

Avatar 1341

Chapter 1341: An Uneventful Round

Pan Lin and Li Yibo were surprised at the arrangements Happy had made this round, and at this point, Happy and Miracle were deep into their match.

Target Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash?

He Ming's analysis and plan was good in theory, but reality told them that Qiao Yifan wasn't someone they could wipe out so easily. When the two sides met, they didn't see a hint of One Inch Ash. The other had gone on some strategic approach.

Matches weren't so inflexible. Since their target wasn't there, they weren't going to cling to this plan, ignore what was in front of them and run off to find their target. Thus, Miracle, seeing that they had the advantage in numbers, decided to just go for it!

They did, in fact, have the advantage in numbers, and a huge advantage, too.

When the two sides met face to face, Miracle was a full team of five while Happy was only Tang Rou and Su Mucheng's characters.

5v2, what was there to be afraid of?

Miracle swarmed over, but they knew that Happy wouldn't just send to people for them to kill, so they were on guard for if Happy would suddenly attack from some other direction.

5v2, with this exchange, there had yet to be a result, but He Ming, Wang Ze and Shen Jian felt rather anxious.

What were they up against? The combo of a Battle Mage and a Launcher! The combo they were most familiar with, the one that the team they had spent years in revolved around. Plus, in the past this combo had done it all: 2v1, 2v2, 2v3, 2v4, 2v5. Subconsciously, He Ming and co had erased their advantage in number from their mind. Advantage? What advantage? They were the ones pinned!

Soon enough, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea appeared and Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash also arrived from their right and left flanks, executing a pincer attack on Miracle.

One Inch Ash had appeared, but the goal of focusing on getting rid of One Inch Ash wasn't going to be easy to accomplish at all. He Ming and co shockingly realized that they had been trapped. Also, this scene was too familiar! In the past, it was their opponents who would be trapped by the Battle Mage and Launcher duo, while they caused trouble from the sides.

So in the end, it was the strategy we were most familiar with?

He Ming and the other two's spirits fell. Lord Grim and Dancing Rain had used their familiarity with these two opponents to craft a strategy to counteract them. Lord Grim straight up didn't show up though, yet it was like Miracle had lost their core. In the end, however, Soft Mist and Dancing Rain had

executed a playstyle that was far more familiar to them than Lord Grim and Dancing Rain, giving them a sense of déjà vu.

Sigh, if they had known earlier...

He Ming and co all held such thoughts. In the end, the team competition ended in Happy's victory, and Happy had won a spectacular score of 9 to 1 this round.

In the post-match press conference, no one had much interest in Miracle, and their press conference ended quickly. When Happy arrived, the reports naturally expressed great interest in Luo Ji's appearance in the match and Ye Xiu's lack thereof in the team competition.

The answer they received was that they were preparing for the playoffs.

Happy already getting into the pace for the playoffs!

Soon enough, such headlines appeared on the news. However, this wasn't really anything to be too shocked about. The season was approaching its last stages, and teams that had stable scores were already preparing themselves for the playoffs. No matter now or before, the playoffs had always been different from the regular season. The matches were frequent, and you'd have to travel back and forth for the home and away games. This truly did necessitate some adjustments and planning.

However, it was only Round 28! Wasn't Happy getting into the pace of the playoffs a little too soon? If they started preparing their troops and training them, then weren't they afraid of accidentally slipping out of the playoffs list?

However, this round of training their troops still ended up with a landslide victory of 9 to 1, so what could anyone really say? Those Happy haters could only swallow their words in the face of reality.

Round 28 was a round of landslide victories from the powerhouses. Apart from Wind Howl's 9 to 1 victory against 301 Degrees, nothing unexpected happened in any of the other matches.

Team Happy, gaining another 9 points to their score, had 187 points in total, continuing to place sixth. Next was Team Hundred Blossoms with 183. After Wind Howl had beaten 301 Degrees, they had managed to overtake the other team with their 9 to 1 victory. Though they had the same number of points at 167, Wind Howl had beaten 301 Degrees 9 to 1 this round and lost to 301 Degrees 3 to 7 in the ninth round. The total score of their matches was 12 to 8, Wind Howl in the lead, so Wind Howl was ranked above 301 Degrees despite their equal point value.

Wind Howl and 301 Degrees' ranking switch was the only movement for this round. The other teams all retained their original rankings. For all the teams ranked lower than number 12's Royal Style, it was more or less over for them this season. Now all that was left was to see if they would make a final charge towards gaining a few more points on the rankings. However, this motivation was primarily present in the club, and not the players.

The media was diving into the small area surrounding 8th place. They didn't even bother reporting on the top ranked powerhouses Samsara, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, etc.. The fight for the top place in the regular season had long since lost its suspense. The powerhouses' score were stable and there was no way they would fall out of the top eight. What was there to write about? The teams heading for the top four did have some juice to them. After all, being in the top four did have the advantage of an extra

home game. However, compared to the fight for the eighth place, the charge for the top four could be pushed to the backburner.

April 3rd, Round 29 of the Pro League, 301 Degrees welcoming Misty Rain to their home game became one of the more interesting face offs.

Misty Rain currently had 149 points, ranked tenth, was 18 points away from the ninth and eighth ranked 301 Degrees and Wind Howl. They still had hope for getting into the playoffs. However, considering Misty Rain's performance this season, most people didn't really expect anything.

Team Misty Rain's new playstyle had been constantly criticised, but after the winter transfer window, they still didn't make any adjustments. In the latter half of the season, their performance hadn't improved any. Now in these last ten rounds, no one knew if they even had the courage to make the charge for the playoffs. Though the club PR always sprouted messages about trust, diligence, fighting for a chance to turn the tables, these were things everyone knew to say. Bright Green and Seaside had also said that they wouldn't give up, but anyone could see that they had already disarmed themselves.

Round 29 was rather calm. Happy had an away game against Royal Style this round. Once a top team, they had already fallen to the point where they didn't even have a chance for the playoffs. However, Royal Style's home turf was still as lively as ever. This was an old team with ten years of history, after all. How many other teams in the alliance had ten years of history?

There were many older fans in their home stadium, middle aged fans were no rare sight. This was probably a scene exclusive to older teams. These people probably hadn't dedicated themselves to Glory much later than even Ye Xiu. Though they were only normal players, lacking the accomplishments that Ye Xiu had achieved, they definitely didn't love Glory any less, able to persist for a full ten years. Glory had already become an integral part of their lives.

Royal Style had completely fallen, but these people didn't leave. Like how Glory was an integral part of their lives, Royal Style was an integral part of their Glory. They had gotten used to supporting this team. If they did well, then good. If they didn't, it didn't matter either. They were no longer fans at an age where they would run over to young players and new promising teams, howling with excitement.

In the first individual competition, Happy continued to field Ye Xiu, and the audience even applauded when Ye Xiu entered the stage.

They had watched ten years of Glory, so they held respect for this veteran of ten years. Thought this guy had crushed Royal Style in the finals of the very first season of the Glory Pro League, Royal Style didn't have as big of a grudge as Tyranny. After all, they only held a grudge for this one year, not like how Excellent Era and Tyranny had gone back and forth for a full four years, always clashing in the finals; that would naturally result in such a huge grudge.

The applause was rather surprising for Ye Xiu, and he acknowledged the audience with a wave. Thinking of Royal Style's past, and then their present, Ye Xiu grew deeply nostalgic.

Then, on the stage, seeing the opposing player and character, Ye Xiu's breath hitched with emotion.

Tian Sen, Peaceful Hermit.

Royal Style had sent out their core and captain in the first match against Ye Xiu.

Unlike Wind Howl sending Tang Hao up first, Royal Style had probably arranged this with a very different attitude. In this season, they wouldn't be able to do much more or aim for anything further. Thus, they relaxed, and even their core came over to fight an individual match. They probably wanted to try breaking Ye Xiu's record, giving their team a little boost and their fans some action! After all, if they just ended it like this, it would be way too calm.

Peaceful Hermit!

Ye Xiu gazed at the character projected by the central projector of the stadium.

This was the character that fought with Ye Xiu over the championship of the very first season of the Glory Pro Alliance. Back then, One Autumn Leaf, Desert Dust and this Peaceful Hermit were the three most elite, most famous characters of the alliance. And now? Peaceful Hermit... Now how many young people still remembered the strength of this character? In the All-Stars this season, Peaceful Hermit didn't even get in.

Tian Sen. Ye Xiu looked to Peaceful Hermit's current player, getting into the player booth on the other side. This player, tall and built more like an athlete than an esports player, always seemed to struggle to get into the booth more than others; it was somewhat comical.

The Golden Generation, the batch of rookies that had shone the brightest, had all become core members of their teams. Tian Sen was probably the most tragic of them. His pro career had consisted of watching as Royal Style declined from a top powerhouse to a team that didn't even have hope to enter the playoffs. Yet he still persisted, silently. In the winter transfer window, 301 Degrees had invited him to join their team. Before Team Royal Style could express anything, he had stepped forth to speak his own mind.

No matter how well they did, just by this heart, he was a player deserving of respect.

As Ye Xiu entered the player booth, he thought of the player who had Peaceful Hermit before Tian Sen. That player had been known as one of the Three Gods of that era along with Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing: Guo Mingyu.

"God, my ass," Ye Xiu cursed as he inserted his account card into the card reader, "He owes me money, and he just disappeared like that. What an ass!"

Chapter 1342: They Call It Counter?

Happy versus Royal Style, individual competition match 1. Both characters had already loaded onto the map.

On one side was a ten-year player who had changed character; on the other side was a ten-year character who had changed player. These two sides rich with history stood on the stage now, and quickly met at the center of the map.

This was Royal Style's home game, but Royal Style had actually chosen to use a simple map like the ones that Ye Xiu normally chose. For a team that already had no more goals for this season, these matches had no pressure. Tian Sen probably wanted to use this kind of battlefield to directly break Ye Xiu.

"How daring." Ye Xiu couldn't help but praise the opponent.

"Bring it!" Tian Sen answered.

He had joined Royal Style just in time to witness the team's decline from prosperity. Everyone said that his story was a tragedy, but in reality, Tian Sen felt that he was still rather fortunate. At least Team Royal Style was still here, and he could still be its member. But what about the person in front of him now? Where was the team he once represented, Excellent Era? Once upon a time it was at the pinnacle of Glory, a dynasty-establishing team, but it had since collapsed until it was nothing more than smoke and ashes. And the final blow had been delivered by this person himself. This person standing here now, he was the most tragic person in Glory, was he not?

