldn't 1v3 within five rounds. The five round limit was his taking advantage of the situation to throw her into a trap.

Because he had very clearly expressed before that Tang Rou's dedication to Glory wasn't stable. Her interest came from the challenge, so it was possible that one day, when she reached a certain height and there were no more challenges to interest her, she would lose her interest in Glory. At that time, this added to her life attitude of a casual rich girl, what would be her resulting attitude? Would she directly quit Glory, just like she had quit music? Or would she aimlessly continue along, just because she was part of the team? Neither outcome was one that Happy wanted to see. So this time, Ye Xiu threw Tang Rou into a trap, putting her in shackles and forcing her to endlessly fight?

"You woman, you're really too scary!" Ye Xiu was shocked after hearing Chen Guo's blunt questioning.

"It's not like that?" Chen Guo said.

"Of course not."

Chen Guo sighed in relief. She didn't know where this thought had come from either, perhaps because she had watched Ye Xiu for a while now, and his normal way of doing things was often rather cold and indifferent. But Chen Guo would not tolerate his orchestrating this kind of plan to the teammates at his side. Hearing his refutation, Chen Guo was relieved.

"But now, she..."

"She'll suffer an enormous amount of pressure. This is really her personality, always choosing the most difficult and the most challenging," said Ye Xiu.

Tang Rou chose the most difficult way to face this. Then what about Chen Guo herself? She couldn't retreat. As a team, no matter what, they should always support and accept every single member of the team. Today, she stood here with Tang Rou, with whom she was the closest, but if it were any other member of Happy, she would do the same.

With these beliefs, Chen Guo calmly faced the reporters who raged around her. Even if she couldn't control her tears, she would be Tang Rou's most firm supporter, the most firm supporter of every single player on Team Happy. Just like that.

Insane! Happy's people are all insane.

This Tang Rou didn't consider her own image at all, and Happy's boss didn't consider the effect of such a player on the team's image as a whole. There were clearly problems with the thought process of this team's operations, big problems.

Don't they understand these principles? It seemed that they did, but they acted like this anyway. Tang Rou was willing to bear the public pressure, and Happy's boss? Even under these conditions, she emphasized her thanks toward Tang Rou for making such a difficult decision for the team.

How could there be a team like this, how could there be a player like this!

The reporters were completely resentful of Happy and Tang Rou, who didn't fit their expectations at all. When the winners of today's match, Tiny Herb, came out for their press conference, the reporters were still alight with an anger that couldn't immediately be extinguished.

They carelessly finished with their congratulations toward the winning party and immediately asked the Tiny Herb players for their thoughts on Happy's actions today.

"Oh?" Hearing that Tang Rou made such an announcement, the Tiny Herb players who attended this press conference, Wang Jiexi, Gao Yingjie, and Liu Xiaobie, found it very surprising.

But soon enough, Wang Jiexi nodded his head. "She would do something like that!" Wang Jiexi couldn't help but think of their time in the tenth server, when defeating Tang Rou was a matter of seconds for him. Even a beginner could tell the enormous disparity of skill that existed between them. But despite such a frightening disparity, Wang Jiexi could only defeat Tang Rou's character and not her fighting spirit. As Tang Rou became more clearly aware of this disparity, Wang Jiexi sensed only an increased excitement from her.

From then, Wang Jiexi knew what kind of person this was. And then later there was the Challenger League, when Tang Rou once again refused Tiny Herb's invitation, Wang Jiexi took another step in understanding how different Tang Rou was from the crowd.

Understanding how different she was from the crowd and then looking at the things these reporters were chattering about, even Wang Jiexi felt that they were laughable.

The reporters clearly felt that Tang Rou breaking her word like this and destroying her self-image would prevent her from continuing to exist in the Alliance, that she would have no more future.

"No powerhouse team would want a player with such a bad reputation ruining their image."

Wang Jiexi heard this sound, spoken with confidence.

It was true, these words are very reasonable. But the problem was, the "future" of which you speak is entirely different from the future in Tang Rou's eyes. This player, different from the rest, is absolutely not walking the normal, expected path of a pro player.

Powerhouse team?

This person had already rejected Tiny Herb twice now, a rejection with no hesitation or leeway. It was evident that Tiny Herb had nothing that attracted her. The so-called powerhouse team was nothing in her eyes.

These group of players that Ye Xiu found all had their quirks and defects, but they were all extremely reliable people! Thinking about this, Wang Jiexi discovered that he subconsciously admired them. But facing the reporters' questions, he sensibly evaded.

"Well, perhaps there's some reason she won't honor her commitment! I'm not too sure, so I can't very well say anything," Wang Jiexi said.

"Then what do you think about Fang Rui saying that he could take on eight of you?" One reporter also dragged this statement over.

To this, Wang Jiexi just smiled a little. "I look forward to our next battle."

To think that trash talk like this would provoke some reaction from Wang Jiexi, the reporters found that they were too naive. And from Wang Jiexi, they couldn't find any interesting topic to discuss. They could only turn their attacks to the other two from Tiny Herb. Tang Rou's actions once again became the focus of their questions.

"I'm pretty happy she didn't quit. I look forward to battling her again." Liu Xiaobie only looked at the result, not the process.

"No matter what, her courage and determination is worth learning," Gao Yingjie said.

Society's morals were degenerating day by day!

The reporters lamented. They couldn't even hear strong condemnation of Tang Rou from Tiny Herb's players?

Chapter 1197: Consequences

The storm caused by the 1v3 didn't pass after the end of the competition. It could be said that for the reporters, the real excitement was only just starting.

