

Avatar 1241

Chapter 1241: Keep Working Hard

The last time Thunderclap had failed in the team competition was during their away game against Royal Style in Round 9. After that, they went on a beautiful six round win streak, but in Round 16 their golden statue cracked again. And this time, their opponent was none other than the team Xiao Shiqin had already lost to last year in the finals of the Challenger League, Team Happy.

In that match, Happy had used lots of unusually exciting tactics against Excellent Era. In the Glory world, it was generally agreed that as Master Tacticians, Ye Xiu was still a bit more shrewd and ruthless. But after losing that battle, it seemed as though Xiao Shiqin had gained something. He returned to Thunderclap, which hadn't changed aside from the addition of the Cleric Zhang Jiaxing from Excellent Era, and he had obtained startling results for his team.

It was impossible for Xiao Shiqin not to be at least a little pleased. Such outstanding results would naturally bring high spirits. Xiao Shiqin now had more self-confidence than before. But this time, he once again fell before the opponents who had just recently defeated him.

When he shook hands with Ye Xiu after the match, Xiao Shiqin's emotions were complicated, and he was certainly a little frustrated. He felt that his year at Excellent Era hadn't been a waste, for in those depths, he had learned a lot and grown a lot. But after growing and improving, he found that he still had no way of defeating this person before him. No one could find happiness in such a situation.

"Keep working hard next time!" Ye Xiu patted his shoulder, as though encouraging some rookie.

Xiao Shiqin smiled bitterly. Of course, he was no rookie, he was someone with prestige and reputation in this circle. But this person in front of him had more qualifications than him, had more honors, and had defeated him twice in a row. When Ye Xiu said something like that, how could Xiao Shiqin respond?

He could only smile bitterly like this and watch as the other walked aside. And then, another hand shook his, and patted his shoulder, and said, "Keep working hard next time."

Xiao Shiqin didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This Su Mucheng hadn't been like this during their time at Excellent Era together! After being with Ye Xiu, she had really changed a lot, hadn't she?

She hadn't even waited for him to say anything before vanishing, and another person shook Xiao Shiqin's hand, and patted his shoulder, and said, "Keep working hard!"

Fang Rui! By year, Xiao Shiqin was actually the senior of this kid, yet even he was going along with this act! Xiao Shiqin glared at Fang Rui, but Fang Rui cleanly ignored him and was all puffed up as he walked away.

"Kid, you gotta keep working hard!" After that, a more boastful voice reached his ear with this encouragement. This person skipped the handshake entirely and directly went to pat him on the shoulder.

"We're not like those little Blue Rain brats," the person said.

Little Blue Rain brats... Blue Rain did have a little brat, but Xiao Shiqin knew, in front of this person, "little Blue Rain brat" referred to more than just Lu Hanwen. Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, two major players in the Alliance, were really just little brats in this person's eyes.

Blue Rain's former captain, Wei Chen. The person with the most status to call the Blue Rain players little brats. Xiao Shiqin could say nothing to him.

After enduring four consecutive encouragements, this blatant ridicule, Xiao Shiqin really couldn't stand it much longer.

Was there more?

Xiao Shiqin adjusted his glasses and prepared to unleash some killer intent, but the youth who walked in front of him now was very respectful in tone.

"Thank you Senior for your teachings."

"Ah?" This sudden change of style caught him completely off guard. This person in front of him now was Happy's sixth player for this match, Qiao Yifan.

"You're welcome..." Facing this kind of respect, there was no way Xiao Shiqin could insert any mockery in his response.

The last one, An Wenyi, the weak point in Xiao Shiqin's eyes. This match, Thunderclap's strategies almost entirely targeted him. He must have a lot of resentment right now, no? As Xiao Shiqin thought this, he was already bracing himself. This was just a rookie, he couldn't lose in dignity.

But when An Wenyi came up to him, the rookie just extended his hand very ordinarily, shook hands, and nodded his head in acknowledgement. Without revealing any unusual expressions, An Wenyi departed.

The players of both teams finished their polite greetings just like that, and Happy's players gathered together and left, basking in victory. Xiao Shiqin was left onstage. He stared at the hand he had just used for the handshakes, and in the end he used it to pat his own shoulder. "You still need to work even harder, Xiao Shiqin!" he told himself.

During the post-match press conference, seeing those eager expressions of the reporters overflowing the space, Xiao Shiqin knew that this upcoming battle today wouldn't be a good one.

During this season so far, they had received too much phrase. But he should still be able to deal with an awkward situation like this!

He had to work hard! Xiao Shiqin lifted his chin, sat straight in his chair, and welcomed the media's interrogation.

The results of Round 16 of Season 10 continued to release, and those who liked statistics quickly found a pattern. In Round 9, the round where Thunderclap lost the team competition, there were five 10-0 swept matches. And this time, in Round 16, when Thunderclap once again lost the team competition, four 10-0 sweeps appeared this round.

Was Thunderclap's performance in the team round a weather vane for powerful 10-0 showings? The bored gave this title to Thunderclap's team competitions.

Looking at the four 10-0's, they were earned by Samsara, Tyranny, Blue Rain, and Wind Howl. Among them, Blue Rain and Wind Howl's performances had been lagging recently, but their 10-0 scores this round were a clean answer to those voices of doubt. And Samsara, after after achieving this 10-0, finally took the lead over Happy in terms of 10-0 match count. Right now, they had six 10-0 matches, one more than Happy.

Aside from them, Hundred Blossoms, Void, Misty Rain, Tiny Herb, and Miracle all achieved victory. This round had been a huge victory for the home teams - among all ten matches, it had been the home team who had won, and the victories were very close to what was predicted by comparing the teams' strengths on paper. There had been no surprises or unexpected outcomes, if one didn't count Happy's victory over Thunderclap as a surprise.

With this, Happy's ranking increased by one on the leaderboard. With 107 points, they were now in fifth place. And the team they had defeated, Thunderclap, was the only team among the current top ten that had lost during this round. Because the other teams had all gathered a sizable number of points this round, Thunderclap instantly slid down two places, from fourth to sixth, with 105 points. And the team that now rose to fourth was a team that had swept 10-0 this round, Blue Rain. Tyranny and Tiny Herb had the same number of points this round, but Tyranny had defeated Tiny Herb in their match, so Tyranny was second, and Tiny Herb third.

Even as the debate continued over whether or not Tyranny was still strong enough, the team had actually quietly climbed up to second place. Samsara was truly too strong this season, leading by such a large margin that people overlooked their presence. The conflict that people paid attention to was that between all of the teams aside from Samsara. People still held the impression that Tyranny was stumbling had nothing of the dominating strength they had shown last season, but just as the season was about to reach the halfway point, they had returned to their place second only to Samsara?

How in the world had Tyranny chased them up here? Even as everyone was still worrying over whether or not they could even secure a playoff spot, now they were actually second place on the leaderboard?

What was Tyranny's performance?

Everyone discovered that their minds were empty. Their impressions of Tyranny had apparently stopped at when they had begun their rotations. After that period of stumbling performances, they had begun to steadily obtain points. Had anyone noticed? Without drawing attention, they had already quietly risen to second place. This sort of cool and calm performance sent chills down everyone's spines. These old generals in Tyranny still couldn't be overlooked!

Although the rankings among the top 8 had changed, it was still the same eight teams. Wind Howl and Hundred Blossoms were sitting steadily at seventh and eighth place, respectively. Void was chasing them ferociously, but they were still five points behind the eighth place Hundred Blossoms. Below them were Misty Rain and 301, with 82 and 81 points. The gap between them and the playoff zone was in the double digits.

Behind the top 10, among the teams in the lower half, the team that surprised everyone was Miracle. After sixteen rounds of play, this team was at 13th place. For a team that had just joined the Alliance, such a performance was extremely outstanding. As of now, they were even higher up than Heavenly Justice, who had garnered such high hopes last season. Everyone praised Miracle, but it seemed like

they had forgotten, the other new team this season was solidly in the playoff zone! But no one thought of Happy as some new team. They had Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, these All-Star level players with whom everyone was familiar. No one could continue to view them as some new team.

After this round, the end of the year was upon them. The Christmas event, the New Year event, and the first weekend of the new year, the All-Star Weekend, they were all rapidly approaching. The in-game event during summer break had been officially named Carnival, but for those in the Glory circle, whether pro or ordinary player, these two weeks crossing the end of the year made up the true valuable carnival.

Every year, the Christmas event that rewarded wonderful presents took place in-game. Ye Xiu had participated in this event for two consecutive years, with great profits. But this year wasn't like previous years. Christmas Day was a Wednesday, and on Friday they still had a professional match to play. The in-game event mainly had to be left to Wu Chen, leading the guild to participate. If pro players were interested, there was nothing stopping them from helping out, but if they spent too much energy there, it could ruin their condition for their match.

Competitive condition, this wasn't just something that existed in the competitive Glory scene. Any sort of competitor for any event had to maintain their condition for competition.

Generally, one's competitive condition would vary cyclically through the weeks. For any sort of event, competitors relied on practice to adjust and maintain their condition. With different events and different competitors, the changes in condition might be different. Some people might only reach their peak condition once a year, and others might reach it two or three times. This required specialized team scientific systems to help every person achieve some control. For Glory, the teams that were aiming for the championship needed their players to reach their full explosive potential during the playoffs.

Ye Xiu was the Glory Textbook, true, but that referred to his knowledge of the techniques of the various classes and the strategies within the game. As for competitive condition, which depended on an individual's skill, personality, skill, and even psychological strength, he truly had no solid grasp of it.

Happy didn't have anyone with such specialized knowledge; the Glory circle as a whole lacked such talents. After all, the Glory Alliance was a competition only ten years old, and everyone was still studying and researching how to best adjust the conditions of the Glory players.

For now, Happy had no way of having such a high-level department, and could only rely on Ye Xiu's intuition from years of accumulated experience to make judgments. And Happy's recent strong performance was unexpected even for him. They... had they entered their peak condition too quickly, too early?

Chapter 1242: Christmas Presents

Eight consecutive wins, plus it was almost Christmas. From top to bottom, Happy was filled with a joyous atmosphere. Ye Xiu didn't want to ruin the spirit. At least wait until after the holiday passed to remind everyone to stay cautious and focused!

That little clumsily handmade Christmas tree was brought out by Chen Guo again. But this time, she didn't set it up in the main area of the Internet cafe for some activity. Instead, she carried it to the practice room of Happy Internet Cafe, and after setting it in a corner she carefully began to decorate it.

Seeing this Christmas tree, Ye Xiu couldn't help but pause. This was now his third time seeing this Christmas tree, and it was now two years since the first time he had seen it. At that time, it had been less than a month since he left Excellent Era. In the blink of an eye, two years had passed, and he had actually established a professional team in this Internet cafe, slaughtered his way back into the Alliance, all the way to fifth place on the leaderboard...

Looking back, even Ye Xiu himself couldn't believe that all of this had happened. They had actually managed to do something like this, and they'd done a pretty good job of it, too.

"What are you spacing out for, come here and help!" Chen Guo's shout interrupted Ye Xiu's thoughts.

Chen Guo was currently hanging presents on the tree. These were all presents that she had prepared for everyone at Happy, each one carefully wrapped so that from the outside, you couldn't tell what they were at all.

"Which one is mine?" Ye Xiu casually asked as he helped her hang them on the tree.

"I don't know. When it's time, everyone will pick one for themselves, and whichever one they pick will be theirs. That way it'll be interesting," Chen Guo said.

"Then what about yourself?" Ye Xiu asked.

"There's one for me too, of course," said Chen Guo.

"You got yourself a present? What's the meaning in that?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"What do you mean I got myself a present! This is a present from Happy to Happy's every member. Am I not a member of Happy?" Chen Guo asked, filled with righteousness.

"Of course." Ye Xiu hurriedly nodded.

"Very good, then we'll just leave it like this!" Chen Guo hung the last present on the tree, studied it critically for a while, and after confirming that nothing was wrong, she nodded her head in satisfaction.

"Aside from picking presents, are we doing anything else interesting?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Isn't casually playing some Glory the most interesting thing for you guys anyway?" Chen Guo said.

Ye Xiu froze, and then laughed bitterly. "I don't object to playing some other things occasionally."