There had been numerous discussions about what had happened between Ye Xiu and Excellent Era. Tian Sen wasn't someone who liked to gossip, but he believed Ye Xiu. He believed that as long as he was allowed, he would absolutely fight for Excellent Era until the end. No matter how well or poorly the team fared, he wouldn't leave or quit. This wasn't mere loyalty. This was a sort of unbreakable tie that existed between the first generation of players, their teams, and their characters. Tian Sen understood this well, because he had inherited all of this. Even though he was part of the Golden Generation, he adhered to spirit and ideas of the Founding Generation.

Parting from one's team, parting from one's character, it was undoubtedly painful.

So Tian Sen refused to leave Team Royal Style, no matter how many promising invitations he received.

As for this person before him now? He parted from his team, parted from his character, and even had to fight a death match against his One Autumn Leaf. When he thought about these things, Tian Sen always felt deeply wronged on Ye Xiu's behalf.

But even so, Ye Xiu hadn't fallen. He continued to advance forward, all for the sake of Glory!

Yes, for Glory!

This was the spirit of the first generation of players, the Founding Generation. No matter what situations they faced, they would never give up.

Why had Ye Xiu chosen the extraordinarily difficult road of building his own team? Tian Sen felt that he understood. Because, aside from Excellent Era, he wouldn't choose anywhere else. He could only start over from zero, and create a team himself.

Perhaps everyone could see the hardships he went through, perhaps they could see the miracle that was his return to the Alliance. But no one would ever truly know the tragic journey his heart had taken.

But even so, Tian Sen would still use everything he had to defeat him. This was the greatest respect he could offer to this type of player.

Bring it!

After saying this, Tian Sen was already attacking.

Back in the day, Peaceful Hermit hadn't beaten One Autumn Leaf. Then what about today's Lord Grim?

It was said that the Exorcist was the counter to the unspecialized Lord Grim. But as the number one Exorcist in Glory, Tian Sen had only two words to say to this: how naive!

If an equipment-sealing talisman was enough to make an Exorcist the counter to Lord Grim, then what about those who had methods to dizzy, to put to sleep, or any other control techniques? Would those become all sorts of counters?

Every skill had its value. But for one skill to raise a class to the status of being a perfect counter, that was too shallow a way of thinking.

The skill was there. But how to use it?

Team Void's Ge Caijie was an excellent Exorcist rookie, but hadn't he fallen to Ye Xiu all the same? Counter, what counter?

There was no such thing as a perfect counter in Glory. Those who thought they were counters, they were just waiting to be countered by the opponent! Because the opponent would always successfully use what you were trying to block. Especially this person here, the Glory Textbook Ye Xiu, the master of calculation... No one who had heard the words and deeds of the older generation would ever forget this.

Team Void? Still too young! That was why Ge Caijie, when placed on the field, would be sent running in circles.

Tian Sen wouldn't be that naive. He didn't treat himself as the counter. He faced this confrontation as he would any match.

Two players, two characters, two classes. On one side, the unspecialized, on the other, the Exorcist.

Peaceful Hermit's left hand snatched a talisman from the air, while his right hand was already waving the scythe Death Savvy as he charged forward. Without fear, he began close-ranged combat with Lord Grim.

But Ye Xiu was unalarmed. Lord Grim swung the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, switching to gun form, and fired a rapid burst of shots toward Peaceful Hermit: Gatling Gun.

Tatatatata...

The gunshots were nonstop. Under Ye Xiu's control, the bullets flew everywhere, attacking not one point but an area.

Peaceful Hermit shook his left hand and the talisman flashed with light. Characters had already formed on the paper, and it was quickly slapped onto his own shoulder.

Hardening Talisman!

Peaceful Hermit didn't dodge, he simply continued to charge straight forward. The bullets exploded on his body in sparks, and he took some damage, but his forward momentum wasn't hampered by these bullets. This was the effect of Hardening Talisman, a stronger version of the Striker's skill Reinforced Iron Bones.

Using the increased defense granted by this talisman, Peaceful Hermit swiftly approached Lord Grim. Lord Grim threw a grenade at Peaceful Hermit's feet, but Tian Sen completely ignored it as well. When Peaceful Hermit stepped there, that grenade exploded, but even though it left a hole in the ground, it didn't shake Peaceful Hermit at all.

Shadow Cloak!

Lord Grim swept his sleeve and sent another skill flying. This type of grab skill was the counter to Super Armor skills like Hardening Talisman. But Tian Sen was fast with his controls. Peaceful Hermit swung Death Savvy down, and the scythe carved through the air with a burst of light. At first glance, it really seemed quite similar to the darkness swung out by Shadow Cloak.

Two skills. Which was faster?

The viewers waited for the result, but the two players had already made their judgments in an instant.

Death Savvy's swing would come faster! The attack speed of a scythe was naturally 10, and the top Exorcist Peaceful Hermit, having chosen such a fast weapon, would definitely have the best equipment to enhance his attack speed even further.

Jump back!

Ye Xiu immediately canceled his Shadow Cloak and controlled Lord Grim to jump backward and dodge. But to his surprise, Death Savvy flew out of Peaceful Hermit's hand toward him. Tian Sen had actually used Spirit Guidance!

Throwing his weapon of course increased his attack range drastically, still carrying the trajectory it'd had when Peaceful Hermit was swinging it. Lord Grim, jumping backward, couldn't escape this range, and it was too late to parry. Death Savvy hit Lord Grim right in the shoulder.

Peaceful Hermit lifted his hand, already prepared to retrieve the weapon. But the scythe was hooked around Lord Grim's shoulder, so when the Spirit Guidance pulled the weapon back, it carried Lord Grim along with it. Peaceful Hermit's left hand had already snatched another talisman, a character already written on it: Immobile.

Immobilizing Talisman!

His right hand pulled back his weapon, dragging Lord Grim along, while his left hand slapped out a talisman. They met, time slowed down, and this talisman was stuck right on Lord Grim's forehead.

Instantly, Lord Grim was unable to move. But the audience burst into shouts.

It wasn't because Peaceful Hermit had played excellently. It was because, as soon as that talisman landed on Lord Grim, another Lord Grim had already flashed behind Peaceful Hermit.

Too bad I saw it. Tornado!

Death Savvy suddenly flipped under Peaceful Hermit's elbow. Tian Sen hadn't turned his camera view, but he already sent this attack to Lord Grim's real body.

This attack came so suddenly, and Peaceful Hermit's attack speed was so high. Lord Grim, who had wanted to sneak up and use a Cut-Throat, was actually slashed by this backward, upside-down attack first. A sheet of red sprayed into the air.

"Ah!" Chen Guo couldn't help but shout.

She had already watched who knew how many matches of Ye Xiu's, but this was the first time she'd seen him caught by his opponent like this. She'd been so sure that Peaceful Hermit's neck would soon be spraying blood, but this time, the one bleeding was actually Lord Grim.

And the scythe once again demonstrated its unique uses. After slashing, it once again hooked Lord Grim, preventing him from retreating to Peaceful Hermit's side. Peaceful Hermit had already turned around, his left hand already gripping yet another talisman. The character written on the paper flashed in the light, as though it were about to fly out.

The Level 75 skill, targeting the opponent's equipment, the Seal Talisman!

Tian Sen didn't agree with the "counter" mindset, but that didn't mean he disagreed with the value of this skill. When there was a suitable opportunity and he could use it, he of course wouldn't let it go.

Seal Talisman. With a twist of this body, Peaceful Hermit sent this talisman toward the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella in Lord Grim's hand.

Kaka!

But with two sounds, the umbrella suddenly broke apart into two. Peaceful Hermit couldn't retract his slap, and the talisman landed upon Lord Grim's chest...

Clothes were equipment. The Seal Talisman immediately took effect, and whatever stats granted by this upper-body clothing were temporarily nullified. But this absolutely was not what Tian Sen wanted, and he didn't think "better than nothing." A skill could only be considered successful if it achieved the effect it was meant to achieve. He failed this attack, and what was waiting for him afterward was of course a counterattack. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella split in two, that was its tonfa form. The Fighter class skills relied on this weapon form.

Pow pow!

Kicks and punches landed nonstop upon Peaceful Hermit's body. There were regular attacks, there were skills, and in the end there was a Fling which sent Peaceful Hermit flying. Taking advantage of this grab skill's priority, which locked the target's movements, Lord Grim chased after with a Shining Cut, and at the right angle, he was able to use a Sand Toss at point-blank range right onto Peaceful Hermit's face. When Peaceful Hermit hit the ground, his vision was completely dark. All he could see was a message from Ye Xiu in the chat box to the side.

"You've studied my playstyle pretty thoroughly!"

Tian Sen had indeed studied Ye Xiu extremely well, and discovered that Ye Xiu loved using Shadow Clone Technique to circle around behind the opponent. So, he carefully watched Lord Grim's hands at all times. No matter what, Shadow Clone Technique required hand seals to form. Unfortunately, even though he correctly anticipated the attack, he still fell short.

Chapter 1343: The True Gunner God

Ye Xiu versus Tian Sen. Ye Xiu still won in the end, but Tian Sen's loss wasn't ugly at all. He unleashed the style of Glory's number one Exorcist Peaceful Hermit to the fullest. After the final attack, Ye Xiu put away his battle mindset to genuinely express his feelings.

Even though he didn't know where the familiar person had gone, the familiar character was still here, and a player who had inherited the spirit was still here. This sort of feeling was enough of a comfort.

"You played well," Ye Xiu said in the chat. Whether opponent or teammate, he wouldn't be stingy with his praise. "You played well" - the words were simple, but they were sincere to the fullest.

The two left their competitor booths at about the same time, and the stadium was already filled with thunderous applause. It was for Tian Sen, and for Ye Xiu as well. Perhaps it was because Royal Style already didn't need anything else from this season, and so the fans were more accepting, sending applause to the opponent both before and after the match. This opponent was worthy of respect, and the 28-consecutive individual win record was worthy of this applause.

Happy earned a point first. Next up was Luo Ji, Luo Ji again.

Royal Style didn't have any feelings toward this player, so of course they didn't have much of a reaction. After experiencing last round's battle, Luo Ji was finally less nervous. During this week, he had watched the recording of the previous match over and over again. That was his first battle of his professional career, not diluted in the slightest, a true you-die-I-live death match on the professional stage.

Luo Ji analyzed many conclusions from that match. His online documents and the paper notebook at his side were dense with notes. It was just a 1v1 that had lasted only a few minutes. How many little details had he noticed, in order to write so many things?

But this was just Luo Ji's method, so no one disturbed him. He drew what he needed from this, and when he came across something he didn't understand, he would ask his seniors for help without hesitation.

How much could he improve in one week? Luo Ji didn't know either. But he was standing on this stage, so he would simply do his best.

As it turned out, Luo Ji's opponent this match happened to be the Summoner player in Royal Style's roster, named He Weitang.