Several reporters, Ruan Cheng at the lead, were enraged to the core by Tang Rou's attitude, and they immediately began to write all sorts of articles condemning her. Esports Time, the publication for which Ruan Cheng wrote, was a bimonthly publication, so there was still a week before the next edition's release. He couldn't wait that long, and impatiently posted on his personal blog to begin a crusade against her, calling this whole thing a scandal and provoking a big reaction. The other major media outlets also reported on this matter, attacking from various angles.

But amidst all this, quite a few reporters gave understanding toward Tang Rou. Chang Xian, for example, clearly stood on Tang Rou's side, looking down upon Ruan Cheng and all those other reporters. But the problem was, the company he worked for, Esports Home, had strict requirements of its subordinate reporters. Articles from invited reporters could have the warning "this does not represent the views of this publication" attached, but articles from their own reporters faced constraints.

It wasn't that Esports Home couldn't have a position, but this time, Tang Rou's actions were extremely controversial. Destroying one's prior commitment like this was impossible to put in a good light. Up through now, Esports Home emphasized their impartiality in the circle, so for this situation, the conclusion of their discussion didn't express a clear position, and they played a bit for both sides. With this, Chang Xian's article expressing clear support for Happy and Tang Rou naturally wasn't suitable and was shot down by the editor-in-chief three times. Chang Xian was a passionate young person. After all this hassle, he was tempted to just quit this and not write, but then he thought, if he did that, then wouldn't the voices supporting Happy and Tang Rou become even weaker?

So Chang Xian dug through numerous articles written by his seniors, studying them to learn how to guide an opinion under these kind of circumstances so that when touching upon both sides at the conclusion, there would be a subtle leaning toward one side. These sort of games couldn't hide from the experienced editor-in-chief, but as long as it wasn't too obvious, a slight bias wasn't a big problem. After all, a robotic article with no position would appear to lack judgment and influence.

On one hand, Esports Home placed strict limitations on their own articles, but on the other hand, they used this topic to draw many eyes. Esports Home invited two pieces from outsiders, one was the article posted by Ruan Cheng to his personal blog, and for the other, they found the famed commentator Cha Xiaoxia.

Ruan Cheng's position was obvious. As for Cha Xiaoxia, that was someone who already publicly declared himself a Happy fanboy. This sort of commentator generally wouldn't be invited to write about a team of which he was a fan, but now Esports Home specifically invited him, undoubtedly to counter Ruan Cheng's position.

Cha Xiaoxia didn't disappoint. He was warm and understanding toward Tang Rou, while cold and mocking towards Ruan Cheng and his people.

There were all sorts of voices, but overall, the indisputable truth of breaking one's word generated mostly negative discussions of Tang Rou. Esports Home's Chang Xian tried to express a vague position, Cha Xiaoxia flew a clear banner in her support, and a few others expressed understanding of her actions, but in the end they couldn't gain the upper hand. In the end, even they had to admit that Tang Rou's behavior was improper in some areas. They could only express their understanding, but they couldn't describe her as completely faultless or justified.

Amidst the storm of criticism, real consequences quickly appeared. Various businesses who had taken an interest in Tang Rou all withdrew their intentions of making a deal. Even some sponsors who had already signed contracts with Happy expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with Tang Rou's speech, putting a heavy question mark on the potential of future cooperation. Happy... Because they were just entering the Alliance, not many sponsors would directly sign a long contract with them. The standard was a one-year contract, and then depending on their performance and results this year, they would make further plans. And now, this negative attention was not something that the sponsors liked.

And then, the Alliance paid attention to this storm as well, and with "improper words and actions" as their reason, they gave Happy and Tang Rou a fine. The Alliance was very sensitive about matters of image. After all, in the beginning, video games were called "electronic heroin." Even though public perception had greatly improved, the Alliance didn't dare let their guard down.

Even though all of this had been somewhat expected, the ferocity of it all surprised Chen Guo. Especially the fine from the Alliance, it was like adding oil to the fire, making the condemning voices grow even louder.

What a pain!

Chen Guo was in low spirits. But when she arrived at the training room, she saw Ye Xiu and Wei Chen sitting in front of a computer in serious discussion.

That's good, they haven't been affected by this. Chen Guo was glad, and her admiration of the mental strength of these old veterans increased. With their fearless attitude toward attacks, the spirits of the others will stabilize quickly. A team really needed this sort of guiding compass presence!

As she thought this, Chen Guo walked over toward them to listen to what they were discussing.

"Tsk tsk tsk, these dumbasses, do they not do any background research before writing this stuff?" Wei Chen was saying.

"That sort of info probably isn't publicly available! More importantly, they don't have that sort of imagination!" Ye Xiu lamented.

"Well, that's true... Hey this... This one's pretty harsh," said Wei Chen.

"That's what I call poison!" Ye Xiu said.

"They really don't know how to spell death!"

"Forget the small shrimp, but the bigger fish are definitely done for," Ye Xiu said.

"The first one to be taken care of will definitely be Ruan Cheng," Wei Chen said confidently.

"He's really doing this diligently," said Ye Xiu.

"He'll probably lose his job immediately?"

"Who knows!"

.

"Think he'll be directly killed?" Wei Chen said.

"That's probably an exaggeration!" said Ye Xiu. "We're talking about a proper businessman here."

"But this is his own daughter! For her to be attacked like this, even killing wouldn't be enough to resolve the hate."

"I think it'd probably just be..."

"Ahem!!!" Chen Guo loudly coughed, angrily interrupting this shameless discussion. And here she was thinking that they were discussing some serious topic, only to find that they were just dreaming about what kind of powerful retaliation Tang Rou's background could help her execute.