"Oh?" Chen Guo thought for a bit. "Go online and play Astrogeddon?" Astrogeddon was currently the most popular RTS game at the moment.

"It looks like you can't think of anything besides playing games, either," Ye Xiu said.

"Yes, I can't either." Chen Guo put special emphasis on the "either." She didn't think that Ye Xiu would have any good suggestions himself; after all, this wasn't the first holiday they had spent together.

"Let's wait for everyone to show up!" Ye Xiu sat down on the couch.

"Brainstorm?" Chen Guo sat down as well.

The two of them sat there like that, staring at the ceiling. One was Happy's captain, one was Happy's boss, but for something like this, neither of them had any good solutions. Perhaps it was because they had both spent too many lonely days without their loved ones.

Bang!

The door to the practice room was roughly pushed open, and Steamed Bun, clutching a steamed bun in his hand, walked inside.

"Yo, Boss!" Steamed Bun waved his steamed bun and greeted Ye Xiu, but just as he was about to greet Chen Guo as well, he saw the Christmas tree at the corner of the room. "Yo, a Christmas tree!" And so Steamed Bun's greeting skipped right over Chen Guo and was sent to the Christmas tree.

"Yup, it's a Christmas tree." Chen Guo wasn't upset that Steamed Bun had skipped right over her, and was actually quite satisfied with his reaction after seeing the tree.

"There are presents hanging on the tree. When it's time, everyone will pick one," Chen Guo explained.

"Alright, thanks Boss." Steamed Bun nodded, and then picked a present off the tree.

Something didn't seem right? Chen Guo blinked.

"What is it?" But Steamed Bun was already unwrapping the present.

"You-! When it's time, I said when it's time! Didn't you hear?" Chen Guo jumped up.

"When it's time? When it's what time?" Steamed Bun asked.

"When it's Christmas!" Chen Guo said.

"Isn't that today?" Steamed Bun was confused.

"That's tomorrow, today is the 24th, the day before Christmas, Christmas Eve, do you understand?" Chen Guo fumed.

"Oh, then I'll unwrap it tomorrow." Steamed Bun nodded, and finally stopped unwrapping. Chen Guo almost went up to get it back, but... Steamed Bun had already left his fingerprints all over the wrapping, since he had just been holding an actual steamed bun. Chen Guo was quite depressed. Should she just rewrap it? Just as she was pondering this, another person entering the room. With a "Huh?", they discovered the Christmas tree as well.

"It's a Christmas tree," Steamed Bun quickly introduced. "There are presents hanging on it, we all pick one, but you can't open it immediately! You gotta wait until tomorrow." After explaining, Steamed Bun shot a "you're welcome" look at Chen Guo.

"Hahaha, little kids, where's all this fuss coming from!" But the new arrival strode forward in large steps. Without waiting for Chen Guo to stop him, he had already come right in front of the tree, plucked the biggest wrapped present off, and swiftly tore it open.

"I..." At this moment, Chen Guo really wanted to burst into tears and wail.

"Let's see what this is, ha!" Wei Chen had already torn all of the wrapping off the present. As it turned out, this largest present was... a cartoon Xiha Monkey pillow.

Wei Chen, growing a chin of stubble over the new year, looked a bit clumsy and helpless as he held this cutesy pillow, with an air of not knowing what he should do with it.

"Is this for me?" Wei Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This present didn't fit him at all!

"You picked it yourself." Chen Guo's voice was extremely cold. She'd said that everyone would pick their own present, but in reality she had prepared to give some hints and prompting. But this guy hadn't even waited for the event to start before rushing forward and snatching a present. Chen Guo was truly heartbroken.

"This... this... Can I have a redo?" Wei Chen looked down. "The wrapping isn't too messed up. Steamed Bun go find some scotch tape, let's rewrap this."

"Yeah, you can't open it now, you have to wait until tomorrow, Christmas Day!" As Steamed Bun spoke, he really did go to find some tape just like that.

"No way! That one's yours!" Chen Guo refused to accommodate them any further. She took a few steps forward and roughly shoved the pillow back into his arms. Seeing the gruff old Wei Chen trying to put on an innocent face, combined with this Xiha Monkey, Chen Guo thought it was both infuriating and hilarious.

"This one! No trading allowed." And so she fiercely emphasized this again. This guy brought this upon himself, let him hold this Xiha Monkey and be embarrassed!

But Chen Guo had underestimated Wei Chen's ability to withstand anything.

"Alright!" Seeing Chen Guo's determination, Wei Chen just casually laughed. He carried this pillow over to the sofa, as though he were the pagoda-wielding Heavenly King Li, plopped himself down, and tucked the pillow behind his back and leaned against it.

"What's yours?" Wei Chen asked Ye Xiu, who was standing at the side.

"Don't know, haven't picked yet."

"Aren't you so noble," Wei Chen said disdainfully.

Ye Xiu was silent. He wanted to laugh, but Chen Guo was glaring at him.

"How about, I pick one too?" Ye Xiu said, cautiously testing the waters.

"Pick one, pick one!" Chen Guo was helpless. There was no point in resisting any longer.

And so Ye Xiu went over and plucked one at random.

"What is it, take a look," Wei Chen urged.

Ye Xiu looked at Chen Guo, who didn't seem to have any murderous spirit left, and was probably already in despair. So, he also began to tear open the wrapping. To the side, Steamed Bun saw that even Boss

was opening them, he'd better keep up with the pace! So he too began quickly opening the present in his hand.

At this point, Su Mucheng and Tang Rou entered the practice room together. The girls were all close with each other, so although Wei Chen and Steamed Bun and the others didn't know about this, the girls had all gotten together and talked about it. But now, they saw Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun were already hurrying to open their presents, this... wasn't what Chen Guo had planned!

"This is?" The two were confused.

"Forget about it. You two go and pick too!" Chen Guo was depressed.

At this point, Ye Xiu had already opened his present. Holding what was inside, he laughed in delight.

"Haha, this is useful."

"I'll switch with you." Wei Chen instantly said, without a moment of hesitation.

"Hehe." Ye Xiu used his laugh to reject him. He had gotten a lighter. At Happy, he and Wei Chen were the only ones who smoked, so it was clear that this present was intended for one of them. Ye Xiu had gotten quite a suitable present.

"What did Old Wei get?" the new arrivals Su Mucheng and Tang Rou asked, curious.

Wei Chen shifted on the sofa, pulling out the Xiha Monkey pillow to show the two of them.

"Hahaha..." The two burst out laughing. This present plus Wei Chen was a combination that you couldn't not laugh at!

"You're really good at picking!" said Su Mucheng. Seeing that Wei Chen had gotten that present, she knew that this situation had gotten out of Chen Guo's control. No wonder Chen Guo was a bit depressed. But the important part of sending presents was the feeling behind it. Su Mucheng didn't care too much about the process or result, the most important thing was creating this atmosphere, no?

"Will you bring that with you everywhere you go from now on?" Su Mucheng asked Wei Chen with a laugh.

"You hurry up and pick, if you get another lighter I'll trade with you," Wei Chen said.

"Don't even think about it," Su Mucheng said. "No matter what I get I'm not trading with you." She also picked a present from the tree and opened it. "Oh no, how'd I get this one?"

"What is it?" Wei Chen carried his Xiha Monkey pillow as he scurried over, prepared to exchange.

"This... should've been given to him!" In Su Mucheng's hand was a slender voice recorder, and in the direction of her gaze, Mo Fan had just entered the practice room by himself.

A voice recorder, the silent Mo Fan... This was really an exquisite pairing.

"What a shame, I suppose it's mine now." Su Mucheng put the present away.

Wei Chen appeared not to be very interested in this voice recorder.

"What did Little Tang get?" He made his way to Tang Rou's side.

The wrapping was torn off, Tang Rou's present was a more general gift, a beautiful music box.

"Are there any more manly gifts?" Wei Chen called.

"Are you talking about mine?" Steamed Bun turned around, wearing a glove on his right hand. Ordinary people might not recognize it at first, but everyone here instantly realized that this was the glove weapon used by Qi Masters in Glory, a piece of Glory merchandise. The intent of this present was also rather clear; it had special meaning for Fang Rui, who had just changed classes to Qi Master. Unfortunately, now...

"Steamed Bun, did you wash your hands?" Chen Guo asked with a sullen expression.

Chapter 1243: Art Book Signing

Chen Guo had by now entirely abandoned her original plans for Christmas Eve. By the time Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and the others entered, she voluntarily told them to pick their presents. By the end, the planned gift matchups had become a complete mess, resulting in hilarious pairings that everyone was laughing over. Chen Guo's initial bit of unhappiness quickly faded away. What was the point of giving gifts? Wasn't it just to make people happy? And now everyone was so happy, there was nothing wrong with this. It looked like the surprise element of this random selection was really quite exciting!

The presents that Chen Guo had gotten weren't just for the players. The in-game department, the R&D department, these were also crucial components of Happy. Chen Guo had done a headcount and gotten enough presents for everyone. These workers didn't work in the practice room, but Chen Guo quickly called them over.

Wu Chen and the others came over and picked their presents, and their unwrapping brought another wave of enjoyment. Guan Rongfei was a bit disappointing though. He had to be forcefully dragged over here, his face filled with reluctance. He charged over, snatched a present, and left, spending a total of less than ten seconds in the practice room before vanishing.

At the end, everyone finished picking their presents and chattering about their suitable or unsuitable presents. Everyone's eyes fell upon Chen Guo, and the final two presents hanging on the Christmas tree.

"Huh?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"Is someone missing?" she asked. The presents had been counted correctly, and she hadn't chosen yet, so by logic there should only be one present left. But in her memory, everyone in Happy had arrived! Even Guan Rongfei, who had only existed here for ten seconds. Chen Guo had clearly seen him holding something as he left.

"If there was no choice at the end, wouldn't that be very boring?" Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?" Chen Guo heard something significant in his voice, and turned back to look at the tree. Two presents, one very familiar to her eyes, undoubtedly one that she had prepared, and the other...

"You put it there?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

"It's your turn to pick now," Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo was startled. She never would've expected that at the very end, there'd be this little surprise left to her. If she was choosing, then of course she'd pick the one that she didn't know, but... Ye Xiu, that guy, he wouldn't have randomly and hastily thrown something together just to make fun of her, would he? Like a half-smoked pack of cigarettes or something? Something like that, Chen Guo felt that Ye Xiu could easily do.

But... Chen Guo walked up and studied it. That unfamiliar present was wrapped just as neatly as the others. It definitely didn't look like something that was slapped together last-minute. Was it also carefully prepared?

Chen Guo felt a bit moved. She didn't hesitate any longer, and plucked from the tree this present that had been specially prepared for her.

"What is it?" Chen Guo wanted to see what it was, and yet was a bit nervous at the same time.

"You'll know once you open it," Ye Xiu smiled. "It's something that you've really wanted."

"Something that I really want?" Chen Guo was at a loss. At the moment, she couldn't think of anything that she really wanted, and was even less clear on how Ye Xiu would know.

The present was very light, and when Chen Guo took it, she did wonder if it was really was a half-empty pack of cigarettes or something. But hearing Ye Xiu say this, Chen Guo felt that this wouldn't be some prank. She unwrapped the package, lifted out the paper box inside, opened it, and saw a card, a Christmas card.

This was what she really wanted?

Chen Guo was puzzled, and in her heart there was the tiniest trace of disappointment. She took out the card and opened it. At the top was written, in none-too-elegant handwriting:

What you've always wanted, as you wish.

And then, two signatures.

Ye Qiu.

Su Mucheng.

Stunned, Chen Guo flashed back to several years ago, back when she was just an ordinary fan alongside all of the other Excellent Era fans, passionately supporting Excellent Era, loving Ye Qiu and Su Mucheng, these two gods. Of course, autographs from the gods were things that they all wanted. And then afterwards, on that snowy night, Happy Internet Cafe saw the arrival of a stranger, who used Chen Guo's account to defeat an opponent in the Arena in 40 seconds, and then asked to become an Internet cafe employee.

At the time, Chen Guo thought that this was some nobody kicked out of his team with nowhere to go. She invited him to stay, encouraged him, and jokingly asked that when he returned to the professional circle, he would get Ye Qiu's and Su Mucheng's autographs for her.