In the end, Luo Ji still lost, but he wasn't discouraged.

One week of effort still wasn't enough. He just told himself this. Now, he had one more recording which he could study.

And then, in the third individual round, Happy's Su Mucheng earned a point.

Next, Happy sent Tang Rou, Steamed Bun, and Fang Rui in the group arena, but, unexpectedly, they lost. Royal Style's players were very relaxed as they played, with no pressure at all. Perhaps it was this

attitude that allowed their performance to peak, and they ultimately won the two points of the group arena.

In the team competition, Happy sent out Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Steamed Bun, An Wenyi, and Mo Fan.

The lineup had a bit of rotation, but Happy played the team round very carefully. Royal Style could relax, but they couldn't. Ultimately, Happy won this team round, defeating Royal Style 7 to 3.

"Please work even harder in the playoffs." As they exchanged greetings after the match, Tian Sen didn't hold back with his words, sending Happy into the playoffs nine rounds early.

"Alright. Want to come with us?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"No need. Sooner or later, we'll return to that stage as well," Tian Sen said. Even though their scores had been poor for several years running now, he didn't lose the pride of being a member of Royal Style. As long as they were still here, anything was possible. Tian Sen believed this deeply.

"Keep it up!" Ye Xiu shook his hand firmly. Thus, the curtain fell on Happy's away game against Royal Style. In another stadium, the live televised match between 301 and Misty Rain also ended at this time. Ultimately, the recently-strong 301 turned out to be fiercer. Their loss to Wind Howl hadn't stopped their good condition, and in this home game, they defeated Misty Rain 8-2. However, their main competitors right now, Wind Howl, had done better this round. They had their away game against a team that was already viewed as relegated, Seaside, and didn't hold back in winning a 10-0.

With this, Wind Howl now surpassed 301 by two points, slightly expanding the lead they had just won last round.

301 was in ninth place, followed by Void. Void defeated Heavenly Swords 8-2 in their away game, continuing to maintain their chance at the top 8. They just had to wait for someone to mess up. However, with their current 11 point difference from eighth place, one mistake wasn't enough. The other team would have to make consecutive mistakes, and they would need to seize consecutive opportunities, if they were to have their shot.

Because of this, their chance was very uncertain, and Void's supporters were all extremely nervous. As for Misty Rain, after once again losing to their direct competitor, they now had a 26 point difference from the top 8. At this point, continuing to bite down on the theoretical possibility was no more than self-delusion. Misty Rain could be considered yet another team that had to say farewell to this season. This was the first time in recent years that this team had dropped out of the playoffs.

In reality, Misty Rain's greatest point of criticism was still how they tended to crumble at crucial points. But there really wasn't any fault to be found on their technical or tactical aspects, and their scores had always been fairly stable. In order to try and improve, Misty Rain had made adjustments, but it now looked like their adjustments had only given them a rather failed season. People were already beginning to discuss what move Misty Rain would make next.

After Happy finished this round, they prepared to rest overnight in City B. Heavenly Swords was also in City B, and had just played a home game. After the match, they contacted Happy to get together. Heavenly Swords right now was like Royal Style, right in the middle, with no more goals for this season.

Losing a match would still be saddening, but the sadness would disperse relatively quickly. At least, when Happy's members met the Heavenly Swords team, they couldn't tell from their faces that they had just lost 2-8 in a home game.

Once Heavenly Swords' players arrived, they pulled Happy for a late-night snack. Every week, this day right after playing a match was indeed the most relaxed day of the week for pro players. As long as they were in the mood, hanging out during this weekend was fairly common. However, by the time they finished the match and the interviews, it wasn't very early, and both teams' players had the self-restraint not to stay out too late. When they were about to disperse, Lou Guanning wanted to extend the friendship of a host, and invited Happy to stay an extra day the next day. But Ye Xiu made a polite but clear refusal for himself, and Su Mucheng followed suit.

"Tomorrow is A Qingming Festival 1," someone from Heavenly Swords quietly reminded Lou Guanning, giving him pause. He didn't know if this was Ye Xiu's reason, but of course he couldn't ask. If someone was observing Qingming Festival, there was nothing cheerful about that.

"Then I won't hold you guys up. We can get together next time, we have plenty of opportunities." Lou Guanning let the whole team of Happy go.

"Next time," Ye Xiu smiled. The two teams said their farewells. The next day, Luo Ji returned by himself to City T, while the rest boarded a plane back to City H.

Qingming Festival...

Chen Guo of course didn't forget this holiday. Yesterday, even if Ye Xiu hadn't backed out, she herself would have. Now, it looked like Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng had the same intent as her?"

"Want to head over together in a bit?" Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu while they were on the plane.

"Alright!" Ye Xiu nodded.

After the plane landed in City H, Happy's members split into two groups. Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Chen Guo went one way, and the others gathered together.

"Where are they going?" The three of them hadn't really said anything, so after they left, everyone else began discussing out of curiosity.

"Probably to sweep the tombs!" Tang Rou had been at Happy the longest and had known Chen Guo's background for a while. Even though she hadn't heard Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's story directly from them, she knew a little from what Chen Guo had said.

The players also knew that Chen Guo's father had passed, but they didn't really know about Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's situation, and so they asked.

"It's Su Mucheng's older brother," Tang Rou told everyone and then looked at Wei Chen. She knew that the young man who had passed was also a Glory expert in the past, and Wei Chen was an old player from those days, so maybe he knew this person.

After hearing Tang Rou's introduction, Wei Chen did reveal a somewhat stunned expression. "So that's what it was."

"Old Wei, you know him?" Fang Rui asked.

"Of course you brats wouldn't know," Wei Chen said, beginning to reflect on his memories. "At that time, there was no Heavenly Domain, and Glory only had one server at the start, only later opening the second server. At the time, all of us spent our time in the first server. We were probably the first batch of Glory players! And at the time in our first server, the Battle Mage One Autumn Leaf was already extremely famous. But there was another guy often with him, very famous, and no less skilled than One Autumn Leaf."

No less skilled than Ye Xiu!

This could be considered the highest praise in the Glory circle. With Wei Chen's shamelessness, for him to give this sort of praise to anyone other than himself was extremely rare to see.

"What was his name?" Fang Rui quickly asked.

"Autumn Tree," said Wei Chen.

Fang Rui shook his head to show that he'd never heard of that name before. That era was too far in the past, and this was just a character in the game. Very few such stories could be passed on for that long.

"Of course, how would you little brats have heard of him?" Wei Chen said disdainfully. In his eyes, Fang Rui was just another little brat.

"So this person was Su Mucheng's older brother!" Wei Chen continued under his breath.

"Autumn Tree, 'Qiu Mu Su'... Su Muqiu?" Fang Rui realized, after slowly voicing the characters aloud.

"Yes." Tang Rou had heard this name from Chen Guo, and nodded her head.

"Oh, so it was his real name in reverse," Wei Chen realized. "But at that time there was no Su Mucheng. No one would make that connection. By the time Su Mucheng entered the Alliance and became famous, this name had probably long been forgotten!"

"Yeah..." Even though Fang Rui hadn't experienced that era, who would pass on the legend of a mere in-game expert? By the time Su Mucheng entered the Alliance, it was already Season 4. Three years was long enough to forget a name.

"This Autumn Tree, what class was he?" Fang Rui asked.

"He was a gunner god," Wei Chen said. "A true gunner god."

Chapter 1344: There Are No Ifs

"Gunner god? A Sharpshooter 1 ..." Happy's members began to imagine a Sharpshooter called Autumn Tree running through the game, but unexpectedly, Wei Chen shook his head.

"No, not Sharpshooter. All of the Gunner subclasses."

"All of the Gunner subclasses?"

"Sharpshooter, Spitfire, Mechanic, Launcher," said Wei Chen.

"Another expert like that!" Fang Rui exclaimed. Everyone understood this "another." Wasn't their Ye Xiu an even more ridiculous all-class expert, a king's avatar 2 ?

"Actually, at that time, there were many people like that. Who didn't have main and side accounts? But very few could play every class to the limit like they did," said Wei Chen.

"Then what happened later?" Fang Rui asked.

"Later, wasn't it like Little Tang said, he died..." Wei Chen said.

"Car accident, I'm not too sure about the details," Tang Rou said.

And then everyone looked at Wei Chen.

"I don't know too much either, but after the Alliance was established and everyone was making teams to participate, he never appeared again. Probably someone asked Ye Xiu out of curiosity, and then the news spread that he had passed away. But the fact that he was Su Mucheng's older brother, no one knew that..." Wei Chen, the shameless old man, actually let out a sigh when he reached the end, with a face full of regret and pity.

"How skilled was this person?" Fang Rui asked.

"I'll say this. Whenever I fought against him, I didn't even have the chance to cast any curses," said Wei Chen, a profound respect in his voice.

The members of Happy exchanged looks, but after a few moments, Wei Chen didn't see the expressions of shock that he was hoping for.

"That's... not that impressive, is it?" Fang Rui finally said.

"You bastard!" Wei Chen instantly knew what Fang Rui was implying. "This was over ten years ago! Back in those days, I was still a godlike youth!"

"Damn!" Fang Rui looked like he couldn't listen to any more.

"In any case, he was incredibly skilled!" Wei Chen said.

"Compared to Ye Xiu, who was better?" Tang Rou always tended to care about the question of who was stronger.

"This... They always fought side-by-side. We were all curious as to who was stronger between the two of them, but sadly there was never an answer. Not back then, and definitely not now. There never will be..." Wei Chen's expression was once again filled with melancholy.

Everyone fell silent. For Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, and the others, this was the first time they'd heard of this person, and so they couldn't truly empathize so quickly. But seeing the extremely shameless Wei Chen suddenly show such emotion, they could feel how tragic this was, the story of a young genius meeting a premature end.

"If he had joined Excellent Era with Ye Xiu..." Even just thinking about this scenario, Wei Chen couldn't help but shiver.

"If he were still here, what would things be like?" Tang Rou was also thinking about this.

If only...

Who wouldn't think about these sort of "ifs"? But such was the nature of "if," to refer to the impossible.

"What kind of flowers are these now?" In front of Su Muqiu's grave, Ye Xiu watched as Su Mucheng placed down a bouquet.

"Hyacinths 3."

"Is there anyone else like you, changing the type of flower every year?" Ye Xiu asked.

"There needs to be innovation," said Su Mucheng.

"Innovation?" Ye Xiu laughed. "So you use every type of flower to express this meaning in the flower language?"

"He would like this kind of method," Su Mucheng said.

"Yes." Ye Xiu nodded. The person who had imagined the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and brought it into reality, was there anyone in Glory more innovative than him?

And the things left behind from his innovation were still sparkling on the Glory battlefield.

28 consecutive victories.