"Boss is here?" Wei Chen turned his head and casually greeted her before going back to cheerfully look at those articles and discussions about Tang Rou.

"I came to see what you two were busy with over here!" Chen Guo said.

"Oh, Little Tang's really being attacked! How do you think her old man will help teach these guys a lesson?" Wei Chen actually tried to drag Chen Guo into the discussion as well.

"Shame on you! Little Tang already said that she was taking this upon herself, when has she ever used her background to get something?" Chen Guo said.

"You can't put it like that. We all know Little Tang's domineering attitude, but this must be taking a toll on her dad's heart! He has to take care of a few of them as a warning, don't you think?" Wei Chen said, particularly confident.

With that, Chen Guo couldn't find any rebuttal. She could only believe that Tang Rou absolutely would not turn back and beg her family to save her, but like Wei Chen said, even if Tang Rou didn't need it, the Tang family might act anyway.

Just as she was hesitating, the door behind her opened and Tang Rou walked in, talking to someone on the phone.

"Yes, I'm fine, don't worry about me, just leave it!"

She hung up the phone, and the other three in the room looked at each other. This phone call sounded like it was from Tang Rou's family, and was probably about this situation. What was the Tang family going to do?

Looking at the three people who were in a daze, Tang Rou waved her phone. "My dad's also worried about this!"

"What'd the old man say?" Wei Chen asked, filled with respect. "Bankrupt Esports Time first?"

"The new edition of Esports Time hasn't even come out yet!" Ye Xiu said.

"Even if you can't chase the monk, you still have to tear down the monastery," said Wei Chen.

"What nonsense is this!" Chen Guo said.

Just as she said this, her cell phone rang. Chen Guo answered, still with a hint of anger in her voice. "Yes?!"

"Is this Boss Chen?" A male voice spoke on the other end.

"Yes, who's this?" Chen Guo checked the phone number on the screen, but it was an unknown number.

"This is Tang Shusen," the other person said.

"Hm?" Chen Guo quickly thought about this name, it seemed a bit familiar!

"I apologize for the trouble Tang Rou has caused you. My daughter's personality is just like that, very strong!" the caller said.

OH!

Chen Guo's heart skipped a beat. Only now did she react to who this was, and she immediately answered, "Mr. Tang, sir, please don't talk like that, we..."

"Ahhhh!" Tang Rou evidently figured out who the caller was from Chen Guo's words and attitude, and she rushed forward and snatched away Chen Guo's phone.

"Dad, what are you doing!" Tang Rou said loudly, her face revealing an extremely rare expression of embarrassment.

They couldn't hear what the caller said, but Tang Rou answered, flustered, "I know, I'll take care of it myself. You go to your meeting!"

"Yes, alright."

"How many times have I said it, my class is called Battle Mage, Battle Mage! Battle God is a title, it's referring to one especially powerful character in this class."

"Yes yes, the player controlling it is more important, you're right."

"Yes, he's in our team now."

"Yes, the unspecialized Lord Grim. You know a lot about this!"

"Talk about what! You guys don't speak the same language." Tang Rou shouted.

Ye Xiu and the other two looked at each other. Listening to that, it seemed that Tang Rou's father had researched Glory, and even wanted to talk for a bit with God Ye Xiu?

"Dad, please stop making such a fuss, if you can't beat Frost Forest then let Secretary Wang find you a guide."

Sweat! The three others wiped at their sweat. This level of skill was really a bit low.

"I can beat it!"

"I can't carry you! You're in the eleventh server. Even if my character returned to the normal server, I can only go to the tenth server, so we wouldn't be together."

"No no, don't come over, if I have time I'll make a character over there and find you, okay! We need to start practice, I'm hanging up now."

"Yes yes, see you!" Tang Rou finally hung up the phone. She let out a long breath, and then looked at the other three, embarrassment still showing on her face.

"Uh... He recently also got a Glory account, and he plays it sometimes in his spare time," Tang Rou explained helplessly.

"I could hear." Ye Xiu nodded.

"What's his account name? I can give Wu Chen a heads up, take care of him a bit?" Chen Guo tried to be serious.

"If he wants to be an experience baby, then just leave him to me!" Wei Chen said with all the air of someone trying to curry favor.

"Can we please just start practice?" Tang Rou was almost crying.

Chapter 1198: The Observation Period Ends

The discussion about Tang Rou continued to be omnipresent, but in the end there was no mysterious power that intervened and stopped all of it. Her father gave her true non-interfering support and freedom. Even when something like this happened, he didn't instantly stand up to protect her.

Tang Rou, facing all of this expected criticism, didn't defend herself. She didn't expect or hope for any understanding. She withdrew and just dove even further into Glory.

Compared to Tang Rou, Happy's current situation didn't look too good, either. The criticism the team received was secondary; more important was Happy's score on the points ranking after eight rounds.

There were 38 rounds in a season, eight rounds meant that over one-fifth had passed. Happy currently had 31 points, ranked at 14th place.

For a new team that just joined the Alliance, a score like this perhaps wasn't bad. Team Miracle, who had also just joined this season, only had 21 points and was ranked 18th. Last year's new team Heavenly Swords only had 25 points, two places behind Happy.

But Happy wouldn't be satisfied with this kind of point score or ranking because only they knew that their goal to win the championships in their first year absolutely was not just a shameless piece of trash talk.

If they wanted to win the championships, they first had to ensure they made it to the playoffs.

And right now, Happy had 31 points after 8 rounds, average 3.875 points per round.