That had just been a joke, Chen Guo hadn't been serious. But two years later, she received this Christmas gift.

The autograph itself didn't mean anything anymore. If Chen Guo wanted a signature from Ye Xiu or Su Mucheng now, she only needed to say the word.

But it was exactly this point that reminded her. The Chen Guo of today was no longer one of those ordinary fans that could only quietly support their idols from afar. She stood right beside the people she had once worshipped. They were friends, and they fought together. This time, she was no longer a bystander; she was a participant.

Team Happy, it had Ye Xiu, it had Su Mucheng, and it had her, and it had everyone. This was the meaning behind these two signatures. Chen Guo instantly understood, and she felt the tears welling up in her eyes. But so many people were watching, and if she cried now that would just be too embarrassing.

Chen Guo quickly turned away and rubbed at her face. Fiercely gathering her emotions, she waved the card around and said, "This, this is just... just..."

Chen Guo wanted to make a joke, wanted to say "this is just too cheap," but she truly couldn't get it out, because she understood the significance of this card. She wanted to pretend she didn't understand, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

"Fuck, just two signatures, that's so lame! So shameless!" In the end, she didn't say it, but someone else did for her. What was the present? This was something everyone was curious about, and they had all politely waited for the revelation. But Wei Chen was never that kind of person, and barged over to take a look. Seeing what was written on the card, he hadn't thought as much as Chen Guo did. He immediately treated this as a prank that Ye Xiu was pulling, and began to condemn him.

"And you too!" After scolding Ye Xiu, Wei Chen turned on Su Mucheng. "You're just as shameless as Old Ye. Our boss doesn't have it easy, she pulled together this Christmas celebration for us, and you two use your pathetic signatures as a gift to brush her off? If you're going to give signatures, at least have everyone sign it! Don't cry Lady Boss, come come come, I'll sign for you too."

"Sign, everyone come and sign!" Chen Guo called, but she had already closed the card. She returned to that Christmas tree and retrieved the final gift that no one had chosen.

"We'll just sign this!" This final present was opened, and it turned out to be an art book. Chen Guo had prepared all of the presents, and so she had an idea of which present was which just from the wrapping. This art book was merchandise that Happy itself had produced. The pages were filled with art of their characters, made by professional artists based on the character designs. To invite everyone to sign their names on this, it couldn't be any more meaningful.

"Huh, the art book was printed?" Wei Chen took the book and flipped through it. Everyone knew that Happy was producing this, but they had no idea that it was already out, so Chen Guo obtained a copy from the first round of printing to serve as a present.

"Hm, not bad." Wei Chen quickly flipped to the page with his Windward Formation, and he was very satisfied with the image of the Warlock in the middle of casting.

"Look at me, look at me." The other Happy players all swarmed over. Even Mo Fan, this antisocial person, was curious at this moment. He left his seat, but still maintained a distance of two meters from everyone, as though he were still considering whether or not he should join in.

"Hahaha, Mo Fan's here, so sneaky, so graceful!" The person in question hadn't even arrived, but everyone was already commenting on Deception's page. They then turned to look for Mo Fan, and saw his hesitating figure two meters away.

"Come and take a look," Su Mucheng invited him, and after a tiny bit more hesitation, Mo Fan finally came over.

In the image, a masked Ninja carefully crept along, indeed looking very sneaky.

This was him?

Mo Fan really didn't think he should look like this, but looking at everyone around him, they all seemed to think this was very accurate.

"Sign your name!" Chen Guo passed a pen to him, preparing to let Mo Fan be the first to sign the art book.

Mo Fan tentatively accepted the pen. Under the eyes of everyone watching, his writing hand trembled a bit. The written characters weren't much in the first place, and with this they suddenly became more askew.

"Your handwriting really needs work!" Fang Rui said from the side. "Here, let me show you guys my Golden Right Hand!"

After speaking, he took the pen from Mo Fan, flipped to the page with Qi Master Boundless Sea, and signed the two characters "Fang Rui" with a flourish.

"How about it, it's a hundred times better, right?" Fang Rui even flipped back to Deception's page to compare. Indeed, his signature was much better; those that wanted to speak up for Mo Fan couldn't open their mouths.

"Try writing a third character," Ye Xiu said.

"Go away!" Fang Rui had already swiftly passed the pen to someone else. Everyone paused, but understood soon enough. Fang Rui was an All-Star level player, and definitely wasn't a stranger to signing autographs. No matter whether or not he practiced on purpose, after signing so many, he would definitely be practiced enough to have a good-looking signature. But aside from these two characters of his name, how good he was at writing any other characters remained to be discussed.

The art book continued to be passed along, everyone signing their name on the page of their character, and was finally passed to Chen Guo. She flipped through the pages, silent until she reached the end, when she said, "When you have time, you should practice your signatures!"

Aside from Fang Rui and Su Mucheng, who had to sign things often, only Tang Rou had a rather

eye-pleasing signature. Of the rest of them, none of them could be brought onstage, not even Ye Xiu's. When Fang Rui took a look at it, he fell over. "And you criticized me! Your third character isn't any good either!"

Everyone looked at Lord Grim's page. The two written characters "Ye Xiu," no matter how they looked at them, were awkward and misaligned. Chen Guo was stunned for a while, then pulled out the card she had received. Once she compared them, she understood.

Ye Xiu was incomparably practiced at signing "Ye Qiu." Even though he never revealed his face, he still would often sign merchandise for the team, at the level that Su Mucheng and Fang Rui had to. But now, he had to sign Ye Xiu, this "Ye" was still the same, but the "Xiu" couldn't keep up with the rhythm at all. Then, putting the two characters together, it was even uglier than the chaotic mess of equipment worn by Lord Grim.

It looked like Ye Xiu's "Xiu" was, unfortunately, his third character.

Chapter 1244: All-Stars

Early in the morning, Team Happy had already finished celebrating what was originally supposed to be the most lively holiday: Christmas Eve. Afterwards, Christmas Day wasn't a holiday for them. The things that they needed to do still had to be done, and the matches that they had to play still had to be played. Originally, Ye Xiu wanted to remind everyone to maintain a steady mental state for the next match, but after seeing their opponent for the next week, he had no way of saying these words out loud.

On the 27th of December, Round 17 of the regular season, Happy's opponent was Team Bright Green.

After Round 16, Team Bright Green had only accumulated 30 points and was ranked second from last. The gap between them and the 18th place team had already risen to 14 points. Along with Team Seaside, they were considered to be the two teams who would be relegated without suspense this season.

Faced with a team with such an awful record, Ye Xiu felt that nagging the team about being cautious and prudent was somewhat excessive. The Alliance could be said to not have any weak teams, with examples of strong teams being defeated everywhere. Even so, for a playoff team facing against a team struggling to keep their place, simply having the appropriate attitude would be good enough. Any serious talk about not underestimating their opponents could instead backfire and cause the team members to lose confidence.

Thus, at the end of the day, Ye Xiu didn't say anything unnecessary, only getting ready in the same way they normally did. Preparing against the opponents, coming up with strategies: they didn't belittle their opponents, but neither did they attach too much importance to them.

Team Happy, who was in their peak condition, naturally didn't get defeated in an upset by Team Bright Green. In their away match, they scored a grand 10 to 0, once again catching up with Team Samsara's perfect sweep record. In Team Samsara's away game against Team Conquering Clouds, they accidentally lost an individual match, resulting in a 9 to 1 victory. Team Samsara thus remained with six 10 to 0 victories under their belt.

At the same time, Tyranny, Blue Rain and Wind Howl all achieved landslide victories in their away games. Tiny Herb lost in a surprise loss against Heavenly Swords after a fierce battle in the same city, but in terms of the number of fans, it could be said that the number of Tiny Herb fans completely overwhelmed the number of Heavenly Swords fans. Yet in Glory, the most benefit of playing a home game wasn't just the fan support received. More importantly, having the right to select the map was more crucial.

In this round, after winning one individual competition, Heavenly Swords suffered defeat after defeat, but finally pulled off a strong comeback in the team competition, defeating Tiny Herb with a score of 6 to 4.

It was just one tiny victory, but it was enough to make the brothers at Heavenly Swords go crazy with excitement. From their debut in the professional league until now, this was their first time defeating a true powerhouse team!

It wasn't too long ago when the team was formed and the rich kids from Heavenly Swords were in high spirits, fantasizing about winning the championships until Ye Xiu helped them to come back to reality. Thus, when they entered the Alliance, they started off carefully and cautiously, and finally realized the true gap between reality and their expectations. Glory champions? To them, this was truly too distant a goal.

Heavenly Swords' cautious progression seemed to be the most suited for their specific circumstances. But deep in their hearts, could the players from Heavenly Swords really be satisfied dithering around near the relegation zone?

Their dream of winning the championships was something that they just carefully kept away, but it wasn't something that they had completely given up on. They weren't the kind of people who accepted mediocrity after facing reality.

They persevered and worked hard, but their team roster being fixed meant that they couldn't rely on external helpers to increase their fighting strength. They could only increase the strength of their characters and equipment, but otherwise, it was all up to their individual bitter training.

But in this season, Heavenly Swords' results couldn't be said to have improved very much. The bunch from Heavenly Swords may have been a bit too idealistic, but they didn't actually believe themselves to be infallible. With these results, it was inevitable that they would begin to doubt themselves somewhat, feeling that they only had so much skill in Glory. Could they really achieve greater heights?

But at this very moment, they had unexpectedly defeated Team Tiny Herb.

This tiny victory had ignited a single answer in their hearts: we can!

No matter what the reason was, if they could win this round, they could win a second round, or a third. With enough successive victories, who could say that the dream hidden deep within their hearts was unreachable?

"God, isn't that right?"

This glorious and uplifting victory for Heavenly Swords led Lou Guanning to specially discuss it with Happy.

"Yes, that's exactly right, keep working hard!" Ye Xiu replied.

"Alright, you too. Happy New Year in advance!" Lou Guanning called.

Right, it was close to the new year already.

Round 17 had ended on the 27th of December. The next week was a winter break for the Pro Alliance, so the rounds put on hold temporarily, but the once-a-year All-Star Weekend would still happen the following weekend.

The voting for the All-Stars had already entered its final stages. The Alliance was counting the votes, the fans were watching closely, and even the pro players would talk about it in their free time.

From the start of the voting until now, Zhou Zekai's first place in the All-Stars was completely untouchable, and no one had any hopes for such a miracle to take place anymore.

But in second place was surprisingly Ye Xiu!

The Ye Xiu that had routed Excellent Era in the Challenger's League and proclaimed "I'm back" had become a real talking point over the past half a year. When the voting had just begun, there were a few old fans of Ye Xiu and a few people who just went with the crowd who voted for him, allowing him to break into the list of 24 All-Stars.

Afterwards, at the start of the regular season when the teams were feeling each other out, aside from one great victory against Hundred Blossoms, Happy seemed to be on a losing streak. But after the 8th round when they lost to Tiny Herb, Happy rose abruptly and went on a winning streak, continually winning 10 to 0 and violently sweeping through the entire Alliance.

Some conspiracy theorists thought that the difference between Happy's strength at the start and end of the season was too dramatic. They even suspected that Happy was deliberately throwing games at the start of the regular season, waiting till the teams had a good idea of each other's strength before revealing their true prowess and snatching as many points as they could. And from Round 2 onwards, Ye Xiu swept through the individual competition without losing a single match.

Such a strong player not competing in the group arena and instead competing in the individual rounds from start to finish did draw some criticism from people, but such a trivial matter had no way of diminishing his real battle records. Ye Xiu's individual record was very domineering, Team Happy's record under Ye Xiu's leadership was also very domineering, and this fact caused his All-Star votes to continually climb upwards. Both veterans and rookies were watching this already legendary figure. This time around, was he getting ready to create yet another legend? Currently, he had already cemented his name for the number of consecutive individual matches won. And this was a constantly updating record, as he broke his own record again and again...