Ye Xiu's hand reached into his pocket, where Lord Grim's account card was quietly lying. This record would be firmly bound to this character. And it hadn't finished yet, it was still being updated.

I'll let this record last forever. But from the very start, I left out one match, to leave you a chance to surpass me.

Ye Xiu stretched out his hands to touch the gravestone. These were the hands currently controlling Lord Grim to write miracles in Glory.

"If it wasn't me here right now, and it was my brother, what would things be like now?" Su Mucheng suddenly asked this question.

"Oh?" Ye Xiu gave it serious thought, but he couldn't think of an answer.

"Would it just always be, championship championship championship championship like that?" Su Mucheng asked.

"Maybe so!" Ye Xiu said.

"And Dancing Rain would definitely be more famous than now."

"Not necessarily," said Ye Xiu. "Some guy with a female account is much much worse than a beautiful female player."

"Haha," Su Mucheng laughed, and touched the gravestone with her hands as well.

"Well, those things aren't really important," Su Mucheng said. "If only he could be here, that would be best."

Ye Xiu didn't say anything, because... there were no ifs.

This time, Chen Guo spent a longer time in front of her father's gravestone, because there were just too many things that had happened in this past year. She said many, many things, but she still couldn't finish it all.

Their team winning the Challenger League.

The difficulties they'd faced at the start of the season.

Their team's crazy win streak.

So many 10-0s.

Every team member's improvements.

The expanding guild.

The developing account characters.

And now, advancing toward the playoffs, the rhythm of sprinting toward the championship.

There was really too much...

Chen Guo actually grew tired from all the talking, and all that was just an overview. There were still many details, many other things she wanted to add!

Chen Guo was in a bit of a daze, not really knowing whether she should continue. Because of the fullness of this year, her tomb-sweeping method now became a bit unsuitable. There were too many things, she couldn't finish them all!

"Boss, want to drink some water?" Right then, Chen Guo heard someone speak. When she turned her head, she saw Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng smiling as they stood by her side.

Tomb-sweeping was a rather sad event. But Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng both knew that this year, to Chen Guo, was very happy, and for this year's tomb-sweeping, she wanted to bring this happiness here.

"Oh oh, thank you." Chen Guo took the bottle of water and gulped down some mouthfuls.

"You two are done?" she asked.

"Yeah." The two of them nodded.

"Alright, then let's go!"

"You're done talking? It didn't seem like it?" Ye Xiu said. It looked like they'd been listening to the side for a while.

"That's enough for today, I can come back and continue later. No one said that I can only come here on Qingming!" Chen Guo waved her hand, and took the lead in heading down the mountain.

When they returned to Happy Internet Cafe, everyone was gathered in the training room. They'd all been huddled together and whispering to each other, but when the three entered, they all instantly returned to their seats, they all sat upright and attentive.

"Went to sweep tombs?" Wei Chen asked with a cough.

"Yeah."

"Autumn Tree?" Wei Chen asked.

"Right," Ye Xiu nodded. It was no surprise that the experienced Wei Chen knew this name.

"It's a real pity," Wei Chen said.

"No one said it wasn't!" Ye Xiu smiled, and took his seat as well.

The room was quiet; no one dared to say anything else. For this sort of topic, it didn't feel right to ask the person in question to find out more. Everyone only knew that there was once a monstrously skilled Glory expert, but he left before he had the chance to strive for any glory. Compared to that, everyone here, whether strong or weak, whether new rookies or old veterans, they were still working hard to strive for everything. There was no greater fortune than that.

Click click click click...

The room was filled with nothing but the sounds of the computer mice and keyboards. Everyone was working hard for their own goals, but at the same time, everyone thought of the other burdens that they were carrying upon themselves.

Wei Chen thought of his teammates from back when he was on Blue Rain. They had already left the Glory Alliance, left this battlefield. Some people he might still be able to meet in life, but others had already disappeared without a trace to unknown places. The championship was what they had pursued back then, but in the end they had all departed with regret. And now, Wei Chen again returned to this stage, with his old skills completely insufficient in coping with the intensity of today's matches. But even though this was the case, he could still carry his burdens, couldn't he? If he really could win the championship, then when his old brothers heard and saw it, wouldn't they feel that he had fulfilled for them their strings of conviction?

This kind of feeling wasn't bad at all!

"Hey!" After thinking to here, Wei Chen suddenly gave a rough shout.

"Hey who?" Ye Xiu asked.

"You!"

"What's up?"

"Next match, I want to play," Wei Chen said.

"Oh? Ready to blaze a fire?" Ye Xiu laughed.

"Did you really think that I only came to watch?" Wei Chen said.

"Not many rounds left, is it enough?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's enough," Wei Chen grinned arrogantly. "I understand matches much better than these noobs here."

"Hmph..." The training room was instantly filled with boos.

"I say, in terms of real Pro League experience, aren't you worse than me?" Fang Rui spoke up. He was a Season 5 player, and had now played for over five and a half years. And Wei Chen? His professional career had been only two seasons, two years. Plus, there had been fewer pro teams at the time and skill levels were all over the place. The competition format was entirely different from what it was today.

"Pro League?" Wei Chen sneered. "Why do I call you noobs? This battlefield is called Glory. The Pro League is no more than a part of it."

"So you're saying you're about to go to Heavenly Domain and get some materials for us?" Fang Rui said.

"You look like you need to be taught a lesson! 1v1, let's go!" Wei Chen shouted.

"Who's scared of you! Make the room," Fang Rui yelled.

And thus the two went to compete in shamelessness and dirty playing. To the side, everyone else was listening and laughing, but they were all sprinting forward with more active, more positive, more hardworking attitudes.

The past could only be turned into ifs and remembered in the heart. Only the present could truly be grasped, and only by grasping the present could they take control of the future.

Nine rounds remaining.

Everyone looked at the leaderboard in the training room. There were still nine full rounds remaining. Play these nine rounds well, then they would enter the playoffs, and step upon an even more brutal journey. Everything had to be grasped tightly, starting from now.

Chapter 1345: That Was Only the Past

In Round 30 of the League matches, Happy played a home game, welcoming the currently last-place Team Seaside. Seaside was in low spirits, as they were essentially already relegated. The players were all worried about their future prospects, and very few fans had come along with the team.

As usual, Ye Xiu was the first in the individual round, earning a clean victory. And then Luo Ji came up, finally winning the first victory of his professional career. The audience was a sea of cheers, congratulating Luo Ji.

And then, Wei Chen.

The stadium burst into excitement again. This especially down-to-earth old player had been absent for while. No one even remembered the last time he had come onstage, but now he was pulled onto the stage once again.

Wei Chen boldly and grandly waved toward the audience, and the audience gave him an enthusiastic answer, but the end result wasn't what people expected.

Wei Chen, Happy's representative in the third individual battle, lost.

Seaside already had no prospects, but some of the individual players were still considering their own futures and putting their full effort into performance to try and attract more attention. Wei Chen met one such player, resulting in a long battle that ended with a slight mistake he made causing his loss.

Real battle was still a whole different matter from daily practice. Regularly training and sparring with teammates couldn't replace the rhythm of one professional match a week.

"Old Wei, can you even keep up anymore!" When Wei Chen came offstage, Xiaoshan Stadium came alive with many hollers from the audience.

It wasn't mockery, it was just the lighthearted joking from the fans that knew him well. Even though these words hit a sore spot, the shameless Wei Chen could always stand up to these kind of jokes.

"The hell do you guys know, this is tactics," Wei Chen yelled. But his voice had no way of competing with the noise of so many audience members talking at once, and it couldn't carry. Wei Chen could only hear everyone continuing to mock him as he helplessly walked back to the player area.

"Can't keep up, huh, Old Wei!" Fang Rui was following along with the audience.

"The hell do you know? This is called tactics." Finally, Wei Chen could make his retort heard.

"What tactics? Please, do enlighten us," Fang Rui said.

"Stop messing around," Ye Xiu interjected. "Old Wei is very upset after losing that match. Don't provoke him, or else he might cry."

"Pah!" Wei Chen spat in contempt.

"How are you?" Ye Xiu sat next to him, his tone becoming more serious.

"Even you're still doing fine, would I be any worse?" Wei Chen gave him a sideways glance.

"I have 29 consecutive victories," Ye Xiu said.

"Soon I'll be kicking ass, just you watch," Wei Chen said.

"Of course, we found you just for that purpose," said Ye Xiu.

"Well, I have to say, you found the right person."

"Good luck."

"I'll get into condition quickly."

The joking tone had finally vanished with those last two sentences.

“Now it’s our turn!” Ever since becoming the anchor of the group arena, he often had this grand air of a general. The group arena roster of him, Tang Rou, and Su Mucheng wasn’t something that Seaside could defend against. Just two of the Happy players were enough to defeat and destroy Seaside. Seaside didn’t even have the chance to see in individual battle that character which had once been their core, Boundless Sea.

In the intermission, Happy actively prepared for the team competition. Seaside’s players, however, just sat scattered around the player area, each lost in their own thoughts. There was no communication at all.

This was a team that had already completely splintered apart. Just last season, they hadn’t been doing so poorly, but this season had been a nonstop plummet. After Zhao Yang retired, the team said they sold Boundless Sea so they could set down a burden and travel light. But now, there was a big discrepancy between expectation and reality.

What they set down wasn’t just the burden of economic investment and resources. At the same time, they had set down what had always been this team’s soul and conviction.

To Team Seaside, Boundless Sea was more than just a contribution to their strength. He was the support on which the team’s spirit rested. Zhao Yang’s retirement was already a huge blow to the team. By selling the character Boundless Sea immediately after, this two-hit combo completely destroyed this team’s courage and belief to continue fighting.

Tear down and rebuild. But Seaside had torn down too much, until there was nothing left of their team. This team, perhaps, had collapsed the moment that Boundless Sea was sold off.

And at the same time, the most attention-grabbing match of this round, the match chosen for television broadcast, had also entered the most exciting part of the group arena.

Blue Rain vs Hundred Blossoms.

Huang Shaotian vs Yu Feng.

Former teammates, now the core players of their respective teams.

And now, it was finally time for them to stand opposite each other with their swords drawn, fighting to the death in this battle to decide the group arena.

Troubling Rain still had 96% health remaining, while Blossoming Chaos was at 100%. With such a slight difference, the two characters were essentially beginning this match at the same starting line.

“Let the match begin!” When commentator Pan Lin made this announcement, the two characters had already finished loading onto the map. But, shockingly, the chat wasn’t instantly flooded with a huge amount of text.

The instant the battle began, the television broadcast had already switched the close-up display to the chat. But there wasn’t a flood of messages?