"Let's look at last season's final point rankings." During Happy's team meeting, Ye Xiu analyzed the current situation in the League for everyone.

"Last season, in eighth place was Hundred Blossoms, with a final score of 190 points, averaging 5 points per round. But last season, because of the game update, many teams' scores went down. If we look at Season 8, Team 301 Degrees in eighth place had 214 points, averaging 5.63 per round. And then looking at our season now, after eight rounds, the seventh and eighth place Tyranny and Hundred Blossoms each have 47 points, which is an average 5.875 points per match. Compared to previous seasons, the situation in the Alliance this season appears to be harsher.

"If we use the current scores after 8 rounds as the standard, a match average of 5.875 means 223 points after 38 rounds. This could very well be the threshold for entering playoffs this season. Right now, we only have 31 points. Subtracting 31 from 223, in the next 30 rounds, we'll need an average of 6.41 points per round to reach that threshold.

"The situation is grim! 6.41 points isn't very easy to get. As soon as we lose a team competition, that means there's no way to get 6.41 points for that round. What then? That means we'll have to make it up

through other rounds. So, our goal for each round absolutely should not just be 6.41 points, we need 7, 8, or even more points, in order to guarantee that we raise our score.

"The end of eight rounds marks a line. From the statistics of previous seasons, we can see that in the beginning rounds of a season, most of the teams prioritize remaining cautious, observing each other, learning more about the situation, and testing each other. There aren't too many unexpected surprises in battle. But after around the eighth or tenth round, they're done sounding each other out, so the teams begin to individually target specific areas to work hard, and that's when the real chaotic fighting begins. The Rookie Block, powerhouse teams capsizing in the gutter, many players' conditions inexplicably decreasing, in reality, these aren't without cause. It's because after the early period of observation, all of the teams start putting real effort in. Whoever plays their moves better will have the last laugh. If competition only compared aces and God-level characters, then wouldn't the champions be decided as soon as the team rosters were revealed for the season?"

"Let's work hard, and welcome the chaotic fighting to come! We will be the ones laughing until the end!"

After the situation was analyzed and understood, they began discussing their battle plans for their opponent in the next round.

In the ninth round, Happy would be playing an away game against the other team that had debuted this year, Team Miracle.

The end of eight rounds meant that Miracle had already played eight matches. And in these matches, what kind of impression did they leave on their opponents? Ye Xiu began to take them apart in his analysis.

Glory Pro Alliance Season 10 Round 9 was on the evening of November 1st, and this day was also the release date of the new edition of the bimonthly Esports Time. Esports Time's position and opinions were expressed much more clearly than Esports Home's were. It was relying on this kind of style that they managed to claim their spot of territory in the area of esports media reporting. And Ruan Cheng, as a head writer for Esports Time, took thorough advantage of the resources at his disposal. The big topic for this edition of Esports Time was exposing Tang Rou's conduct.

Ruan Cheng named this incident the biggest scandal in Glory history and described it in all sorts of flamboyant, unrestrained language. Many of her performances in the eight rounds to date were carved as proof that she was human scum.

An angelic appearance, a dirty heart...

Ruan Cheng's words were extreme. After Chen Guo received this edition, she swiftly destroyed it. It brought down spirits too much, and besides, they still had a match tonight. And although Ruan Cheng thoroughly attacked Tang Rou, he didn't discover her family situation, which almost made Chen Guo anticipate the Tang family standing up and giving Ruan Cheng a scare. This guy was just too despicable.

That night, the match was held at Team Miracle's home stadium in City M. This team that purchased its players for only 5000 yuan didn't appear to be a particularly wealthy team. Like Happy's, they rented their home stadium. City M wasn't home to any other Glory teams, so this stadium naturally didn't originally have the specialized holographic Glory projection technology. However, the amount of

resources a team possessed was an important criterion considered by the Alliance when approving a new team to join. Teams that applied didn't get the same financial support from the Alliance that teams like Happy that won the Challenger League did. But Miracle was able to successfully pass the checks and enter the Alliance, which then led people to believe that this team wasn't particularly short on money.

The projection technology in Miracle's home stadium was impressive. At this time, before the match began, the host was accompanying the projection to introduce the players and characters of two teams.

After eight rounds, many teams found a strong sense of déjà vu in Miracle's roster: Excellent Era!

Of course, this wasn't just because they had three players from Excellent Era, but also because of the class composition of this team.

Aside from the Elementalist, the Striker, and the Sharpshooter, who were the former Excellent Era players, the first-string players of this team were a Battle Mage, a Launcher, a Spellblade, and a Cleric.

This was entirely the same as the roster of the old Excellent Era. What was different was that old Excellent Era had Battle Mage, Launcher, and Spellblade as their core, while the current Miracle had these three classes as the orbiting moons, and the transferred players from Excellent Era, He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze became the central axes.

Among them, He Ming became Miracle's captain. This former sixth player in Excellent Era probably never would have thought that he'd have the chance to lead a team himself. But Team Miracle? To be honest, leading a team like this, He Ming didn't feel particularly well-off. Meeting Shen Jian and Wang Ze here was a sort of consolation, a reassurance that at least he wasn't the only person to be met with such misfortune.

At Excellent Era, these three had just been teammates, but after they all fell and landed here, their relationship became much closer. These three would group together to wallow in their misfortune together, sometimes talking about the good old days they spent in the powerhouse that was Excellent Era. As of now, their other former teammates had all scattered. These three admired Liu Hao and Guo Yang, who had managed to enter Wind Howl and now had a certain position in that team. Especially Liu Hao, who had now become part of their main roster, and had performed quite well in the past eight rounds. Wind Howl, who had managed to obtain him through a free transfer, all felt that they got a great deal from this.