Even until Round 17, Ye Xiu's record was unstoppable, and Happy's consecutive victories were unstoppable. Afterwards... for now, there was no afterwards. The next round of competition would have to wait until next year, and the All-Star voting for this year would end here. Team Happy, which had never participated in the Pro League before, and its players, who mostly had never had the distinction of winning a championship, would naturally have a weaker standing in the All-Star voting. Even so, the matches that Happy had participated in were significant enough, and in defeating Excellent Era, they

displayed a might worthy of a playoff-level team. On top of that, in defeating Excellent Era, Happy had created a miracle, and the effects of that miracle were tremendous. Ye Xiu originally had a firm standing in the Glory circle, and even though he had left for a year and a half, his powerful return meant that it was completely unsurprising for him to have a place in the All-Stars.

With his valiant return, and the strength he displayed after his return, his rise in the All-Star rankings was unstoppable. It was now coming to the end of the voting period, and it looked like there was little hope of him catching up to Zhou Zekai, but it also looked like his position as number two was very stable. Because just behind him was Team Thunderclap's captain, Xiao Shiqin, who was relying on the astonishing results that Thunderclap produced under his leadership this season. After his failure at Excellent Era in the first half of the year, he had returned in full force, surprisingly crushing many top teams.

Originally, the number of votes that the two of them had was really too close to call, but on the 20th of December in the 16th round of the regular season, the two teams faced directly, and Team Thunderclap was defeated 9 to 1 by Team Happy, indirectly proving an answer to this question. To many of the indecisive fans, their votes depended on the player's performance. Happy defeating Thunderclap indicated that Ye Xiu was stronger than Xiao Shiqin, and so after that day, the results of the struggle gradually became clear. The two player's vote count now had a clear difference between them, and this tussle between second and third place was resolved in this way.

Fourth place in the polls went to Tiny Herb's captain, Wang Jiexi, fifth place belonged to Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian, but sixth place was once again taken by a player from Samsara, the new addition to their roster, Sun Xiang.

People had long become numb to Team Samsara's strength, but this numbness didn't mean that people had overlooked their abilities. Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf, this new duo had attracted explosive amounts of attention from the very beginning. This was a duo between two Gods at the peak of Glory, one old and one new. Just this topic alone was enough to be discussed for days on end. On top of that, there was Samsara's undefeated winning streak... that's right, undefeated.

Seventeen rounds of competition, and Samsara had won seventeen rounds without even a single draw.

Victory belonged to every single player in Samsara, but within these people, there would always be those who would shine brighter.

The first of them was Zhou Zekai, the second of them was Sun Xiang... afterwards, the value of Jiang Botao, the vice-captain of Samsara had long been recognized, and he was in ninth place.

In the top ten ranks of the All-Stars, Samsara had already monopolized three of the places, and their Grappler, Lu Boyuan was also ranked at twentieth. After transferring to Team 301, the previous All-Star Grappler, Li Yihui, had gradually lost his former fame, and didn't make it into this year's list of All-Stars.

Four All-Stars! Team Samsara's lineup was truly shining with talent. What about Team Tyranny, who had four All-Stars last season? Now, they only had two. Zhang Xinjie, ranked seventh, and their captain, Han Wenqing, had fallen out of the top ten for the first time in his career, and was ranked twelfth.

In reality, Team Tyranny was currently rank number two in the regular season, but they had very quietly made their way to this position. In the All-Star voting, it was easier for everyone to notice the

performances of those with strong, flashy performances. In this season, Team Tyranny had rotated their players. Even Han Wenqing's votes had seen a significant decrease, while Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan had finally been dropped from the list of All-Stars.

What about new players replacing the old?

Regrettably, it was very rare for rookies to appear amongst the ranks of All-Star players. Last season, Gao Yingjie and Lu Hanwen received an unprecedented number of votes, but after their novelty faded away, in this season, they didn't even receive as many votes as last year.

Tang Rou was originally amongst the rookies who had a great number of votes, but unfortunately, after the 1v3 incident, her votes plummeted. There was no need to consider the top 24, her name couldn't even be found within the top hundred players.

Aside from the four players, Ye Xiu, Xiao Shiqin, Sun Xiang and Su Mucheng who had returned from the Challenger's League and become All-Stars, there was one new name in the list, but it wasn't a newcomer to the Alliance.

Team Wind Howl, Liu Hao.

Chapter 1245: The Fortunate and the Regrettable

Liu Hao had entered the Glory Alliance in Season 5. He had joined Team Excellent Era just after their reign was ended by Team Tyranny.

No one had expected such a fall from grace. After all, at the time, they had only lost their streak as champions. In the Pro League, there were always ups and downs. Losing now was no issue, just aim to win next time. Team Excellent Era's Season 4 recruit, Su Mucheng, had been astonishing to see with Ye Qiu. At the time, Team Excellent Era had still been viewed favorably, with an expectation that they would quickly pull themselves back together.

Liu Hao had also carried this type of confidence for Team Excellent Era when he became a member. But who, himself included, would have expected that Excellent Era wouldn't even make it to the finals from this season onwards?

Tiny Herb, Blue Rain... team after team, new champions arose. Player after player, All-Stars appeared. But as for Liu Hao?

It seemed like Liu Hao of Excellent Era was the only vice-captain of an Alliance powerhouse to not have been selected as an All-Star?

This made Liu Hao very dejected. But what could he do about it? Excellent Era already had the ever-radiant Ye Qiu. Then appeared the outstanding beauty Su Mucheng. They became Best Partners, and there was no shortage of rumors about a kindling relationship between the two. Besides these two protagonists of the story, not even the vice-captain could escape being given a side character role.

Liu Hao didn't want to be a side character. He watched as the others who started in the same Season as him became All-Stars one by one: Zhou Zekai, Wu Yuze, Fang Rui. All-Star status meant popularity, but it also required true skill as a foundation. In the pro scene, popularity did not come without skill.

Liu Hao did not have this popularity, but he was adamant that he had the skills. The problem was just that he paled in comparison to his ever-radiant senior. Compared to the founder of the dynasty of back-to-back-to-back championship victories, who in the Alliance wouldn't come up short in comparison? Initially, Liu Hao was proud and content that he could share in the glory, but then he realized that this glory was blinding. No one could see him. He wanted to bask in his own glory.

But... it was so difficult!

Enthusiastically showing his talents would put him off-rhythm with the rest of the team. Limit himself to the team's pace and he would get outshone by the Best Partners.

This team's structure was made for these two and they outshone those around them. Liu Hao thought about this somewhat angrily. What he conveniently failed to think about was that if you picked any random team, of course the core players would be the most prominent. If another player can overshadow the core player's existence, wouldn't they have that title instead?

If he wanted to be noticed, he had to establish his own relevance first. Liu Hao, when unable to do so, instead thought up various excuses for why he was not being noticed. This was too backwards. If he had this kind of mindset, then any ordinary arrangement would seem like an elaborate plot to undermine him.

Liu Hao really didn't want his "radiance" extinguished like this, so he continued to search for opportunities. Although Ye Xiu's ultimate departure from the team couldn't entirely be called his victory, it was at least an outcome that he was pleased to see.

His moment to shine had finally arrived, but right after, Excellent Era was promptly relegated.

This outcome was really some miles away from what Liu Hao had expected. However, Excellent Era was still Excellent Era. Even though they were relegated, their influence was still strong, and they even managed to grab the All-Star Xiao Shiqin from Thunderclap.

Sun Xiang filled the gap left by Ye Xiu's departure, but the gap he filled was only the position of One Autumn Leaf's controller; the role played by Ye Xiu in Excellent Era was much greater than that. After all, he was one of the four Master Tacticians. The arrival of Xiao Shiqin was evidence of Excellent Era's prestige as a powerhouse. However, the hidden motive behind these actions was not noticed by many.

Sun Xiang was not Ye Xiu's successor.

The role of successor fell to Sun Xiang plus Xiao Shiqin.

Two people to replace one. Excellent Era definitely could not reveal this intention.

Following this addition, Liu Hao found himself heartlessly abandoned. It was at that moment when he realized that he would forever be a side character in Excellent Era. When Ye Xiu left, Excellent Era spared no expense to find a replacement and to quash certain rumors. They even started preparing far in advance. But for Liu Hao?

Player trade, you're going to Thunderclap.

All Liu Hao received was this phone call.

Yes, breaking the news to him with a phone call. How much more disrespectful could they get? Forget about a send-off for him, Excellent Era was too busy with welcoming Xiao Shiqin!

Liu Hao left with resentment in his heart. He had thought about exposing how Excellent Era had been unhappy with Ye Xiu, and how they had schemed to pressure Ye Xiu into retirement, while at the same time being afraid of having Ye Xiu become an enemy that they would need to face; Excellent Era had been forced into some very careful maneuvering with regards to the issue. But Liu Hao didn't dare. Speaking of reasons for Ye Xiu's departure, plenty of rumors were floating around the competitive scene, some more accurate than others. However, those were still simply guesswork from outside observers. How much influence would their words have? The worst a comment here and a remark there could do was to give people something interesting to gossip about.

Of course, Liu Hao was not an outside observer. If he decided to blow the whistle, the media would be all over the story. But if he did this, it would not bode well for his future. In the Pro League, which team didn't have some skeletons in their closet? A brave Warrior of Justice may be loved by the media or the masses, but which team would dare let him join?

Liu Hao didn't want to get himself into this lose-lose situation. He still wanted to shine! He should wait until he retired before he exposed the Excellent Era scandal.

Liu Hao buried his bitterness towards Excellent Era who had abandoned him. Who would have guessed that Ye Xiu would be the one to avenge him, by eliminating Excellent Era with a grassroots team?

Life is... just absurd...

Liu Hao absentmindedly thought this at the time. I didn't do anything at all, but the person I hate and the team I hate are locked in a battle to the death. What kind of luck is this?

Liu Hao reflected upon his good luck, but then that year he still didn't make it into the All-Stars, what he'd dreamed about for so long.

It's because my team is too shit.

Liu Hao thought this helplessly.

His performance in Thunderclap that season wasn't bad at all. The team performed reasonably well too, but still did not manage to make it to the playoffs. That meant he, Liu Hao, was still no match for Xiao Shiqin. So in that season, everyone in Thunderclap, from top to bottom, missed their former Captain Xiao Shiqin. Liu Hao felt repulsed being confined in this atmosphere. Even a person long gone still outshone him! Thunderclap was even worse than Excellent Era!

Liu Hao originally did not want to stay long at Thunderclap. Add on his disgust for the atmosphere in the team, and he directly turned down Thunderclap's request for him to stay for the next season. He moved to Team Wind Howl of his own accord. It looked like standing out in this team wasn't going to be an easy task. Just as he was beginning to more carefully consider his situation, issues arose within Wind Howl and vice-captain Fang Rui left the team.

Liu Hao got his foot in the door.

In terms of skill, he was never a weak player; in terms of seniority, he had five years in the Pro League; in terms of experience, he had been both vice-captain and captain. His only weakness was that he was still a newcomer and may not have too much influence in the team yet. However, Wind Howl didn't really have anyone better, so those three advantages were enough for Liu Hao to stand out.

Liu Hao lived up to expectations. He performed well both on and off the field, and everyone could see his worth to Wind Howl. With the highest priced transfer in the summer transfer window but never a spot out among the 24 All-Stars, he seemed to have taken a decisive step forward during the season. Coincidentally, his current All-Stars ranking was at number 17, the same as Fang Rui's last year. Liu Hao was replacing Fang Rui's position both on the All-Star rankings and in Wind Howl.

Unfortunately for Fang Rui, he didn't make the All-Stars. Changing classes was damaging to a player's reputation, regardless of their skill level. However, Fang Rui's performance could still be considered satisfactory. In his very first few matches where he was getting used to the class, he could only rely on a few tricks. Following this, he had incorporated his own playstyle into the Qi Master class, resulting in improvements match after match.

But he still didn't make the All-Stars.

"Qi Masters don't understand love!" Fang Rui noted indignantly.

No one could really tell whether this indignation was real or tongue-in-cheek. Fang Rui didn't seem the type to get hung up on being an All-Star. As one whose style was to play dirty, Fang Rui should have expected divided opinions, leading to a smaller portion of this love. It was rare to witness the situation where Fang Rui would flip this reasoning on its head and say that those who didn't appreciate dirty play were the ones who didn't understand love.

The All-Stars polls closed as the New Year ticked over. With no matches, the votes did not change very unexpectedly. Most did not care about any changes in ranking within the top 24; they only cared if any at the bottom of the poll were changed.