“What’s going on?” Pan Lin exclaimed. “This is a match with Huang Shaotian! And it’s only the opening, they’re not fighting each other yet, how come there are no messages in the chat? Ah! It’s already been

seven seconds and there isn't a single message! What is this? Did something happen? Is there a problem in the player booth? Did Huang Shaotian faint? Can someone go and check?"

"I think..." To the side, Li Yibo finally opened his mouth. "Even though Huang Shaotian hasn't sent a message yet, you sounded a lot like him just now."

"..."

Fortunately, Pan Lin didn't need to worry, as just at that moment, Huang Shaotian's message finally appeared on screen.

"We meet onstage again. But after so long, we're probably used to this feeling by now! Come on, let's have a fierce battle. Let's see if your greatsword is fiercer or my lightsaber is faster."

At the same time the messages appeared, Troubling Rain was already Swift Running out, his weapon Ice Rain at his side glowing with faint blue light, leaving blurred afterimages like the marks left by raindrops freezing as they dripped down.

Just one message. For Huang Shaotian, this was truly unprecedented. Such an atypical performance seemed to indicate that he still wasn't quite used to treating this former teammate as an opponent? Even if Yu Feng had already left Blue Rain over a year and a half ago.

"I'm sorry that I can't continue to walk alongside everyone..."

Every time he met Yu Feng again, Huang Shaotian flashed back to what this guy had said just before he left Team Blue Rain, when he was bidding farewell to them all.

"I want to see what I can accomplish with this greatsword in my own hands," Yu Feng said.

What he could accomplish?

These two seasons, everyone had seen his accomplishments. Under Yu Feng's lead, Team Hundred Blossoms rebuilt its former trademark duo, the Berserker and the Spitfire. The number one Berserker, after leaving Blue Rain and joining Hundred Blossoms, was still the number one Berserker. But his simplest, most sentimental season would always belong to Blue Rain.

That was Blue Rain's most beautiful summer.

In Season 6, Blue Rain defeated Tiny Herb in the finals, winning that year's championship.

At that time, Yu Feng was a mere rookie in the team. He wasn't like Lu Hanwen, who had taken up the responsibility of main attacker in his very first year. In that year, Yu Feng's position still wavered between main roster and substitute as a rotating player.

But he played a role in Blue Rain's championship victory. Everyone saw his talent and anticipated his growth.

As expected, he quickly became a solid, indispensable member of Blue Rain, always the one who stood at the very front of the team to meet the enemies that came at them.

But unfortunately, this situation only lasted for two seasons. In Season 9, Yu Feng voluntarily transferred, wishing to leave Blue Rain. And his reason was exactly as described above: he wished to forge an era that was his own.

“But if that’s the case, then what was Blue Rain to you?”

Only Huang Shaotian would ask such a sharp question without hesitation.

“Thank you everyone, for your care all this time...” But this was Yu Feng’s only reply, and he left just like that. And Huang Shaotian, who had wanted to go up and demand answers, was ultimately pulled to a stop by Yu Wenzhou.

A position truly as the core. A team that truly belonged to him.

Perhaps some people wouldn’t care about these sort of things, but others would care about them greatly. And Blue Rain could not give these things to Yu Feng. Even if they had once had that perfect summer, even if Yu Feng had always led Blue Rain forward like the front of a train, these were not what he most wanted.

He wanted to use the greatsword in his hand to forge an era that belonged to him!

Even when Huang Shaotian hurled that “what was Blue Rain to you” question at him, he felt no guilt or remorse. What was Blue Rain to him? Every time he faced Team Blue Rain in battle, every time he met Blue Rain’s players, he would always think of this question.

At the time, he hadn’t known, and so he hadn’t given a reply. But now, he had found his answer.

The past.

To him, Blue Rain was the past.

That place had brought him laughter and tears and sweat and emotion. But all of that was in the past. Now, his body bore the emblem of Hundred Blossoms. He was this team’s captain. He had already waved farewell to the past. Now, he was using his sword to strive for what he wanted to obtain.

And no one could block him, not even Huang Shaotian, this person who talked so much and yet could never be hated.

Even if the one blocking his way was the Sword Saint, he would knock him down for good.

Blossoming Chaos, charge forward!

Without pause, without retreat, the two characters flew toward each other at the center of the map, and without hesitation, the swordlight clashed.

AAAAAH!

Blossoming Chaos seemed to roar. In terms of power, the Berserker of course had the advantage over the Blade Master, especially since he had activated the Berserk status from the start. Blossoming Chaos’ two eyes had gone red, and blood energy roiled around him. The Silver weapon he held, Blossoms’ Burial, with all the strength to bury everything in its path, swung toward Troubling Rain.

Chapter 1346: The Instant Spotlight Steal

“Right now Yu Feng has the advantage!!” Commentator Pan Lin described the current situation in shock.

When the two characters met, Troubling Rain was actually instantly suppressed by Blossoming Chaos. Under the ferocious attack of the Berserker, Troubling Rain was clearly in a bad position.

The broadcasters couldn't help but cut to a close-up of the chat every so often. This was a habit born from broadcasting many of Huang Shaotian's matches. But now, there was nothing... The chat was clean and empty.

“Huang Shaotian has said unusually little during this match!” Li Yibo observed.

“Looks like Yu Feng is giving him a lot of pressure. Maybe he doesn't have any time left to type words?” said Pan Lin. The pace of the players' attacks and defenses was so fast that Pan Lin had no time to discuss any details of the battle. He could only insert some side comments like this.

“After spending over a year in Hundred Blossoms, Yu Feng has indeed improved significantly,” said Li Yibo.

“Maybe it's the responsibility of captaincy that gave him more courage, gave him more of a role to play!” Pan Lin said, before glancing at the two sides' health bars once again. “The battle is extremely fast-paced. Troubling Rain's health has already dropped to 71%, while Blossoming Chaos still has 79%. Just looking at the health, we see that even though Huang Shaotian doesn't have the initiative, he's still managed to take away a large portion of his opponent's health. Plus, at the start of this match, Troubling Rain was already at 96%, meaning that up to now, he's lost 25%, while Blossoming Chaos has lost 21%. That's only a 4% difference!”

“On that point, we have to remember that Blossoming Chaos is a Berserker. During these exchanges, Yu Feng will likely be bolder,” Li Yibo said.

“Whoa, just in the time it took us to say that, their health has dropped again, Troubling Rain 67%, Blossoming Chaos 70%! Blossoming Chaos ate a big attack here! If we consider the two characters' starting health, doesn't this mean that Troubling Rain is now in the lead?” Pan Lin was surprised, because looking at the current offensive, Yu Feng clearly had the upper hand.

“Huang Shaotian's defensive ability has always been exceptional, and his ability to attack while defending is also strong. This has to do with the role he often plays within the team,” Li Yibo said.

“That's true,” Pan Lin agreed. The two didn't describe this point further, because all sorts of reporters, critics, and commentators had already talked about this many times. Huang Shaotian's defensive ability was high because Team Blue Rain had several characters that needed to be defended. Aside from the healer, Yu Wenzhou's Swoksaar also needed his support frequently.

But the protection of Swoksaar was different from the typical protection of a healer. After all, Yu Wenzhou wasn't someone who could be casually killed off. Even though his hands were slow, he relied on experience and rhythm to fight in his own way. So, Huang Shaotian's protection of Yu Wenzhou more

often contained a counterattack. This strategy of Blue Rain's was very mature by this point: from Swoksaar, launch a defensive counterattack.

So Blue Rain's players were all skilled in this area, with Huang Shaotian as the leader. Right now he was being suppressed by Yu Feng, but while defending, he managed to gain the upper hand in health. It had to be said that Huang Shaotian's defensive counterattacking was extraordinarily effective.

Having been teammates for three years, Yu Feng wouldn't overlook this special trait of Huang Shaotian's. But at this moment, it seemed like he didn't care, as he tenaciously continued to attack.

"Is Yu Feng playing too carelessly?" Pan Lin said at this moment. "Even though he has the initiative, if this keeps up, the initiative won't help him win!"

Just as he said these words, Yu Feng finally fell behind in terms of raw health. Troubling Rain was now at 61%, while his Blossoming Chaos had been brought down to 58%.

"He still won't stop to consider strategy?" said Pan Lin. Indeed, it looked like Yu Feng had no plan of stopping. The battle rhythm was just as fast as before, and in the midst of flying blood droplets, the health bars continued to drop.

60%, 57%;

58%, 54%;

54%, 51%;

50%, 40%...

After a flurry of blows, Blossoming Chaos's health suddenly plummeted drastically, from 51% all the way down to 40%.

"Ah, this..." Pan Lin was already losing his voice as he cried out. Blue Rain's home stadium erupted in cheers to welcome victory.

"No! Now, Yu Feng's offensive truly begins!" Li Yibo shouted. After seeing this sharp drop, he realized something.

Blood Awakening. Activating once a Berserker's health was below 50%, this granted a massive increase in strength. The lower the health, the greater the increase. And Yu Feng's health had dropped all the way to 40% in one step. The strength increase granted by this 10% would boost Blossoming Chaos' attack power and priority. And this sudden boost in attack priority would instantly put greater pressure on Huang Shaotian's defense. If he couldn't keep up with this increased rhythm, it was very possible that he would be crushed.

It looked like Yu Feng wanted to use this moment to attack explosively, directly defeating Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain in one go. Now that his own health was at 40%, Blossoming Chaos used his Awakening skill: Bloodthirsty Craze.

Boost!

Aside from the boost to strength, Bloodthirsty Craze also boosted Blossoming Chaos' movement and attack speeds. It relied on the same logic: sacrifice one's own health to drastically increase attack power.

In just this short instant, Blossoming Chaos completed a massive explosion of stats. This explosion wasn't a coincidence, of course. Yu Feng had planned for this long ago. He had a very clear plan here: relying on this explosiveness, he would deal the final blow to Huang Shaotian.

It's here!

The Silver weapon Blossoms Burial once again whipped up a hurricane of blood. All of these boosts had come so suddenly, even Huang Shaotian probably didn't expect Blossoming Chaos to swiftly enter a 40% health Blood Awakening and activate Bloodthirsty Craze. This was all completed in an instant. Blossoming Chaos' attacks now were on a whole different level from before.

Could Huang Shaotian withstand this sudden increase of power?

No, clearly not.

When Troubling Rain lifted his weapon Ice Rain to defend, it was instantly forced back by the greatsword Blossoms Burial. Blossoming Chaos' attack priority right now wasn't something that Troubling Rain could casually block with his blade.

Hit!

It looked like even Ice Rain was thrust into Troubling Rain's flesh. The blood sprayed up like a screen to cover the two people. Only their health bars could be seen, reflecting the current situation as they jumped downward.

Troubling Rain: 45%; Blossoming Chaos: 39%.