Aside from this, the Cleric player Zhang Jiaying had gone with Xiao Shiqin to Thunderclap and was also doing very well there. This season, Thunderclap was playing more and more smoothly. They were actually ranked second on the current leaderboard with 61 points, losing only to Samsara and were earning lots of attention.

As for Sun Xiang, that genius-level being, He Ming and the others didn't bother to envy his fortune at Team Samsara. Looking around, it seems that the three of them had drawn the shortest straw.

The three were all depressed about landing in Miracle, but they didn't dare neglect this team. In this weak team, if they were careless and became relegated, then their futures would become even more awkward and uncertain. And so, these three players worked quite hard in Miracle. Right now, they were in 18th place with 21 points, with a solid lead above Bright Green and Seaside. They even beat Void in an away game 7 to 3, one of the rare upsets in the first eight rounds.

And this round, their opponent, Happy...

He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze had complicated mixed feelings toward Happy. Things were a bit simpler for He Ming, as he had already left Excellent Era during the season that the team was relegated, and he hadn't experienced the sweeping pain when Excellent Era fell to Happy in the Challenger League. Looking at Happy, the only complicated feelings were toward his former captain Ye Xiu and former teammate Su Mucheng. As for Shen Jian and Wang Ze, who had experienced the Challenger League, Happy could be said to be the chief culprit of their current miserable situation. If there had been no Happy, then perhaps Excellent Era would currently be a big player, lifting high its three All-Stars and shining brightly in the playoff tier.

"We cannot lose this match!" October 27th, during a small meeting between the three of them five days before their match, Shen Jian declared.

But He Ming and Wang Ze didn't say anything. That person in Happy's roster was a shadow upon them.

"That... won't be too easy..." Wang Ze hesitated for a moment, but said it. In the current leaderboard, Happy had a lead of ten points above them. Pro players wouldn't feel that a match outcome was decided because of a point difference. For Wang Ze, the scary thing was still that person. In front of that person, he felt that he had no way of relaxing his hands and feet, that any of his movements would be thoroughly scrutinized and seen through.

"Right now, they're bruised and battered. It's a perfect chance for us to earn points," Shen Jian said.

He Ming and Wang Ze froze, and then suddenly understood.

That's right! That Tang Rou in Happy had really stirred up a lot of trouble this time. If she'd been in the old Excellent Era, she probably would have already been kicked out, and even if not, she'd be buried and hidden. Happy was currently in a rough time, and these waves wouldn't calm down again so quickly. November 1st was the ninth round and also the release date of the new edition of Esports Time. There would definitely be articles about this.

Let them see the articles during the day, then battle them at night. This rhythm was quite excellent!

Chapter 1199: Team Miracle's Sacrificial Pawn

Team Miracle's home stadium.

After the two teams were introduced, the players on both sides entered the venue and met in the center of the stage, shaking each other's hands and greeting each other warmly. It looked as if their relationship was friendly and joyous.

He Ming was Team Miracle's captain. He gave a most amicable greeting towards his former captain Ye Xiu, particularly showing his concern for the recent 1v3 controversy.

"That guy Ruan Cheng is too outrageous!" He Ming said indignantly. "He's talking nonsense again in today's issue of the Esports Time. He really is unbearable. Did you guys see it? If you guys haven't, I have one here. It's truly infuriating."

He Ming held a copy of today's issue of the Esports Time and promptly took it out with who knew what motives. He directly opened the conversation with an article about Happy, asking in a concerned manner about Ye Xiu and the rest of Happy's opinions.

Ye Xiu didn't brush away his good intentions. Even though he had already seen the article, he still took it.

"Is one copy good enough? I've got more, if you guys need more!" He Ming said. The members of Team Miracle seemed to have all conjured up a copy in their hands.

"Team Miracle really likes to read! What a good practice," Ye Xiu said.

"You're too kind," He Ming said modestly.

"Just one copy is enough. You guys can keep the rest!" Ye Xiu smiled.

"Hey! There's no need to be polite between us! Take them take them." He Ming signaled Team Miracle's players to hand over their copies of the Esports Time to everyone in Happy. After handing the copies over, they didn't give Happy an opportunity to refuse. He Ming led Team Miracle down from the stage, while waving towards Ye Xiu. "See you in the match."

"See you in the match..." Ye Xiu waved his hand and then led Team Happy back to their seats.

On Miracle's side, the group was stealthily glancing towards Happy's side.

"They're reading it! They're reading it!" someone yelled out excitedly. Quite a few people from Happy were taking a look at the Esports Time paper that they had shoved into their hands.

"Hehe..." He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze looked at each other and chuckled as if they had won.

The official match soon started. The first competition would be the individual competition. The players to be sent out by the two teams appeared on the large screens in the stadium.

Happy would be sending out Wei Chen, Warlock Windward Formation.

The three bros in Team Miracle whispering in each other's ears suddenly froze. Hadn't Ye Xiu always gone up first? Why'd they change it up today? Their Team Miracle had sent up their Spellblade Xiang Yuanwei. Of their six players in the individual rounds, he was their weakest. Team Miracle's plan had been employing the principle of Tian Ji's Horse Race, throwing their weakest to face Ye Xiu. How could they have known the other side would suddenly switch up the order?

Wei Chen?

This player could be considered an elderly person in the competitive scene. He had appeared an extremely limited number of times this season. Why was he sent out against their Team Miracle? Was this contempt?