Yes, there still were some changes.

The names on the last two All-Star spots, 23rd and 24th, frequently switched. This time, as the voting closed, two names squeezed in: Zou Yuan and Yang Cong.

After years of loyalty and diligence, Yang Cong finally made it onto the All-Stars. On the other hand, Zou Yuan made it twice previously when he shouldn't have. This time, his performance had really stood out from the rest of the pack, and he had secured a spot in the All-Stars. This time, his true value was demonstrated, and his votes were not from fans who were hung up on a character or who wanted to be spiteful towards a certain other player.

Seeing the names now at rank 25 and 26, everyone felt that it was a shame. Those two were definitely qualified to be All-Stars.

Zhang Jiale, a player in the Alliance since Season 2. Aside from his retirement during Season 8, this was the first year he had failed to make it into the All-Stars.

Liu Xiaobie. This was the second time he had missed out on a spot by an inch.

Lin Jingyan and Fang Rui, the former Criminal Duo, were now neither a combination nor teammates. However, they stood together outside the All-Star rankings.

Finally, Tian Sen and the former God-level character Peaceful Hermit could not defend their last shred of glory and were also out of the All-Stars. What might be going through Tian Sen's head right now?

The All-Star Weekend drew near!

Chapter 1246: The One and Only

The clocks chimed to signal the beginning of the New Year, and players of the Alliance gathered in City Q, where the All-Star Weekend was being held this year. Tyranny's once-outstanding old generals' days were numbered. The Alliance seemed to have taken this into account and decided to give hosting rights to Tyranny's home city. However, it looked like fans voting for the All-Stars did not share the sentiment. It was quite unfortunate that Tyranny's Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan were both unable to make it into the All-Stars.

On the night of January the 3rd, City Q, in Tyranny's home stadium, Glory Alliance's Season 10 All-Star Weekend finally began. The 24 All-Stars' characters were introduced by projecting them in the stadium with hologram technology, along with New Year's greetings.

Ever since the introduction of the hologram technology, the presentation of Glory's players and characters reached new, astonishingly heights. These heights were paralleled by the characters, representing the very apex of Glory. For these events, the hosting team would go all out to make everything as spectacular as possible.

Usually, they arranged the characters to appear one by one and perform some actions, such as training moves or a choreographed fight with another character. This time, under the direction of Tyranny's hosting, a new theme was introduced: duos.

Samsara's Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf;

Blue Rain's Troubling Rain and Swoksaar;

Tiny Herb's master and apprentice Witches;

Void's Ghost Duo;

Hundred Blossoms' Blood and Blossoms;

Happy's Lord Grim and Dancing Rain;

As the duos appeared pair by pair, the other theme was introduced: Memories!

The screens within the stadium began to play the classic moments created by each of these duos. Many Glory veterans could recognize familiar scenes from just fleeting snapshots.

In the ten years of Glory, players and characters were constantly being passed on. Likewise, within each and every team, duos were constantly being created.

However...

A pause appeared in the on-screen action, and a question cropped up.

Was there a duo that had survived since Season 1 of Glory for the entire decade, and had fought side by side until today?

Everyone gave a start, and considered each duo that had flashed up on the screen.

Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf? They only started fighting alongside each other this season.

Troubling Rain and Swoksaar? Swoksaar was a legend passed down ever since the beginnings of Team Blue Rain, but Troubling Rain made his debut in Season 4, the same time when the Golden Generation's Huang Shaotian began his professional Glory career.

Tiny Herb's Witch duo only existed after Gao Yingjie made the main roster starting from last season.

Void's Ghostblade duo formed after Wu Yuce joined the team in Season 5 and insisted on playing the Ghostblade class.

Hundred Blossom's Blood and Blossoms were formed in Season 2. However, they were separated after Sun Zheping had to retire due to injury. It was reformed after Yu Feng was transferred to Hundred Blossoms.

As for Happy.... you couldn't get any newer if you wanted to.

None of those duos had endured the test of time, so who had?

Loud shouts rang out across the stadium before many were able to work it out. This was Team Tyranny's home stadium, and of course had more local Tyranny fans than anyone else. These fans were also the only ones capable of causing such a loud ruckus.

Thus, the answer was revealed amidst the clamoring.

Desert Dust and Immovable Rock.

Since the birth of the Glory Alliance, the Striker Desert Dust and the Cleric Immovable Rock, from Team Tyranny, were the two All-Star characters that had fought side by side until today.

The hosting team's duo was the epic climax afterall.

After countless calls from the crowd, the King of Fighting Desert Dust, who had not once known retreat in ten years, appeared on stage with the ever-present Immovable Rock by his side.

Ten years...

The clips of this duo played for longer than any other. From the birth of the Alliance until today, these two characters had become a symbol of Team Tyranny. No other team had a duo that always stood at the peak. Not even the former Excellent Era with their unrivalled accomplishments!

Many of Tyranny's old fans that had followed their team for ten years could no longer control their emotions.

Fuck, you're trying to tug at our heartstrings? This isn't Tyranny's style, why are you trying make us cry? Tyranny's manly men do not cry. How embarrassing is it to have tear-streaked cheeks?

"A partnership that has lasted ten years. Unwavering. Steadfast. The character may be timeless, but the player eventually departs. However, only one player, from our Team Tyranny, has brought Desert Dust with him onto the stage. He has lead Team Tyranny into battle from day one and continues to do so. Season 1, Season 2, Season 3, all the way until today in Season 10! He has stood here eternally, at the summit. This player, the one and only. WHO IS HE???"

"HAN WENQING!!!" The whole stadium erupted into a thunderous roar. Han Wenqing was the only player in all of the Glory Alliance who deserved this portrayal. Originally, his arch-rival Ye Xiu would be his equal for this, but unfortunately Ye Xiu took a year and half break starting in Season 8. Therefore...

There stood Han Wenqing. The one and only.

Not only had he lasted ten years, he had lasted ten years while being the best of the best. While his age might have slowly robbed him of his mechanical speed and reactions, his spirit and indomitable will never swayed. This was Han Wenqing, the player behind Desert Dust, the captain of Team Tyranny, for ten years straight.

Han Wenqing quietly stepped onto the stage. Desert Dust's projection stood beside him. The stadium gradually quieted down, expecting this warrior who has fought ten years' worth of battles to give a speech.

But he didn't!

Han Wenqing refused the microphone that was handed to him by the MC. He said nothing, while glancing at the projection of Desert Dust that was beside him.

Seeing the character that he has controlled for ten years standing next to him was a rare experience for Han Wenqing. As he glanced sideways, he stretched out his right hand and actually gave the hologram a pat on the shoulder. Then, he lifted his outstretched right hand and clenched it into a fist. Towards the entire audience, the players, he waved his fist once. Although it was not forceful, it carried a distinctive air of conviction.

He didn't need to say anything.

I'm still standing. I can still clench my fists. That is enough!

Han Wenqing's gesture set off another passionate round of cheering. At the same time, Zhang Xinjie also walked onto the stage, his meticulously calculated footsteps landing him precisely next to Han Wenqing.

Zhang Xinjie was not the first owner of Immovable Rock; however, he had fought by Han Wenqing's side for almost seven years. Players were not like characters and could not fight on endlessly. From this, each player could be considered an inheritor. From the bygone past, to now, to the distant future, through their characters they passed on their spirit and willpower forevermore.

The two players clasped hands tightly and embraced each other under the gaze of tens of thousands of spectators.

The whole stadium erupted into applause.

No one felt that Tyranny was being biased in showing their own team's players in this All-Star Weekend. Han Wenqing was the most befitting as the main character of the Glory Alliance's tenth anniversary. He was the only one to have experienced the full ten year history of the Alliance, and at this moment, it did not matter whether he was on Team Tyranny or not.

The applause did not dwindle. Even though Tyranny did not actually plan to only show off Han Wenqing, all the others who appeared on stage next naturally didn't get the same kind of resounding welcome. The other 22 All-Stars joined the stage while clapping along with the crowd. They stood on either side of Han Wenqing and Zhang Xinjie, placing them in the very middle, in a gesture that gave more than enough face to Tyranny's hosting arrangements.

The lively opening had finally come to a end. Each player left the stage and joined their own teams in the players' stands. The All-Star Weekend was a festive occasion, so everyone was being very casual. Many players mischievously snuck off to other teams' areas and found their more familiar colleagues, greeting each other and chatting about who-knows-what. On stage, the preparations were being made for what was always the first event of the All-Star Weekend: the Rookie Challenge Competition.

The first onto the stage was a rookie from Team Parade.

Many audience members let out a yawn. Compared to the excitement brought about by the dramatic appearance of Han Wenqing earlier, this was too much of a slump.

Li Jiu?

Who was that?

Small- to medium-sized teams already only received a limited amount of attention, let alone a rookie who did not get a chance to appear on stage very often. Li Jiu really was an unfamiliar name to fans. This kind of Rookie Challenge was no fun! The viewers felt that not having an exciting rookie might impact the turnout for Day 1 of the All-Star Weekend. It honestly was not interesting to follow or discuss a rookie who had no reputation. This was in contrast with last year, which had very exciting Rookie Challenge matches where many rising stars stole the stage. The viewers racked their brains and thought: of all ten years of professional Glory, it seemed like there was no good crop this year! There didn't seem to be any strong rookies?

Tang Rou?

When everyone considered this question, this name was the one that popped up in the minds.

Peh peh peh!

Many people spat. This woman doesn't know heaven from earth, and she even went back on her own word! Where do you think this is? Did you expect everyone to easily forgive you? Don't feel so privileged just because you have good looks! Fuck off!

This was the opinion of many towards Tang Rou. Even within Happy's fanbase, many people felt unbelievably upset when they remembered that there was such a person on the team; their hearts were very conflicted..

Everyone came to the conclusion that there really were no rookies this season who were especially notable. How about second-year rookies? They also qualified for the Rookie Challenge. They thought of Lu Hanwen, but since he already participated last year, it didn't seem like they would support him going up again?

Poor Li Jiu was already completely forgotten by the masses, who were all pondering whether there was anyone after him worth watching. Meanwhile, Li Jiu's voice rang out: "I would like to challenge Senior Ye Xiu from Team Happy."

Chapter 1247: Asking the Senior to Advise

"The one I want to challenge is Happy's Senior Ye Xiu." Li Jiu's voice echoed throughout the stadium.

Everyone was stunned, and then suddenly exploded into a large clamor.

"This kid is so daring!!" Tyranny's crowd was always wild, and quite a few people cried out. Although they hated Ye Xiu, their shameless rival, they would never deny his strength. And this newcomer actually challenged Ye Xiu! Interesting, really interesting! If Ye Xiu really lost, then it'd be interesting to the limit!

At the thought of this possibility, the audience suddenly grew excited.

In this season so far, Ye Xiu had won the individual competition 16 consecutive times. At the thought, Tyranny's fans were furious. This arrogant fellow! Can no one stop him?

The success of the All-Stars match didn't include the statistics, but Tyranny fans didn't care about that. As long as this guy admitted defeat, then they would be ecstatic!

The player that walked out was a rookie, but this was the All-Stars stage. Anything was possible. Perhaps in a less serious atmosphere, there would be mistakes he could take advantage of? The disparity between a God and rookie was not so large!

"Oh! Li Jiu wants to challenge Happy's Ye Xiu! Alright, let us welcome Ye Xiu to the stage!" The host took the lead to applaud, but the audience booed in response.

"You really are unpopular! How did you even become an All-Star? And second place too! You secretly found people to vote for you, didn't you?" Fang Rui lamented.

"Why is power of hatred so strong?" Ye Xiu deeply contemplated on this thought. He had already left the professional circle for a year and a half, but Tyranny's "welcome" was still as before!

"Stop being so disgusting! Hurry up and get on stage!" Wei Chen scolded.

Ye Xiu helplessly stood up amidst the sea of boos and bitterly smiled as he entered the stage.

This was the second-place All-Star player, plus he was someone who had never made a public appearance like this before. The host was obviously excited as well. Even before Ye Xiu got onstage, the host had already appeared before him.

"Senior Ye Xiu, hello. I suppose it's been a while since you've been here?" The host also referred to Ye Xiu as a senior.

"Yes," Ye Xiu nodded his head.