43%; 38%;

40%; 37%;

35%; 36%...

In an instant, in just this instant, Blossoming Chaos completed his counterattack. His health was now higher than Troubling Rain's. There wasn't even an exchange, there was only Yu Feng's crazy offensive. Blossoming Chaos' health depletion was only an automatic side-effect of Bloodthirsty Craze.

I can win! I will win!

Yu Feng saw the opportunity, the opportunity that he'd constructed from the very beginning, finally in his hand. He loved this feeling, truly loved this feeling, the feeling of having everything firmly in his grasp. It felt so enriching, and so very real...

32%; 35%;

29%; 34%;

25%; 33%;

20%; 32%...

Controlled well, his attacks were controlled excellently, the gap between their health was only widening. Even more importantly, as Blossoming Chaos' health depleted his strength was still increasing, and his offensive grew more and more violent.

The Bloodthirsty Craze status was about to wear off, and a large portion of his battle ability was about to vanish. Afterward, he would need to rely on Berserk to make up for it. But Huang Shaotian had probably already grown accustomed to this current rhythm; the replacement boost from Berserk probably wouldn't be enough to suppress him.

Still, he didn't need to worry too much. It wasn't a big deal if he sacrificed some health. Consider it a one-time interest payment on Bloodthirsty Craze! The final offensive was about to begin here.

Berserk!

Yu Feng didn't wait for Bloodthirsty Craze to wear off before using a new skill. Just before Bloodthirsty Craze was about to end, he activated Berserk.

His offensive continued, but as Yu Feng expected, the 25% decrease that Berserk represented couldn't help Yu Feng suppress Huang Shaotian completely.

He needed an exchange. He just needed to complete one exchange.

His 12% health lead allowed Yu Feng to feel calm. This battle would end after this final wave of attacks.

Whirlwind Strike!

Blossoming Chaos' attacks continued. He used a Whirlwind Strike to send his sword spinning toward Troubling Rain.

But...

Falling Blossom Form!

Troubling Rain suddenly darted out with his sword. So fast, so accurate. The attack was clearly initiated just slower than Whirlwind Strike, but it landed upon Blossoming Chaos first.

Blossoming Chaos was sent falling down out of his control, and Yu Feng was stunned. What happened? How was his offensive broken here? Troubling Rain's attack came so quickly that he truly had no way of responding. This one attack came as though it had been waiting for a long time, as though it had been ready for a long time. One touch completely shattered Blossoming Chaos' offensive.

"Dropping health like that in front of me, you really are too bold. Have you already forgotten what my style is?" Huang Shaotian finally graced the chat with some of his words. He mentioned his style. This style... He probably wasn't referring to how he was finally talking now, he was evidently referring to something else... Huang Shaotian's style, aside from his talkative nature.

Opportunist. The greatest opportunist in Glory. One opening was enough to create a reversal. One opening was enough to kill.

It wasn't that Yu Feng didn't know this, nor would he forget this. He simply believed that he wouldn't give Huang Shaotian any openings, any opportunities. But now...

Swordlight. Ice Rain's swordlight, like strings of frozen raindrops, landed over and over upon Blossoming Chaos' body.

20%, 28%;

20%, 25%;

20%, 22%;

20%, 15%;

20%, 11%;

20%, 0...

Just like that, Blossoming Chaos' 32% was wiped away in one go. Troubling Rain took no damage.

As expected of this guy! Yu Feng watched, helpless, as Blossoming Chaos fell. This guy always had a sudden explosion at a critical point, instantly stealing your spotlight. On the battlefield, no matter how hard he worked, no matter how well he played, it could never compete with the elegance of that guy's instantaneous strike.

He thought he had grasped victory in his hands, but it still slipped through his fingers in the end. That feeling of fullness turned empty in the blink of an eye.

This is why I had to leave Blue Rain!

At Blue Rain, your sudden appearances always crushed the presence I worked so hard to build up. It was truly too cruel...

Chapter 1347: Sprint

In the group arena, Troubling Rain defeated Blossoming Chaos, giving the victory to Blue Rain. In addition to the two points they had earned in the individual competition, Blue Rain entered the team competition with a 4 to 1 lead.

In the end, Blue Rain used their home advantage to crush their opponents in the team competition, winning an impressive victory of 9 to 1 against Hundred Blossoms. In the same round, Happy also managed a 9 to 1 victory against Seaside. Conquering Clouds was crushed by 301 Degrees in their away home, not getting a single point and losing 0 to 10. As for Wind Howl, 301 Degree's most direct competitor, they had managed to win against Misty Rain 8 to 2 on their home turf, but their 2 point lead was eliminated by 301 Degrees. They only managed to remain eighth thanks to their victorious battle against 301 Degrees.

There were two matches that roused public interest this round, Tiny Herb's home game against Void and Tyranny's home game against Thunderclap.

In the end, the two home teams ended the match 8 to 2. Thunderclap's team once again lost; this time to Tyranny's team. Something that was rather unexpected, however, was that Han Wenqing, Zhang

Jiale, Lin Jingyan and Zhang Xinjie, after a long time of not fighting together, all appeared in the starting lineup this time.

Was it a coincidence of their rotation?

No one would think that way. Team Tyranny had implemented this rotation for Han Wenqing, Zhang Jiale and Lin Jingyan to switch off. With all three of them present, Tyranny seemed to perform perfectly well, so what was the point of the rotation?

“Tyranny’s begun the sprint for the playoffs.” With Team Happy, Ye Xiu merely glanced at the lineup before making a conclusive judgement.

In the past, Chen Guo would probably ask why, but she didn’t need Ye Xiu to explain something like this anymore, because she could read between the lines. In reality, Happy also had such plans for Wei Chen, and Wei Chen’s situation was far worse than Tyranny’s veterans.

Veterans like them didn’t have enough energy for the entire season, especially not with the fact that there was an even more anticipated, even more intensive, even more frequent playoffs after the regular season.

Last season, Tyranny was ever so impressive, but lost at the finals.

Perhaps they had felt their efforts taking a toll on them ages ago, holding on only through their faith. Another match, just another match... Perhaps, that was what they were chanting in their heads. Getting to the finals, fighting three rounds against Samsara, they were holding on stubbornly through sheer willpower. However, no matter how strong they were, their energy would eventually be depleted. Under this exhaustion, they had met their strongest rivals in the Alliance and Tyranny had fallen, and many people could only think of what a shame that was.

Thus, in the new season, they had discarded their headstrong ways, not opening the season very well. Everyone felt that it was such a shame; they sighed: the spirit of these veterans were admirable, but what was the use in this stubborn persistence?

The voices cheering for Tyranny for the championship slowly died out, but Tyranny didn’t care, continuing forth like that. Their scores soon stabilized. Though they weren’t as impressive as last season, there was no pressure for them to get into the playoffs. Nonetheless, some people still felt it was a shame. They longed for the time where the four kings lead Tyranny to victory together, sweeping through the alliance with high-spirits.

Yes, high-spirited, but they ended up losing the finals.

But this time, Tyranny wouldn’t act according these personal feelings anymore. They fought steadily, stably. The veterans, including Han Wenqing who hadn’t backed down in ten years, all began playing in rotation. He was the team captain, after all – the soul of Tyranny. Currently, there wasn’t a single team that had such a figure in such a consistent rotation. It was rare that these people would even sit out for a single match. Yet now, this was something that had happened to Han Wenqing. The Han Wenqing that always pressed forth and never backed down.

Everything was for the championship.

Team Tyranny's members, after their loss last season, had clearly realized that they could no longer fight freely and without restraint like the younger generation. They had to preserve their strength. They needed enough energy to face the playoffs, to face the finals. Thus, they stayed in rotation this season, marching forth and keeping a low profile. The three veterans had each played two thirds of what they had played last season. They maintained their condition throughout the intense pro level matches and didn't deplete so much of their energy.

And now, it was Round 30 of the regular season. After this round, there would be eight more rounds in the regular season before the even more intense playoffs begun.

Team Tyranny's low profile would end here. In the match against Thunderclap, they revealed their fangs and claws. The three veterans and Zhang Xinjie appeared in the starting line up together, wiping out Thunderclap, who were using their team competitions to make miracles this season. They were announcing their return, announcing that they were prepared for the playoffs. They were going to use the following eight matches to once again get completely used to their team, to find the state they needed, because this was their true pillar. This was weapon they wielded in this fight for the championship. That was something they never doubted since they had formed this team last season, this team had people had thought senile.

"It's time to start."

That was the simple and straightforward reply Han Wenqing gave in response to the reporter's questions on their lineup.

It was starting.

All the teams were preparing.

Those who hadn't secured their position would begin their final slaughter to the top. Those who had already reached the door to the playoffs were all adjusting their teams to get into the rhythm of the playoffs.

Tyranny had the three veterans fight together, and Happy also had Luo Ji and Wei Chen find their optimal state through the following matches. As for the teams that didn't have much hope, they were beginning to change their tactics, too, willing to try out new things. Each team, depending on their own situations, would be adjusting to a different pace in these last eight rounds.

Often times, strange and unexpected situations would result from the clashes of these differing rhythms. Some would be at a disadvantage, others would be able to take advantage.

Happy was, unfortunately, one of those disadvantaged. In Round 31, they played their away game against Misty Rain, and Happy somehow lost with a shocking 1 to 9. Apart from the victory Ye Xiu gained in the first individual round, they lost spectacularly until the end.

If it was last season's Misty Rain, this score wouldn't be too shocking, no matter what team they had managed it against. However, Misty Rain's condition clearly wasn't very good this season, and their strategic structure had completely collapsed. But in this round, Misty Rain had fought unrestrained and won a landslide victory against Happy.

“Don’t underestimate us!” Chu Yunxiu grinned, saying to Ye Xiu as they shook hands after the match. “We didn’t underestimate you, we just really weren’t expecting it,” Ye Xiu said helplessly.

The individual rounds were acceptable. Happy had been prepared to lose points when they sent up Luo Ji and Wei Chen. The thing was that in their team competition this time, Misty Rain completely ignored the criticism from both outside and inside the circle. This time, they were even crazier. Chu Yunxiu took Shu Kexing and Shu Keyi, and the three ranged fighters fought elegantly and without a care for a world. Li Hua’s Ninja didn’t bother acting as a close ranged guerrilla tank anymore, instead running around and launching sneak attacks. Misty Rain had gone completely off the rails, leaving Happy floundering to react, and swept a victory for themselves.

“How was it? Our strategy?” Chu Yunxiu was enthusiastically asking for Ye Xiu’s opinion.

“Be happy about catching us off guard elsewhere. Stop shoving it in my face, would you?” Ye Xiu said.