He Ming and his two bros were furious. After all, they had once been part of a powerhouse. Even though they had fallen, they weren't about to let others stomp on them as they pleased.

"Yuanwei!" He Ming called out to Yuanwei, "Play fast! Fight fiercely!"

"Okay," Xiang Yuanwei nodded his head. He had originally been their throwaway piece. As the time drew near, he stepped onto the stage.

He Ming and the others had been planning on giving up this fight, so they hadn't put a lot of thought into it. They just listened to whatever Xiang Yuanwei wanted for a map and didn't object to it.

The map was Sky Garden.

The terrain wasn't complicated, but it was an exceptionally beautiful map. Spellblades had a lot of flashy moves, so they would sometimes reap surprising results from this map. Xiang Yuanwei didn't seem to have given up despite being a throwaway piece. He still put in quite some thought into choosing a map.

The match began. The two characters moved towards the center from their starting corners.

Xiang Yuanwei listened to his captain's advice. He didn't play any fancy tricks and quickly went forward to take the initiative. As for Wei Chen, he pretended to charge forward wildly for a short distance, then amidst the crowd's boos, he shamelessly hid inside a thicket of flowers. But it seemed that he still felt like it wasn't enough cover, so he had his character lie flat on his stomach. The large screen cut to Windward Formation's viewpoint. He was carefully looking around from the cracks between the flowers like an evil ghost.

The boos from the crowd intensified.

Team Miracle wasn't very popular, but they still had fans. In these moments, they obviously had to give their support to the home team. Wei Chen's despicable ambush was immediately condemned by them. Everyone hated how the referee didn't just directly red card the guy away for such dirtiness. Happy had previous history for this! The crowd impatiently hoped to see this scene again.

Happy had a previous offense before, so the referee really was paying close attention to them, his demands more strict. The referee saw Wei Chen setting up an ambush and subconsciously started checking the time.

Xiang Yuanwei's Spellblade rushed forward, but the thicket of flowers chosen by Wei Chen was too thick. Xiang Yuanwei rotated his Spellblade Halis's viewpoint left and right, passing over Windward Formation's hiding spot several times, but he failed to notice him. The crowd was feeling even more anxious than the player.

1v1 maps weren't very big. Sky Garden didn't have complicated terrain. Since he couldn't find his target, he had Halis raise his sword in the air.

Fire Wave Sword!

A wave of raging flames rolled forth, leaving scorch marks everywhere in its path. The frail flowers and grass were instantly burned by the Fire Wave Sword and turned into ash.

After this sword came another.

Earthquake Sword!

The magic waves from the sword intent raised up the earth, uprooting the grass and flowers, lifting them up and then pressing down. Even though it wasn't as clean as Fire Wave Sword, it would still be obvious if anyone was hiding there.

But Windward Formation was still nowhere to be found.

Halis turned around and pointed the tip of his sword in a different direction.

Xiang Yuanwei wasn't throwing around his skills randomly. His wave swords always aimed at areas lush with flowers and grass, letting him cover a wide range of possible hiding locations. Just from these two wave swords, it could be seen that this player was quite familiar with this map.

The third wave sword was aimed directly at Windward Formation's hiding spot.

Ice Wave Formation!

A wave of ice surged forth, freezing any plant it touched. The next wave of ice shattered these frozen plants, sprinkling ice crystals onto the ground.

Windward Formation still isn't going to move?

Everyone looked towards Wei Chen's Warlock. Sure enough, this time, he could not sit at ease any longer. Windward Formation scrambled to dodge, rolling backwards in an extremely ugly manner.

Ice Wave Sword had a limited range. With this backwards roll, he was able to escape from the wave sword's range while also staying hidden.

Too crafty!

Everyone thought to themselves. However, Xiang Yuanwei wasn't just using these wave swords to scout out the area. Whenever he released a wave sword, his viewpoint spun quickly, observing the movements of the grass and wind at every location. The moment his Ice Wave Sword came out, Xiang Yuanwei noticed a rustle from the flower thicket at the end of the ice wave.

Xiang Yuanwei was the weakest in Team Miracle. In the past eight rounds, he had only appeared once in the team competition. However, just because he was weak didn't mean he didn't work hard. Even if he was just a sacrificial pawn, he would still try his best, choosing his best map. It didn't matter who his opponent was. He would strive to win.

Seeing a rustle from the thicket of flowers, Xiang Yuanwei didn't wait for Ice Wave Sword to finish and immediately moved towards in that direction.

Electric Wave Formation!

After Windward Formation rolled out of the way of Ice Wave Sword, he just happened to be within the formation's range. The ball of electricity shot out lightning, automatically chasing after Windward Formation, who was still hiding in a bush. The lightning shot through his body, the flash sweeping away the surrounding flowers. Windward Formation, who had been lying in ambush, was completely revealed. He cut a sorry figure, pressed onto the ground by the lightning. The crowd instantly erupted into cheers and laughter.

Too awesome!

Seeing someone so shameless in such a sorry state was too satisfying!

The crowd's emotions reached a high point, but Xiang Yuanwei wasn't happy just because of this. He wanted to win, and it was still too early to tell. It was just an Electric Wave Formation, not a serious blow.

What was important was that he had finally located his opponent's position. Xiang Yuanwei had Halis rush forward, brandishing the shortsword in his hand.

Storm Wave Sword!

This wave sword was the fastest among all wave swords. A powerful whirlwind roared out from Halis's sword, ripping apart any plants in its path. By the time these shredded plants drifted down, who knew how far away the Storm Wave Sword's sword intent would be at.