Tyranny's home stadium? After he retired in Season 8, he hadn't come back here. Although he had fought against Tyranny this season, that had been Happy's home game. If he were to try and recall, Ye Xiu couldn't really remember how long it was since he'd last been here.

"Do you have any feelings about returning to this stage?" The host asked with a smile, obviously also very attentive to the enmity between Ye Xiu and Tyranny. Thus, he purposefully asked such a question.

"Haha, it's still just as noisy," Ye Xiu said.

The audience immediately booed in protest, as if they had specially coordinated with him to create such a scene.

"What are your thoughts on being the first one named for a challenge?" the host asked again.

"Fame follows merit," Ye Xiu answered simply.

"Ah? What does that mean?" The host was baffled.

"Number one!" Ye Xiu said.

The host was stunned. What was this troublemaker trying to do? The host resisted the urge to boo alongside the audience.

"Alright, let's ask Li Jiu a question. Why did you choose to challenge Senior Ye Xiu?" The host turned his attention to Li Jiu, paying no heed to Ye Xiu.

"Because Ye Xiu's record this season has been very good. I want to try and challenge him." Li Jiu merely replied.

"Oh, so to say, you want to end Senior Ye Xiu's winning streak?" the host asked.

"No, I don't dare!" Li Jiu immediately responded, but his gaze still revealed a faint anticipation.

So, the host turned to Ye Xiu with a smile. "Senior Ye Xiu, would you accept that if you lose this match, you break your winning streak?"

Ye Xiu grinned. "So if I win, will that count toward my winning streak?"

"Haha, sincere fans will surely remember." Quick witted as he was, he responded to Ye Xiu's question very quickly, and then seamlessly changed the topic. "Is there anything the two of you would like to say to each other?"

"Better work hard, kid. On the battlefield, I'm very serious and very ferocious," Ye Xiu said.

The audience's jeers grew in volume and the host was overcome with emotion. Ye Xiu and Tyranny's enmity really had an undeserved reputation. Ye Xiu had only been on stage for only a few minutes, but the deafening boos reverberated for what must have been the fourth time.

"Please advise me, Senior." Li Jiu's response was very ordinary, but the thunderous applause from the audience surprised him. Confused, he asked himself, had he actually said something brilliant?

His words were certainly not brilliant. Tyranny's fans simply wanted to make Ye Xiu lose face, so they purposely supported the rookie.

Both players entered their respective booths and logged into their characters. The host then walked offstage. With such an easy-going atmosphere, he stood at the side of the stage and trash talked like a fan.

"Good! The match started! Let us see how serious and cruel God Ye Xiu is!"

"Both sides meet! They're starting!"

"Oh!"

"Oh no..."

"Oh my god!"

"This... Li Jiu totally cannot counter God Ye Xiu's seriousness and cruelty!"

"Alright, it's over..."

A little over a minute. That was how long it took for the match to conclude. Li Jiu's loss hadn't been too unsightly, but when he came out, his face was completely flushed red to the tips of his ears. The match had been totally one-sided. He could say that he was completely defenseless against the formidable Unspecialized. He, like many others before him, only knew after having experienced it, that all his prior preparations and plans could not be put forth in the match at all. He could only subconsciously respond and follow the unspecialized's fighting rhythm. What was more, he couldn't even fully grasp the rhythm, much less try to win.

"Many thanks for your guidance." Li Jiu had lost thoroughly, and that wistful hope of victory made him feel extremely ashamed.

"Keep trying harder," Ye Xiu chuckled. Then he waved at the audience and walked off amidst the jeers.

"He went too far! Towards a rookie, that was so cruel!"

"Yeah! He doesn't have any human feelings!"

"Any other player would have gone easier on him!"

The various discussions weaving through the audience weren't whispers. Everyone hoped these words would make it to Ye Xiu's ears. They wanted to make him feel ashamed.

But it was a shame. In the midst of the discussions, Ye Xiu had taken it in stride and was cheerfully chatting with his fellow Happy players.

"What a shame! Li Jiu couldn't stop God Ye Xiu's winning streak!" Onstage, the host joked, and then looked at the card in his hand. "Then next up, let's invite Miracle's rookie, Guo Shao!"

"Oh, Guo Shao! I've paid attention to this player before! He's pretty good!"

Compared to their reaction to the previous player, Li Jiu, the audience was more spirited this time. Team Miracle. This team had just joined the Alliance, and after 17 rounds, they sat at 14th place with 58

points. For new teams, this was considered quite good. Although this team were mainly made up of Excellent Era's ex-team members, Guo Shao originally came from Miracle and had caught the attention of many parties. Based on many of the individual statistics, Guo Shao was a strong contender for the title of Best Newcomer this season. Even if Miracle's overall placing was relatively weak, there was no reason for a rookie to bear responsibility for the team's results. . This was an important difference between the awards for Best Newcomer and MVP.

For Best Newcomer, the main topic of consideration was the rookie player's performance and statistics.

But for the MVP, the team's performance as a whole was an extremely important consideration. Otherwise, where else could the three words "Most Valuable Player" come from?

Guo Shao received booming applause, but very quickly, the jeers filled the stadium once more.

"Yes, the one I would like to challenge is also Senior Ye Xiu..." Guo Shao said.

Ye Xiu was in a daze. His butt hadn't even warmed the seat yet! But he had to go onstage again?

"Go, go. Keep up your win streak!" Fang Rui relished in Ye Xiu's misfortunes.

Ye Xiu had no choice but to stand up with another bitter smile and return onstage amidst the jeers.

The host chuckled, delightfully greeting Ye Xiu. "I didn't think we'd meet so soon again."

"You're too kind," Ye Xiu responded.

"Then, Guo Shao? Why did you choose to challenge God Ye Xiu?" the host asked Guo Shao.

"Ever since we met last time in an Alliance battle, I've been looking forward to having another match with Senior!" Guo Shao didn't hide his excitement.

"Sounds like you've come prepared?" the host asked with a smile.

"Of course," Guo Shao nodded.

"Really? Then show me what you've got!" Ye Xiu said.

"Okay Senior, let's start then!" Guo Shao rushed to his competitor booth.

After several minutes...

"You prepared quite well," Ye Xiu said.

"But I still lost." Guo Shao was upset.

"Winning isn't so simple." Ye Xiu said.

"Being able to quickly chain together so many low-level skills really allows the Unspecialized to have incredible movement ability!" Guo Shao lamented.

"Yeah, Launchers need to fight at a distance, so it's especially difficult," Ye Xiu said.

"Yeah, I thought of some solutions, but after this, it looks like they still weren't enough!" Guo Shao said.

"Hey hey, like I said, it's not so simple."

"But I felt there was a tiny short lag when you tried connecting the Slide Kick with Shining Cut."

"Oh? You noticed?"

"I tried to take advantage of that opportunity, but it was still very difficult," Guo Shao scratched his head.

"Do you need me to repeat for the third time that it's not that simple?" Ye Xiu sighed with emotion.

"I'll continue to work hard!" Guo Shao gave Ye Xiu a thumbs up.

"Alright, I look forward to meeting you the next time!" Ye Xiu nodded.

"Thank you to the two players for the splendid match," the host said, a helpless expression on his face.

"But the two of you, next time can you not just talk amongst yourselves? Say some words to the audience too," he complained weakly as he eyed the retreating backs of the two players that conversed until they returned to their teams.

Chapter 1248: There's No End

Ye Xiu and Guo Shao chatted as they walked back, and soon enough Guo Shao arrived at where his teammates were sitting.

Ye Xiu's gaze swept over them, and he saw He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze sitting together, these three former players from Excellent Era, or in other words Ye Xiu's former team. The players to the left were chatting with each other, the players to the right were chatting with each other, so these players in the middle were suddenly left with no one to talk to. They lowered their heads, and refused to look at Ye Xiu and Guo Shao, who had just stopped right beside their seats.

"Next time, if there's the chance, I would like to learn from senior some more." Guo Shao reluctantly bid Ye Xiu farewell.

"Good to hear! Go and rest now, I'm heading back." As Ye Xiu said this, he suddenly heard a distant shout.

Ye Xiu?

Are they calling me?

Who's calling me?

"It looks like there's no rest for senior!" Guo Shao said.

Ye Xiu turned back. The host onstage, whom he and Guo Shao had left hanging, was staring in his direction, clearly struggling to conceal his glee at Ye Xiu's misfortune.

"Ah, I'm so jealous! I'd love to go onstage again to challenge senior," said Guo Shao longingly.

"Don't." Ye Xiu quickly waved his hand. Onstage, the host was repeating what he had just said.

Yes, that was correct. Another rookie had come onstage, and the player he wanted to challenge was once again Ye Xiu.

"God Ye Xiu, I know you're working hard! We'll have to trouble you to once again come onstage!" the host said.

The helpless Ye Xiu could only retrace his steps.

This third challenger was a player with whom Ye Xiu was somewhat familiar.

Wen Kebei.

Wen Kebei of Team Heavenly Swords.

Heavenly Swords joined the Alliance last season. Lou Guanning and the other four were considered second-year players, so they were still eligible to issue challenges in the Rookie Challenge. Last season, Lou Guanning challenged Yu Feng, and this time, Wen Kebei jumped up to participate, and the opponent he named turned out to be Ye Xiu as well.

"Is there a point to this? It's not like we've never fought before." This was the first thing Ye Xiu said to Wen Kebei upon returning to the stage.

"Ah... We've never played in an official setting, have we?" said Wen Kebei.

"This is hardly an official setting!" Ye Xiu said.

"Ahem!" The host coughed emphatically. True, the All-Star Weekend can't be considered any official setting, but God Ye can you not use such a contemptuous tone! Of course you've had enough of this place, but this is a rare chance for rookies to show themselves under the eyes of such a large audience!

"Haha, after hearing Wen Kebei's words just now, we can pretty much know the reason for his challenge." The host worked hard to keep up appearances.

"I hope that Senior may teach me," said Wen Kebei.

"Haven't I taught you enough times by now?" Ye Xiu smiled bitterly. Wen Kebei played Battle Mage. Among the Heavenly Swords players, Wen Kebei had definitely received the most lessons.

"It's never too much!" Wen Kebei's manner was quite shameless.

"Alright, come on!" Ye Xiu was helpless and could only accept the challenge.

A few moments later...

"Keep practicing!" Ye Xiu said to Wen Kebei.

"Yeah..." Wen Kebei sighed. He had lost quite miserably. How come the difference between him and the God was still so large?

The two people left the stage together, but this time they hadn't even left the stadium floor when Ye Xiu once again heard his name being called.

"Ah!" Wen Kebei was shocked. This was the fourth now, right? When he came back to his senses, he saw that Ye Xiu didn't seem to have heard, and was still leaving the stadium floor.

"God Ye!" Wen Kebei quickly caught up to Ye Xiu to remind him.

"Shut up! Let's go!" Ye Xiu said, his steps not stopping.

Wen Kebei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Can you really pretend not to hear something like this? But Ye Xiu was acting like this anyway. As the host called his name louder and louder, Ye Xiu walked faster and faster.

It looked like shouts weren't enough, so the host could only take direct action. With the speed of a hundred-meter sprinter, he reached Ye Xiu's side and grabbed his arm.

"Let go of me, what are you doing!" Ye Xiu fumed.

"God Ye, the fourth rookie still wants to challenge you." The host's face was sympathetic, but his stomach was hurting from stifled laughter. He of course knew that Ye Xiu was just pretending to be ignorant. How childish! The host's thoughts were quite similar to Wen Kebei's.

"Be honest now," Ye Xiu said, glaring at the host. "Did Tyranny purposefully plan this out to mess with me?"

"Of course not!" the host immediately said. "Don't you know? The rookies are free to choose anyone they want once they're onstage! The fact that so many rookies wish to challenge you is a sign of your position in their eyes!"

"You think I'd believe something like that?" Ye Xiu said.

The host began coughing again. Just as the host had said, for the Rookie Challenge, the participating rookies had completely free will to choose any of the players to challenge. But how were these participating rookies selected? The All-Star Weekend was designed to be an exciting event, so the organizers wanted to try and deliberately create many exciting situations that the audience would enjoy.