“Heheh,” Chu Yunxiu didn’t mind this at all. It was clear she understood that their performance had simply caught Happy off guard. If Happy had prepared and dealt with this more carefully, Misty Rain’s strategy wouldn’t be all that reliable. “Good luck!”

After Ye Xiu walked past Chu Yunxiu, Su Mucheng came over and grasped Chu Yunxiu’s hand, giving her words of encouragement, as if they had been the one to win and not Misty Rain.

Chu Yunxiu naturally understood what Su Mucheng was talking about. Her encouragement wasn’t about this match, but Misty Rain’s overall situation.

Faced with her good friend, Chu Yunxiu didn’t bother with the triumphant demeanor she had worn in front of Ye Xiu, shaking her head and giving a strained smile.

“Let’s hang out after this!” Chu Yunxiu suggested.

“Alright!” Su Mucheng didn’t reject the offer. The two didn’t dawdle any longer. After the players of each team finished giving each other their post-match regards, they each returned to their prep rooms to prepare for the post-match press conference.

Misty Rain were the victors, so their press conference was after Happy’s. The sudden victory was exciting for the reports, and they enthusiastically tossed questions about the playstyle Misty Rain had used this round as well as what they thought about the playoffs.

Chu Yunxiu answered the questions one by one. Their strategy was something the team had been figuring out and researching. With the victory today, it seemed pretty good, so the team would continue to look into it and hone themselves. As for the playoffs? No one would know until the last moment, and Misty Rain wasn’t planning on giving up.

Watching the satisfied reporters, Chu Yunxiu could only sigh to herself. Was there really any hope for Misty Rain this season?

After the press conference, Misty Rain’s players bid each other goodbye. Chu Yunxiu was the last to leave the prep room and she flipped open her phone to a text from Su Mucheng: “Waiting at Exit E.”

“Coming.”

Chu Yunxiu replied before heading for Exit E.

The moment she stepped out from Exit E, Chu Yunxiu saw the somewhat blurred but elegant figure of her friend in the night lightning. Next to her was another, a fitful spot of red light fading and burning.

The elegant figure waved at her and Chu Yunxiu quickly walked over.

“How come you’re here, too?” Chu Yunxiu didn’t greet Su Mucheng, instead choosing to side eye the smoking Ye Xiu.

“I felt like the Great God Chu seemed after uncertain and was wondering if she needed some advice from a helpful senior,” Ye Xiu replied.

“Give me a cig!” Chu Yunxiu demanded.

Ye Xiu didn’t hesitate to take out a cigarette and hand it over and even offered a flame. Chu Yunxiu accepted the cigarette and lit it smoothly.

“Let’s go to the coffee shop over there!” Chu Yunxiu suggested after taking a puff from the cigarette.

Chapter 1348: Misty Rain, Helpless

The coffeeshop was fairly remote. It hadn’t been too long since the match ended, and the more eye-catching places along the road were popular hangouts for gamers who had just finished watching the match. If the three of them had gone to one of these places, there would definitely be onlookers. Fortunately, this was Misty Rain’s home stadium, and Chu Yunxiu was extremely familiar with the area. She led the two to this very quiet location.

They took their seats, each ordering a cup of coffee. The cigarettes were already finished during their walk over here. Ye Xiu stared blankly at the prominent no-smoking signs hanging in the coffeeshop.

Finally, Chu Yunxiu opened her mouth. “Happy really is doing well.”

“What about Misty Rain?” Ye Xiu didn’t dance around, going straight to the topic. He could tell that Chu Yunxiu was really feeling quite depressed. There must be some problems with the team, for her to ask to meet them after the match.

“What do you think?” Chu Yunxiu asked Ye Xiu.

Misty Rain’s problem right now was one of strategy, everyone knew this. In general, things like strategy should be kept secret from competitors. But unlike the stats of Silver equipment, strategies were publicly demonstrated in battle. So, strategies themselves weren’t considered some secret weapons. The key was their execution. 301 adapted to their new strategy of the Knight covering the Assassin like a fish to water, but if you tried to get a different team to emulate it, it probably wouldn’t be as effective. Different players and characters required different strategies. There needed to be adaptability.

So, there wasn’t anything taboo about talking strategy. Anything you can do, everyone else can too. It just came down to whether or not it’d be useful or effective. Still, mutually asking for tips and advice was rarely seen. Who had time to help the competitor improve?

But now that Chu Yunxiu said this, Ye Xiu didn't seem like he cared about all that, and he directly said what he had to say. "It's clear that the current strategy isn't suitable. Let's make an analogy! In basketball, there's a strategy of having one tall player with four perimeter players, but there's no strategy with a short player running around with four perimeter players. Misty Rain right now is the latter. You could play with this strategy occasionally to trip people up, but it's not suitable as a main strategy."

"Who said that wasn't the case?" Chu Yunxiu said.

"If you know the problem, then why don't you adjust?" asked Ye Xiu.

"How do you think we should adjust?" said Chu Yunxiu.

"Sun Liang should play in the starting lineup for the team competition," said Ye Xiu. Sun Liang was a member of Misty Rain, a Striker. He used to be a main player for the team, but after Misty Rain changed its strategy this season, he became a rotating player.

"Oh, then who should be switched out?" Chu Yunxiu asked.

Ye Xiu hesitated.

For such a simple question, Chu Yunxiu didn't need to ask him step by step. Who should be switched out? When Chu Yunxiu said this, the frustration and bitterness on her face was plain to see. Clearly, there was more to this question. After Ye Xiu thought for a moment, he realized where the problem must lie.

"When it comes down to it, that pair of sisters will just have to be separated," said Ye Xiu.

"That's the problem. They can't be separated," Chu Yunxiu said.

"Oh..." Ye Xiu understood and fell silent. He had already guessed the general situation.

The Shu siblings couldn't be separated? How could something like that be so absolute? Their partnership wasn't guaranteeing the team's success. On the contrary, it was because the two of them were on the field at the same time that the team couldn't adjust their class composition. They couldn't be separated, not for strategic reasons, but for other reasons. And the only thing that could supersede strategic demands were the decisions of the club itself. This wasn't a problem of strategy. This was a problem of the operations of Club Misty Rain. The club required that both of the Shu siblings be on the battlefield.

Just from how Misty Rain had specially requested the Alliance to change the genders of these sisters' characters, the hope and importance placed on these two was clear. And for pro players, value was ultimately demonstrated on the battlefield. So it wasn't strange that the club directly required that these two had to appear together on the field.

And this was something that players could hate, but could do nothing about.

Business operations overrode strategy. The outside directed the inside.

Chu Yunxiu hadn't asked to meet Su Mucheng to try and find some solution. She was simply feeling depressed and wanted to chat and share with a good friend. Now that the situation had been made

clear, the three sank into silence. For a problem like this, if Chu Yunxiu was powerless to fix it, then how could outsiders like Ye Xiu or Su Mucheng help?

Chu Yunxiu, Li Hua...

This was the true strategic core duo of Misty Rain. The value of this pair was higher than that of the Shu siblings. If it came down to it and this pair needed to sacrifice in order to achieve a more suitable class composition, then it wouldn't just be an individual sacrifice. The team as a whole would be sacrificing its fighting strength. If Misty Rain resorted to such a method to get a reasonable class composition, how much strength would they ultimately have remaining, anyway?

Furthermore... between these two players, if they had to choose one to remove from the roster, then Chu Yunxiu was a better choice than Li Hua. After all, the Shu siblings were both long-range Sharpshooters and had some overlap with the use of an Elementalist. Keeping Li Hua's Ninja on the field would allow greater flexibility of tactics. But with that, the problem became even more unsolvable. Chu Yunxiu was this team's captain; Windy Rain was this team's core character. If she didn't play on the main roster, was Misty Rain planning to start over from zero?

Ye Xiu combed through Misty Rain's situation in his mind, and he discovered that this really was a frightening problem with no clear solution. No wonder Chu Yunxiu was so helpless.

"Then what do you plan to do?" Su Mucheng suddenly asked. She hadn't said anything since entering the coffeeshop, but she'd thought of everything that needed to be thought of.

"I don't know..." Chu Yunxiu's gaze was somewhat empty. This season, she had truly felt rather lost and confused. The heads of the club had ordered that the Shu sisters be placed in the main roster, but Misty Rain's core wasn't suited for the sudden addition of two Sharpshooters.

But no one talked reason with her. The club simply wanted all of these players on the field at once. Windy Rain, Dark Forest, Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack, all four characters had to be there.

Ye Xiu had proposed the hypothetical of either Chu Yunxiu or Li Hua sacrificing themselves, but in reality, even that wasn't possible! Misty Rain was greedy; they wanted not only the beautiful sisters, but their core partnership as well. They demanded that this irrational roster win results. Misty Rain had already drifted unsteadily through half a season, but the upper management still refused to change. In their view, Misty Rain just needed to push a little more to get results. The players needed to work just a little harder, the strategies needed to mature just a little more, and then they would begin winning matches beautifully.

While they treated this as an obvious fact, they overlooked the reality.

While Misty Rain's players were working hard, the players of all the other teams were working just as hard.

While Misty Rain's strategies were maturing, the operations of the other teams were only growing smoother and smoother.

And Misty Rain's class composition gave them a natural handicap that they could never overcome.

A Misty Rain like this could not win.

Chu Yunxiu had racked her brains for half a season, but in the end, this was all that Misty Rain could accomplish. What else could she feel, beside frustration and bitterness?

"If you can't make adjustments, then you can only try even bolder things!" Ye Xiu suddenly said.

"Say it." Chu Yunxiu looked at him.

But Ye Xiu only said two words: "Wind Howl."

"So that's how it is?" Chu Yunxiu looked not at Ye Xiu, but at the ceiling.

"You've already noticed it, haven't you? Misty Rain could possibly emulate Wind Howl's playstyle," said Ye Xiu.

"It's a desperate playstyle," said Chu Yunxiu.

"Do you all have any other choice? If you don't want to give up right here."

Chu Yunxiu was silent.

Anyone could use a strategy. The question was whether or not it was suitable. Misty Rain was traditionally viewed as soft, so much so that it was basically considered part of their style. To have such a soft team try and emulate Wind Howl's ferocious and desperate style, it clearly wasn't a very suitable choice. This was a choice made when there were no other options, a choice to beg for victory in the midst of defeat. Even Wind Howl themselves wouldn't have gone to such extremes if their performance hadn't been so unstable. A fight without a healer was just too risky.

The three fell into silence once again. Chu Yunxiu rested one arm on the table. Her other hand held a small spoon to stir the coffee in front of her. She stirred it for a very long time, but in the end, didn't take a sip.

"Let's go, let's head back." She suddenly stood up.

"You're leaving like that?" Both Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were surprised at her suddenness.