Trapped by the Electric Wave Formation, Windward Formation was unable to dodge this extremely fast attack. The Storm Wave Sword didn't seem to be striking him; it just looked as if it flitted by him like the wind. But immediately afterwards, numerous thin arrows of blood shot out from Windward Formation's body.

After these two skills, Halis was finally in position. Spellblades kiting around the target at the farthest range possible wasn't a good choice because the speed of wave swords wasn't very fast. If they were too far away, the opponent could easily dodge it. Thus, compared to their skill's attack range, Spellblades needed to fight at a slightly closer range. As for exactly how much closer, that depended on the player's hand speed and fighting style.

Xiang Yuanwei's most comfortable and favorite distance was at two-thirds of his wave swords' range. At this moment, his Halis had finally reached this position.

Earthquake Sword!

This low-level skill had a short cooldown, allowing him to use it once again. At a distance of two-thirds, dodging this attack would require faster reaction speed and hand speed, and these just happened to be what old generals lacked.

"He's playing well!!!" Down from the stage, Team Miracle's unfortunate three were grouped together in a very good mood. Even though Xiang Yuanwei was their sacrificial pawn, it didn't mean they had no hopes for him. Seeing that he was playing well, these three saw this lower skilled player in a new light.

"Sending such an old guy onto the stage, what is Ye Xiu thinking!" Shen Jian sighed.

"Probably to stabilize the situation? Old generals are better at dealing with pressure, after all!" He Ming had been thinking about the meaning behind Wei Chen being sent out the entire time.

"But in the end, he's going to lose?" Shen Jian laughed.

"Our Team Miracle isn't that easy to bully!" He Ming was quite excited. When things were going well, he was very willing to be in character, viewing himself as a glorious member of Team Miracle.

But at this moment, the situation suddenly changed.

Xiang Yuanwei had just gotten into his favorite distance and was about to have Halis continue his onslaught, when he was suddenly engulfed by a plume of purple fire.

Warlock skill: Shadow Flames!

Chapter 1200: Death's Door Opens Wide

Shadow Flames dealt primarily dark element damage, with supporting fire element damage. However, no one would focus on the damage for Warlock skills. The control skills, and status effects inflicted by Warlocks were the most uncomfortable to deal with.

Shadow Flames was no different. Apart from the first wave of health this skill seared off, it would inflict a six second long Flames effect, a damaging status that did damage every two seconds. This status damage also interrupted chants. The Wave Swords of Spellblades were instant, but Wave Formations were chanted. With Shadow Flames, a Spellblade's rhythm would be heavily disrupted.

But when was this Shadow Flame unleashed?

Everyone was so focused on Halis' Wave Swords and Wave Formations that no one ever noticed.

Xiang Yuanwei was also shocked, suddenly afraid of being too reckless. But if he didn't charge, Wei Chen wouldn't let this chance go. An explosion of Curse Arrows shot out from the flower bush, clearly having been charged for a long time.

Shadow Flame didn't affect the character's movement, so Xiang Yuanwei hurriedly had Halis dodge, hoping to throw his own attack back as he did, but that was when he realized that, out of all the instant cast Wave Swords, only Waltzing Wave Sword was available.

Waltzing Wave Sword, as the name implied, didn't strike in a straight line. In a team competition, it could often create unexpected effects, but right now it was a 1v1 fight with just a single target. No matter what arc the attack made, the destination was the same. Apart from being able to use it to ambush others in specific situations, Waltzing Wave Sword would just be giving the opponent ample time to dodge when fighting face to face.

However, apart from this Sword, the other Wave Sword skills were all in cooldown.

Xiang Yuanwei immediately realized that he had most likely fell into a rather terrifying trap. His Wave Sword skills were almost all on cooldown, and his Wave Formations were under restriction from Shadow Flames. These six seconds were purposefully created by his opponent, so how could the other let him go so easily?

Even as he struggled with himself for this split second, Waltzing Wave Sword was still sent out. With the attack, flowers and grass flew everywhere, and it left a clear arc across the ground. If you couldn't dodge that, then you really didn't have any right to stand on this stage. Xiang Yuanwei really had no choice. He didn't have the time to adjust himself, so he could only strike back like that to give his opponent a little pressure, even if it was miniscule.

And then, retreat...

Xiang Yuanwei hurriedly had Halis back away, wanting to get some distance. He knew that danger could come from anywhere around him. His opponent didn't just hide his character, but used such a simple action to lure him into action and strategically beat him down.

Sly old fox!

Xiang Yuanwei commented on Wei Chen as he had his character escape. Speaking of which, he had thought that his opponent would be Ye Xiu and his head was filled with the strange ever-changing style of the Unspecialized! Yet he had ended up meeting a Warlock, and an endlessly shameless Warlock, too.

Halis was continuously moving backwards and Xiang Yuanwei didn't dare have his character turn. He still had to keep an eye on what this shameless Warlock would do to try and disrupt him. Yet, what was most surprising, was that the other didn't do anything. The flora was completely silent, as if Windward Formation had suddenly disappeared.

What was this about?

After jumping back twice again, Xiang Yuanwei had Halis stop his retreat, confused.

The audience wanted to cry.

Xiang Yuanwei couldn't see what Windward Formation was doing in the bushes, but they could! Windward Formation, this shameless Warlock, was currently flat on the ground, charging up a spell. Players familiar with the Warlock class immediately recognized the endlessly gathering energy. Death's Door, this was the Warlock's level 70 ultimate, Death's Door!

Using the cover from the terrain as well as a psychological understanding of his opponent, Wei Chen fearlessly and directly started chanting a time and mana consuming skill, Death's Door.