And so, was it a coincidence that all of these rookies wanted to challenge Ye Xiu? Ye Xiu didn't think so. He had a strong suspicion that this was the Alliance's doing, that they wanted to have him face this string of challengers. The best evidence for this was that from Happy, both Tang Rou and Steamed Bun had applied for the Rookie Challenge, but neither of them had been selected. The official response was that there were many applicants this year, and that they wanted to give more opportunities to the second-year players for whom this was their last chance at participating.

This reasoning seemed sincere enough, but now Ye Xiu had defeated three players, and aside from Wen Kebei, weren't the other two first-year rookies? From this, barring Happy's players from participating seemed like an intentional move. After all, Happy's players were most likely to disrupt this situation.

"It really is a coincidence, God Ye Xiu just please try and cooperate!" The host was still maintaining what he said, but it was clear that he knew very well that it wasn't that easy to fool this experienced God. His plea of "try and cooperate" could be considered his attempt at making peace.

"Alright..." Helpless, Ye Xiu shook his head. The host was delighted on the surface and snickering in his heart, but then he heard Ye Xiu say, "Then I'll take this a bit more seriously. I won't use my main to bully the rookies anymore, give me an unspecialized account."

The host instantly spat blood. The God wouldn't just casually compromise, he'd already begun his counterattack. Like this, for example, he was deliberately making things difficult! Everyone knew that the unspecialized Lord Grim only worked because of that Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, and the core of this weapon wasn't its stats, but its ability to shift forms. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was unique; Lord Grim was unique. Unspecialized? Lord Grim was no traditional unspecialized. For this unique character, even the Alliance had no way of supplying an alternate account.

"God Ye! If you used an alt, the rookie would have no way of appreciating your true style!" implored the battered host.

"Aren't the alts supplied by the game company? Let them make a copy of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, and after this is over I'll keep it," Ye Xiu said.

"Ahahaha, God Ye you have such a sense of humor! But this is so last minute, it's a bit late now, isn't it?" said the host.

"You didn't prepare beforehand? This was very poorly organized," Ye Xiu criticized.

"Before this we didn't expect so many people to challenge you!" The host was also becoming a bit shameless. Ye Xiu had even pulled out a "after this is over I'll keep it," so the host certainly wasn't going to fall behind.

This sentence managed to shut Ye Xiu up, finally. He glanced at the rookie standing to the side, pitiful and innocent and not knowing what he had done wrong. Ye Xiu sighed and headed back to the stage.

"Thank you senior for your teachings."

"Keep working hard."

A few minutes later, the battle was over. The rookie walked offstage, satisfied, but God Ye Xiu didn't move. He stood alone on the stage, staring at that host.

"Er, is God Ye Xiu not going offstage to rest?" the host said timidly.

"Don't give me that. I want to see if you guys are done yet," Ye Xiu said.

"We have no say in it either!" Helplessness was written all over the host's face. He then announced the next challenger to come onstage: Team Void's second-year rookie, Ge Caijie.

Ge Caijie walked onstage as Ye Xiu watched him all the while. This was already the fifth person, but Ge Caijie, this second-year rookie with the commanding presence of a veteran, didn't waver because of any of this. When the host asked him, he announced the player he wished to challenge without any hesitation: "Ye Xiu."

The host didn't make a sound, and he put on a face of helplessness as he looked at Ye Xiu. His gleeful laughter was concealed in his stomach.

"There's really no end, huh? I'm going to throw this match!" Ye Xiu said.

"How could you do that!" The host laughed.

"Let's go!" Ye Xiu didn't say anything else as he walked toward the competitor booth. Ge Caijie didn't say anything either, and as he walked, he was already adjusting his emotions for the upcoming battle. Although this was only the All-Star Weekend, he took this very seriously, for he didn't want to lose. In Ye Xiu's individual match win streak this season, Ge Caijie was one of the ones he had crushed, but in that battle, Ge Caijie felt that he had still had a bit of a chance. If he had better handled a few details, if he were able to more thoroughly address a few problems...

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, there was no way he'd brought two copies of it this time, right?

This is what Ge Caijie thought. Battling with two Myriad Manifestations Umbrellas had clearly been specifically guarding against the Exorcist's Seal Talisman. There was no reason for him to bring them with him everywhere?

And even if he had brought both, Ge Caijie didn't need to worry too much.

The Seal Talisman was a form of suppression, used to give Ye Xiu pressure, forcing him to change his techniques. If he didn't use the Seal Talisman, that might even be more useful than the effects of his using it.

Ge Caijie mentally organized the data he had from their last battle. He took a deep breath, stretched his fingers, and his character loaded in.

"Alright, next we have the fifth round of the Rookie Challenge, with Void's rookie Ge Caijie challenging Happy's Ye Xiu. These two players met in Round 14 this season. Does Ge Caijie plan on using this opportunity to wash away his previous loss? Okay, the battle officially begins, the two characters appear on the two ends of the map, this map is..."

"Huh?"

The host was stunned, the entire crowd was stunned. After a beat of silence, booing. Even though Ye Xiu had been constantly booed by the Tyranny fans from the very start, this time was undoubtedly the loudest.

Because this match had already ended, after only one second.

The only trace left was the message that Ye Xiu had sent in the chat: "GG."

Ye Xiu really did throw the match!

Chapter 1249: Everyone Come at Once

GG!

He actually just typed GG!

In the next moment, Lord Grim very naturally logged out from the game, and the system announced that Blue Exorcist had won.

It ended just like this?

BOOOO! The sound was so loud that even with the aid of the host's audio equipment, his voice was completely drowned out by the surging boos of displeasure from the crowd. In this moment, that boeing sound could only be described by one word: deafening.

That's right, it was deafening.

During the festive atmosphere of the All-Star Weekend Tournament, someone was actually greeted by such a loud, angry boo.

"He truly deserves to be called God Ye Xiu..." the host thought, with a face full of tears. Even though it was just an All-Star match, there was still a referee, and now that referee was sitting there, completely dumbstruck.

Ye Xiu walked out from the player booth, but he didn't leave the stage, instead directly walking back to the side of the host.

"God Ye Xiu, you're really..." the host didn't even know what to say. Who had experience dealing with this kind of unprecedented situation?

"I kept my promise, aren't I amazing?" Ye Xiu said.

"..."

At the other side, Ye Xiu's opponent Ge Caijie also walked out of the player booth and headed back to the center of the stage with a face full of regret. He was obviously extremely disappointed that he couldn't fight against Ye Xiu but could only helplessly and silently leave the stage.

Ye Xiu and the host watched Ge Caijie's lonely figure leaving. They watched for a long time before the host suddenly asked, "God Ye Xiu, how could you have the heart to disappoint the cute rookies like this?"

"Sigh..." Ye Xiu let out a deep breath. Ge Caijie's disappointment was something he could also see clearly, and for a moment, he felt a little bad about it. The Alliance and Team Tyranny could at most pick out those rookies who wanted to challenge Ye Xiu and group them together. To these rookies, challenging Ye Xiu was something that they were very sincere about. But when they went onstage, filled with anticipation, they were unable to do anything before being sent off with a "GG.". They had won nominally, yes, but in these All-Star matches, winning or losing was never the most important thing. The most important thing was how they won or lost. Just sending them off with a "GG" was very satisfying to Ye Xiu, but to these rookies who wanted to challenge him, it couldn't have been any more cruel.

Having said this, the host snuck a peek at Ye Xiu's expression and knew that Ye Xiu had been a little bit moved by his words. Obviously, he was also reluctant to disappoint the rookies in this way.

"When the next two contestants come, if they still want to challenge God Ye Xiu, will you... still GG immediately?" the host asked him.

Ye Xiu looked at him and asked, "There's still two more?"

"Yes, there are," the host confirmed.

"Then there's no need for them to fight one by one, let everyone come at once!" Ye Xiu said.

"What?" the host was at a loss for words.

"I'm saying, let them come at once!" Ye Xiu said.

"You mean... 1v2?" the host was stunned.

The boos took a great deal of effort to quieten down, but when they heard this conversation, the whole stadium was dead silent. Shortly afterwards, however, the booing began again, only this time it clearly wasn't as valiant as before. After all, sending out such vigorous boos of displeasure also required a lot of energy, and it was evident that the Team Tyranny fans were already tired, but they still persevered. They wanted to kill this shameless archenemy of theirs with their booes. GG? 1v2? Is there anything you can't do?

"This... isn't really in accordance to the rules, right?" the host said.

"What are you being so serious for? If I don't mind, then just let them come up! Who are they?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's Zeng Xinran of Team Hundred Blossoms and Song Qiying of Team Tyranny," the host replied dumbly.

"Alright!" Ye Xiu grabbed the microphone from the host's hands, raised it to his mouth and called, "Zeng Xinran of Team Hundred Blossoms and Song Qiying of Team Tyranny, the two of you kids can both come at once!"

"This this this....." the host hurriedly wrestled the microphone back. Momentarily, he had no idea how to deal with the situation, and could only desperately communicate with the backstage team for ideas. Team Hundred Blossoms' Zeng Xinran and Team Tyranny's Song Qiying also had no idea what to do. Rookies were the ones who took the rules most seriously, but Ye Xiu was doing something that clearly didn't follow the rules and wanted them to join in, leaving them at a loss.

"Then... the two rookies, do you mind this arrangement? If you don't mind, then please come onstage!" After the host's rapid communication with the people backstage, they eventually decided not to stop Ye Xiu. After all, it was All-Stars, where they were looking to make things more lively. If Ye Xiu was so brave as to want to 1v2, then let him do it. At the end of the day, if he lost, the only person who would lose face is him, and to Team Tyranny, they absolutely wouldn't mind.

Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying were both in the player seats looking at each other, waiting to see how the other would respond before deciding what to do, but after taking a look, the other person's response was to wait for them to react. With no ideas left, the two of them went to consult their team captains for advice.

"Just go!" the two captains said. After receiving their orders, the two players went onstage.

"Ah... the two rookies have already arrived. Then let me check first, is the player that the two of you want to challenge God Ye Xiu?" the host asked.

The two rookies were still a little out of it, so one of them just said yes while the other nodded his head.

"Oh... then next will be a 1v2 battle, the two of you will face God Ye Xiu together, are there any problems?" the host asked.

The two rookies glanced at each other. They were already on stage, what problems could there be? The two of them nodded.

"Great, then let's hurry up and start!" Ye Xiu waved his hands and headed towards the stage.

"Then, do the two of you want to say anything before you begin your challenge?" the host asked as he interviewed the two rookies.

"Uh... I... I have nothing that I want to say." Zeng Xinran was clearly quite nervous.

"Then what about you?" the host asked the other player, Song Qiying.

"This is against the rules..." Song Qiying said with a conflicted expression. It appeared that this arrangement was very difficult for him to stomach.

Having reached this point, the host didn't want to get side-tracked anymore and applauded the two rookies before directing them to their booth.

The competition was no longer an individual round and was instead set as a team battle. Ye Xiu alone made up one team, while Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying made up the other team.

"Little Song, teach this guy a lesson!!" the shouts in the stadium resounded. This was Team Tyranny's stadium after all, and Song Qiying could be the future successor of Desert Dust, so he naturally received a lot of attention. On top of that, he was about to face Team Tyranny's bitter rival of many years, Ye Xiu, so the fans were extremely excited, not caring about whether or not it was 1v2, deciding to cheer first and think about it later.

"Alright, then rookie challengers 6 and 7 will fight against Ye Xiu together, which is what Ye Xiu requested himself. The match is about to begin," the host announced. As the map loaded, the host suddenly felt flustered. This guy... he wouldn't pile these two together and then just send the two of them off with a "GG", right?

Having suddenly thought of this terrifying possibility, the host felt extremely restless. As the map finished loading and the players entered the game, the host could barely watch any longer. Has he said "GG" already?

The crowd was still quiet, so... he shouldn't have, right?

The host looked at the screen and finally let out a deep breath. There was no GG. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was charging out directly, was he getting ready to take the competition seriously?

But if it's a 1v2, even against two rookies, Ye Xiu should have a hard time, right?

Team Tyranny's successor for Han Wenqing, Song Qiying, now had a soaring reputation within the pro circle. Because of Team Tyranny rotating their player roster this season, he had very consistent opportunities to appear onstage, and was a strong contender for the Best Rookie award. In contrast, Team Hundred Blossom's Zeng Xinran looked inferior. The character he used was Tang Hao's character during his time at Team Hundred Blossom's, the Brawler Delillo. In Season 8 of the All-Star Tournament, Tang Hao used this very Delillo to defeat Lin Jingyan's Demon Subduer, convincingly winning the title of Number One Brawler. But now, Tang Hao's character was Demon Subduer, leaving Delillo in the hands of Zeng Xinran. Number One Brawler? Zeng Xinran was still extremely far away from this title.

In his first match, he encountered Ye Xiu. During that match, he could hardly play at all because he was too nervous; every joint in his hands was stiff. Luckily, the team didn't abandon him because of his first poor performance. Gradually, he adapted to the atmosphere of the competitive scene and became less and less tense. But that nightmare of a first match had still left a shadow in his heart.

This was really too awful of a memory for him. Zeng Xinran desperately wanted to find a way to cleanse himself of this memory, so he signed up for the All-Stars's Rookie Challenge. From the very start, he wanted to challenge Ye Xiu, letting himself rise from the same place where he had once fallen.

Today, I will not be nervous again!

From the start of the match, Zeng Xinran was very active.

"Hey, make sure you don't drag me down!" he told Song Qiying. Song Qiying was a first-year rookie just like himself, but his fame and reputation had far surpassed his own. Zeng Xinran couldn't complain. Who asked his very first performance to be so awful? Even so, he could still feel a sense of inferiority, so at this very moment, he wanted to prove himself where he had previously failed.

"Since we have two people, let's cooperate a bit more!" Song Qiying said.

"Cooperate? The two of us? How can we cooperate?" Zeng Xinran said. The two of them weren't familiar with each other at all, but inexplicably ended up fighting side-by-side. Cooperation? With this person? Zeng Xinran had no idea how to do so.

"You're a Brawler, I'm a Striker, from a class perspective, we can at least coordinate our low-level skills. What low-level skills did you add skill points into?" Song Qiying asked.

"Reinforced Iron Bones, Back Throw and Fling," Zeng Xinran replied.

"Oh, you really like grab skills! I've learnt Fling and Dismantling Throw, maybe we can make use of these." Song Qiying said.

"How do we make use of it?" Zeng Xinran asked.

"Have you not paid attention to the strategies used when two characters with the same class play together? It's in fashion now!" Song Qiying said.

"Ah..." Zeng Xinran started to recall. Strategies involving two characters with the same class were indeed being used by many teams nowadays. Team Blue Rain's Dual Blade Masters, Team Tiny Herb's Dual Witches, Team Misty Rain's Dual Sharpshooters, and even less needed to be said about Team Void's Dual Ghostblades.

How did they fight together?

Chapter 1250: Rookies' Partnership

The players who frequented the All-Stars list would not make a big deal out of the matches here, but most rookies did not share this sentiment. This was especially true for many first-year rookies. They had very few opportunities to get on stage, and all had a thirst to prove themselves. The All-Star matches received plenty of attention, and the rookies could face strong opponents, which made it quite a good opportunity to show off their skills. It didn't really matter if the matches were not played very seriously. Anyone would brag if they defeated the Battle God, the Great Gunner or the Sword Saint.

For this reason, the rookies were quite enthusiastic for the All-Stars Weekend. Enthusiasm translated to diligence. If they came on stage and faced a God, they would deep down be hoping to win, regardless of how courteous they appeared to be. Right now, Zeng Xinran and Song Qiying were about to play in a two on one. Even though Song Qiying felt apprehensive since it was against the rules, his mind was still focused on winning as soon as the match began. Two on one meant employing tactics for a two on one; Song Qiying did not entertain the thought of deliberately creating a one on one scenario in this situation. Thus, as soon as they entered battle, he actively communicated with his partner. The two weren't too familiar with each other, and it was probably a bad idea to rely on pure observation and skill to reach a tacit understanding. Therefore, Song Qiying hoped to communicate a basic battle plan first.

A battle plan that involved two characters of the same class.

Technically, they were not the same sub-class. They only shared some low-level skills, but approaching the current problem from this angle was undoubtedly the quickest way for them to find common ground. Song Qiying's judgement here was quite spot-on.

Same class duo tactics?

Zeng Xinran was also a reasonably diligent rookie. When he heard Song Qiying mention this, he immediately thought of some same-class duos in strong teams. The double-act of a same class duo could be said to be the most prevalent type of cooperative play in the pro scene. His Brawler and Song Qiying's Striker could qualify for a bit of a double-act as well.

Except...

Song Qiying was admittedly apprehensive about a two on one at first, but still managed to focus when the match started. But Zeng Xinran had other plans. What he wanted the most was just to defeat Ye Xiu, displaying his own talent in the process. A two on one? He didn't really think that far. When he heard Song Qiying's suggestion for cooperating, he didn't dismiss it entirely, but did he put too much thought into it either.

"Yeah... I guess as a Striker and a Brawler we could..."

"It can wait! The opponent is already closing in!" Zeng Xinran interrupted Song Qiying, and had his Brawler Delillo rush forward to meet Lord Grim.

"Don't be too hasty!" Song Qiyong called out quickly. He had quite a few ideas for a Striker and Brawler duo. Don't forget that his team Tyranny currently had the same duo, made up of the most experienced Striker and Brawler in Glory history! But right now, it didn't seem like his partner was patient enough or very interested in cooperating...

"I'll test the waters. Follow up appropriately!" Zeng Xinran didn't refuse Song Qiyong entirely; he was well aware of his own limits. Defeating God Ye Xiu, who had a sixteen win-streak in the individual competition? Of course Zeng Xinran had this desire, but he didn't dare have that much confidence in himself. But at least within the partnership between him and Song Qiyong, he was happy to give himself the main role. It didn't matter that right now, Song Qiyong was slightly more reputable than him. Since they were both rookies, Zeng Xinran had some confidence that he could steal the spotlight from Song Qiyong.

"How do you plan to test the waters?" Song Qiyong asked, while quickly following close behind with his character River Sunset. The two rookies could keep communicating because the voice channels were open. The All-Stars matches were slightly more lax on the rules and had never forbidden voice chat. However, with the recent lively debate about voice chat in the Pro League, the arrangement at the All-Stars matches also doubled as a trial of sorts.

"We'll look for an opportunity," Zeng Xinran answered.

"At least have some semblance of a plan!" Song Qiyong was alarmed by how casual Zeng Xinran was being.

"Okay, I'll go first, you follow up." Zeng Xinran revealed his plan.

"..." Song Qiyong was looking for something to say but became lost for words.

"Dodge!" Zeng Xinran suddenly shouted.

Boom!

Lord Grim's raised his Myriad Manifestation Umbrella. It blazed with gunfire and attacked the rookie duo from afar.

"He has a significant range advantage over us, I'm sure he won't let us get close too easily. We need to flank him," Song Qiyong called out.

"What's your plan then?" Zeng Xinran said, while having Delillo continuously roll. Lord Grim unleashed a never-ending stream of skills from gunner, mage or whatever classes; his selection criterion simply being that the attack range was enough to reach the enemy. Even though Zeng Xinran's brawler had some mid-range skills, he was still forcibly zoned out.

"Split up and flank!" Song Qiyong said.

"Fuck, and here I thought you had some master plan!" Zeng Xinran said.

"Flanking isn't just charging from two different directions! We need to watch the opponent's attack rhythm and skill rotations, and find the optimal angle of approach," Song Qiyong explained.

"Blah blah blah, just tell me which angle!" Zeng Xinran yelled.

"I'll take the left. You go right," Song Qiyong said.

"Could you be any more vague?" Zeng Xinran said.

"Split up first, we'll look for opportunities," Song Qiyong called out.

"Isn't that what I said in the first place?" Zeng Xinran muttered. The two rookies' characters, Striker River Sunset and Brawler Delillo, took the left and right respectively, and began to close their distance.

"Spread further! Further! Okay, line it up!" Song Qiyong called, while observing Lord Grim and dodging his attacks. The two characters ran up and managed to form a straight line with Lord Grim in the middle.

"Sweet, that reduced his damage output by a lot. Cover me while I try to get into attack range!" Zeng Xinran yelled.

"How am I meant to cover you?" Song Qiyong felt gloomy. Strikers had the shortest effective attack range out of all 24 classes in Glory. Since when did this class provide cover fire?

"Be forceful and charge, attract as much of his attention as you can!" Zeng Xinran said

"That's nice of you, letting me be the cannon fodder," Song Qiyong complained, but still had River Sunset charge forward. He believed that Zeng Xinran's suggestion was still the best way forward.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

River Sunset quickly activated this skill which gave Super Armor and increased defence, then followed up with Cloud Body and charged in forcibly.

As expected after seeing such a forceful charge, Lord Grim focused more of his attacks in the direction of River Sunset. He also started retreating to widen the distance between the two.

"Good job!" Zeng Xinran praised; he felt the pressure towards his own side lessen noticeably. Delillo seized the opportunity and charged forward madly.

Should I focus on my left or right?

Ye Xiu seemed to have been put in an awkward spot. Song Qiyong's River Sunset seemingly aimed to draw his attention, but the threat of his every step was very real. If Lord Grim toned down his attacks towards River Sunset, Song Qiyong would waltz right up to Lord Grim without hesitation. Strikers would not be able to demonstrate full potential in battle unless they were really up close.

What will he do?

Song Qiyong carefully watched Lord Grim's every move.

"Don't forget to maintain the angle!" Song Qiyong yelled. He noticed that after Lord Grim retreated perpendicularly to their two characters, the angle between them was shrinking. This would allow Lord Grim to switch fire more freely; they definitely shouldn't make this so easy for Lord Grim.

"You maintain it!" Zeng Xinran answered firmly.

Song Qiyong was speechless. Although keeping the angle by one person was achievable, it was more flexible if both contributed! Zeng Xinran really wanted to be the primary attacker no matter what!

There was no time to argue in the midst of battle. Song Qiyong felt helpless and could only do all the dirty work that the other guy didn't want a part of. He moved sideways to maintain the Lord Grim sandwich, while trying his best to close the distance and exert some pressure.

Lord Grim concentrated even more gunfire towards River Sunset.

"Chance!" Song Qiyong called out.

"You don't say!" Under Zeng Xinran's control, Delillo sent out a Powerful Knee Strike. It wasn't aimed at dealing damage but rather to close the distance, and Delillo managed to forcibly propel himself into attack range.

"Here I come!" Zeng Xinran shouted loudly.

"Don't rush in!" Song Qiyong saw this and shouted in return, but Delillo already used the Powerful Knee Strike. It was too late to cancel the skill; in any case, it wasn't like Zeng Xinran would care about anything Song Qiyong said in this situation.

This is bad!

A flank attack didn't seem complicated, but it actually required balance and precision between the two partners. Delillo's advance was too hasty and brought about an imbalance; this was especially disadvantageous for Song Qiyong's Striker, as they needed to be up close and personal before they could attack at all. This gave a very good chance for the opponent to launch a fierce counter-attack.

Song Qiyong analyzed this correctly, but he knew he had no way to stop Zeng Xinran. He could only have River Sunset charge forward recklessly, but...

"Behind you!" Song Qiyong shouted. Lord Grim used Shadow Clone Technique and teleported behind Delillo. Zeng Xinran threw a brick towards Lord Grim; he was so excited he got within attack range that he thought he was invincible. After hearing Song Qiyong's warning, he realized something was wrong; but it was far too late to react. A spurt of blood bloomed out from Delillo's neck. Ye Xiu mercilessly had Lord Grim use Cut-Throat.

Exactly! This imbalance!

Delillo rushed in too quickly and disrupted the coordination with River Sunset. From the current distance, River Sunset could not throw out any attacks. Zeng Xinran was currently one on one against Ye Xiu, and after being ambushed from behind, lost all initiative. Song Qiyong could only watch from afar. He had no way to intervene so he urged River Sunset to quickly close the distance.

But... would Ye Xiu have Lord Grim wait for River Sunset to arrive?

Of course not.

A Falling Flower Pam sent Delillo crashing into River Sunset. Lord Grim took this opportunity to retreat and increase the distance, once again starting to kite the two characters.