"Attack already!!!"

Many members of the audience were already shouting desperately, even the members of Miracle, Xiang Yuanwei's teammates, had stood up, fists clenched.

However, Xiang Yuanwei had his Halis carefully, cautiously observe his surroundings as he inched forwards towards the bushes Windward Formation was hiding in, sword raised.

Caution was good, but caution at a time like this just made the audience so desperate they wanted to curse.

It was only until the bushes Windward Formation was hiding in were no longer sufficient to cover up the miasma gathering at the tip of Death's Hand that Xiang Yuanwei realized something was wrong. If he still didn't know what this was by then, then he couldn't be called a pro player at all.

Run?

Too late!

Death's Door had a very wide area of effect, in addition, Windward Formation was a Warlock with a terrifying attack range. This Death's Door wouldn't give him any chance to run.

He'd have to go for it!

Xiang Yuanwei was quick at coming to a decision. If he couldn't run, then he would advance and find a way to interrupt the skill. Death's Door was a skill that had to be maintained even after being activated. They could be interrupted any time from when they began chanting to the end of the skill.

GO!!!

The audience roared as one. They all felt that at this distance, with the Spellblade's attack range, there really wasn't anything to be afraid of.

Xiang Yuanwei thought the same.

Halis charged forwards, magic pulsing around his blade.

Attack!

The short sword swung out!

Boom!

A thunderous noise that seemed to pierce dimensions boomed.

A black, spinning door that led to another world rotated slowly, set up directly in front of Halis.

Holy crap!!

Countless audience members fell out of their seats.

This Death's Door was actually placed between the two.

This way, if Xiang Yuanwei had realized what was happening and turned to run like a noob, then he might really be able to run out of Death's Door's range.

However, he was a pro player, and his experience told him that running was impossible, so he tried to close in to interrupt and ran directly into the door of death.

The Death's Door was probably delighted and surprised. It probably never had such easy prey before in its life. Its miasma tentacles barely stretched out of the door and were already at Halis' shoulders.

Xiang Yuanwei didn't even have the time to attempt a dodge before he was caught by the tentacles of miasma. Then, he was easily pulled into the door.

Death's Door came quickly and left quickly, too. In a 1v1, Death's Door was primarily focused on damage. As for its control abilities, Warlocks had to continuously maintain Death's Door so even if they trapped their target, they couldn't send out other attacks.

However, Death's Door's attack, coming from another, demonic dimension, wasn't anything easy to deal with. Apart from the damage, the target would be thrown about and disoriented.

Chaotic Rain, Hexagram Prison, Grasping Phantoms...

Wei Chen very calmly, with a not all that fast hand speed, sent out the skills he had long since prepared one by one.

Halis was inflicted with countless negative status effects. He was sometimes confused, sometimes bound, sometimes controlled, sometimes imprisoned...

Wei Chen had a very good rhythm to his attacks. If a veteran like him couldn't even control his own rhythm, then there was no point in him continuing to fight on the pro scene. No matter how experienced, he wouldn't be able to utilize it.

Xiang Yuanwei refused to give up, but his struggles never managed to turn the tides. Halis still fell in the end.

Wei Chen won and Xiang Yuanwei left the stage, depressed.

His heart was filled with what ifs. If he did this... if he only did that...

However, there were no ifs in competition. These ifs could all be turned into experience and help the player grow.

Wei Chen was naturally delighted when he came back. He took the boos from the audience as cheers, walking as if he was ten years younger.

"What other result could you expect with me at the helm?" After returning to the bench, he accepted everyone's praises and complemented himself without any semblance of modesty.

"Amazing!" Ye Xiu didn't even send him one word of mockery.

"What's up today? How come you're being so nice to each other?" Chen Guo was surprised. It was downright unnatural that Ye Xiu and Wei Chen didn't mock each other.

"Hahaha..." Ye Xiu chuckled, but didn't explain.

Hearing these praises, Wei Chen took his fill of boasting and, when he had enough, he shook his head. "I'm going to go to the bathroom."

"Hm?"

Gazing at his retreating form, everyone was stunned. Something like that was something everyone should've dealt with before the match! Only one individual battle had gone by, it hadn't been long.

"He... didn't win as easily as it might seem," Ye Xiu suddenly said.

"Ah?" Chen Guo was confused.

"He didn't say a single taunt for the entire match," Ye Xiu sighed.

Chen Guo continued to be stunned. Gazing at Wei Chen's retreating figure, Chen Guo felt as though she saw a well-hidden exhaustion in his form, despite the arrogance he had come off stage with.

As for over here...

"I'm going up, then!" Su Mucheng stood. She was the second player to go up on Happy's side.

"Good luck," everyone said.

"It's Su Mucheng." Over at Miracle, the unlucky three looked to their former teammate's name, flashing across the screen, and then saw Su Mucheng walk towards the stage.

"Leave it to me." Wang Ze seemed very confident. He had been arranged in the individual competition and had hoped to be set against Su Mucheng.

"Good luck, the time to prove yourself has come!" He Ming said to Wang Ze.

When Wang Ze was in Excellent Era, he couldn't count as a core player. Pros in his position all had the desire to prove themselves.

However, Excellent Era was no longer here, and he didn't have to fight for his position in the team anymore. Instead, he had to prove himself to the entire pro circle. The All-Star level ex-teammate of his, Su Mucheng, was the best opponent he could ask for.

It was because this sort of clash gave people something to talk about and was very eye-catching.

"I have an ace up my sleeve!" Wang Ze went up, full of confidence.