"I still have two episodes of my TV drama to watch," Chu Yunxiu said.

"This late?" Ye Xiu looked at the time.

"You think I'm watching it on TV?" Chu Yunxiu scoffed.

"Alright, then!" Ye Xiu said helplessly, as he and Su Mucheng also stood up to leave.

Night had already fallen. There were no streetlamps around this out-of-the-way coffee shop to which Chu Yunxiu had brought the two of them. Under the starlight, her blurred silhouette walked at the very front. Misty Rain's troubles were both internal and external, but as the team's captain, Chu Yunxiu could only quietly carry this burden. On this point, she needed to be even tougher and more resilient than too many of her fellow male pro players. Misty Rain was in a disastrous situation, the outside world all criticized their strategies, the club was unwilling to change. But even in this situation, she had never said anything. She only continued to try and think of solutions, think about how she could use this unreasonable roster to earn results with which people could be satisfied.

“Alright, I’m going this way. What about your hotel, where is it?” At the intersection, Chu Yunxiu stopped and asked them.

“That way.” Su Mucheng pointed.

“Okay! When you get back, let’s chat online.” Chu Yunxiu walked back and hugged Su Mucheng.

“Keep your chin up,” Su Mucheng said. In reality, they hadn’t really talked about much this night. Everything that Ye Xiu said, Chu Yunxiu had understood long ago. Perhaps she only wanted to lay bare her emotions to her girlfriend; perhaps she wished to draw from this the courage and faith she needed to continue.

In any case...

“I will,” Chu Yunxiu said softly. She turned, waved her hand, and disappeared into the distance.

Soon, Round 32 was upon them. That night, Misty Rain presented a shocking roster to everyone who believed they were already done for the season.

Six attackers. No healer.

Chapter 1349: Team

The current round was Misty Rain’s home game against Team Void. In the 1v1 matches, Misty Rain won one individual round and the group arena afterwards, gaining a lead of 3 to 2. Then, when their formation for the team competition appeared onscreen afterwards, the entire stadium erupted.

Team Wind Howl had created an all DPS formation, but they were smart about it, arranging for their healer to appear in the starting lineup like any normal team. As for if they’d switch their healer out for an all DPS formation, that was something their opponents had to contemplate. They might do a man-to-man offense, but they might do a normal one healer four DPS formation.

However, Misty Rain’s formation didn’t even have a healer in it. This was something that hadn’t happened in the Alliance for who knows how many years, but now it had appeared with Misty Rain, a team which was often considered rather soft.

Were they cutting off all chance of backing down?

Everyone could feel their determination with this lineup.

“How fierce...” Team Void’s captain, Li Xuan, looked over at Misty Rain, where Chu Yunxiu was telling the players of Misty Rain something. This captain, the only female captain in all twenty teams in the Alliance, might truly not have as much hot-blooded passion that was typical of male players, but her dedication to her team didn’t lose to anyone. “But is Misty Rain’s formation really suited to this playstyle?” Wu Yuze looked up at the player lineup on the big screen.

Chu Yunxiu and the Shu sisters, one Elementalist and two Sharpshooters, these three ranged fighters had no problem with DPS, but they lacked CC. Melee classes, even if they didn’t have any control skills,

usually had an easier time restricting an opponent's actions. Could Misty Rain use three ranged fighters to completely pin their opponents?

"Don't let your guard down," Li Xuan said. Misty Rain wouldn't neglect to consider such simple problems. If they still dared to use such a formation, then there must be a reason. After all, didn't Happy get crushed by Misty Rain's sudden switch in tactics, despite having a home game advantage? Perhaps Misty Rain was now preparing to use a different strategy every round and hoping to win through catching their opponent's off-guard.

"It's time." After the referee approached to call them over, the players of the two teams entered the stage.

For Void, their starting lineup was comprised of Li Xuan and Wu Yuze's Ghost Duo, Li Xun's Assassin, Ge Caijie's exorcist, Tang Lisheng's Paladin and their sixth player was Ge Zhaolan's Spitfire.

How would Void's typical team arrangement face off against Misty Rain's extreme?

Currently, Misty Rain's fans were extremely anxious. Thought they were 32 points away from the current eighth team, but what if they really did achieve a miracle?

Last round, Misty Rain had crushed Happy with their sudden and drastic change in playstyle and rhythm. This round, they had made significant adjustments too, so maybe they would claim victory again? If and only if they continued like that, would their opponents' mistakes be of use. Perhaps the conditions of the top eight teams would suddenly slide, allowing Misty Rain into the playoffs?

You have to win... All of the audience members in the stadium were all thinking of the same thing, even those players who had given up on their team this season felt the embers of passion flicker to life.

Just maybe, there was still hope?

They hadn't seen a victory, but they saw Misty Rain's attitude. This attitude reignited their hope.

The team competition between a Misty Rain with a six DPS formation and Void begun! Unfortunately, this wasn't the match that had been chosen to be live broadcasted on television, so there was no way of drawing everyone's immediate attention. The match broadcasted this round was also much anticipated. At Tiny Herb's home game against Thunderclap, the two sides had reached the team competition.

In the 1v1 matches, Tiny Herb had claimed 4 points and Thunderclap only 1. It was a good lead and should've given them a huge morale boost, but when the opponent was Thunderclap, then a lead in the 1v1 matches didn't mean much for a morale advantage. Thunderclap had always relied on their performance in team competitions to achieve such heights, after all.

In the current round, they were playing their away game against Tiny Herb. How would their team competition end?

Oh... After several rounds of exchanges, Team Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi understood what was happening.

So everyone has started to focus on me? It was probably because the match against Happy had given everyone too clear of a message.

If you defeated Wang Jiexi, then you've defeated Tiny Herb. That's probably what everyone believed! So, was that Thunderclap's current plan as well?

Divide, encircle, reserve Box-1.

Wang Jiexi had noticed Thunderclap's strategic intentions, but what should he do? Wang Jiexi gazed at the team members at his side. Under his leadership, it was true that Tiny Herb had obtained two championships, but he couldn't be their pillar forever. Ultimately, he would retire, and the team would have to depend on themselves. Be a role model instead of a crutch, huh?

Wang Jiexi recalled Ye Xiu's words. In the past, he really hadn't considered that much, simply carrying Tiny Herb on his shoulders unthinkingly. Perhaps, it was precisely because of their previous successes that the team had developed such a strong dependence on him.

However, he would eventually be incapable of bearing such a weight, so they had to find a way to break away from this dependence. Gao Yingjie, Gao Yingjie had grown up under his careful attention and protection. The other had gained confidence, but it seemed that he had yet to gather the courage necessary to truly bear the weight of Tiny Herb.

They had to grow under a trying situation! Those who overcome adversity would gain more courage, and their confidence would be fortified. He couldn't continue to shoulder all their difficulties; he had to leave some for them to overcome on their own.

Yes, just let them deal with it themselves!

Wang Jiexi made this decision, and Vaccaria fell into Thunderclap's attempt at divide and encircle.

Perhaps he had the ability, the chance to throw off this attempt at dividing them, but this time, he decided to try and brute force his way out of the encirclement and destroy it. Of these two choices, there wasn't one that was particularly better or worse. Wang Jiexi's choice had always been to deal with it himself if he could, though. But now, he had chosen the latter, depending on the power of the entire team to destroy Thunderclap's strategic arrangements.

Would it work?

Wang Jiexi didn't know, but this was a trial, a trial for all the players of Tiny Herb.

Happy had added more chess pieces to hone for the playoffs, Tyranny's veterans were adjusting their pacing and condition in preparation, and as for Tiny Herb? Tiny Herb had to prepare for the playoffs, and even the future beyond them. They had to change their ways, completely. "Ah... Tiny Herb's been divided by Thunderclap!" the broadcast commentator Pan Lin cried out in surprise.

"Yeah..." Li Yibo gave a very simple reply. He had a feeling that the reason Thunderclap's strategy was executed so successfully was because of Wang Jiexi's choices. If it were the Wang Jiexi of the past, it definitely wouldn't have been so easy. Perhaps, he would've once even managed to crush Thunderclap's attempt at dividing them with a peak in performance. Yet this time, it felt like he was going with their plan and letting it succeed. What for? To push Tiny Herb as a team? Was it because he didn't want what happened with Happy to repeat?

No one knew about the words Ye Xiu and Wang Jiexi exchanged post-match, so Li Yibo felt like there was a barrier, preventing him from truly understanding. He had long since developed caution and didn't dare make a hasty judgement. He needed to continue observing. He thought to the last round where Tiny Herb faced off against Hundred Blossoms and lost their away game 4 to 6. Since that match wasn't broadcasted on tv, Li Yibo simply checked the post-match report, not bothering to rewatch the match.

Did any specifics happen with Tiny Herb in that match?

Li Yibo didn't know. After Tiny Herb had lost to Happy, they had fought another four matches. Did they make any adjustments? Li Yibo didn't know. Since they hadn't broadcasted any of the four matches, the attention he paid to Tiny Herb had fallen to such lows.

He wasn't like this before...

Even if he didn't watch all of the matches, he would at least follow the matches of the powerhouses. Not watching four rounds of matches of a powerhouse like Tiny Herb is something he wouldn't have even been able to imagine.

Why did it end up like this? Was it because now that Glory was growing in popularity, the number of reports by the media and commentaries also grew in number, making it easier to obtain large amounts of information, so he got lazy?

If he continued like this, then what was the point of his presence?

Never able to see deeper into the match, getting his face slapped all the time, was it fun?

No, not at all! The stockpile of Glory knowledge he had was running out. He had to keep learning, keep up with the pace at which Glory was developing!

The match was still continuing and Li Yibo once again admonished himself for not daring to express his own opinion.

"Ah, Vaccaria's been surrounded; Thunderclap has focused fire. They're trying to one wave rush him! They're keeping Tiny Herb's healer under careful control. That's right, their goal is to get rid of Tiny Herb's captain, Wang Jiexi first," Pan Lin explained excitedly.

"Tiny Herb's other members have reacted quickly, coming to Vaccaria's aid! Can they break through? Thunderclap will probably continue trying to take down Wang Jiexi first! In the match between Happy and Tiny Herb, Team Happy had sacrificed two characters to kill Vaccaria."

"Huh?! They've doubled back, switched targets... Thunderclap has adjusted their offensive, this... They've gone back and surrounded the rest of Tiny Herb's players. Vaccaria has been thrown to one side..."

"This... is isolation! Thunderclap has isolated Wang Jiexi! How to say this... This is probably a reverse of Happy's strategy. Thunderclap may have realized that they didn't have the power to finish off Vaccaria quickly, or they thought they might not be able to assure their final victory after the sacrifices needed to get rid of Vaccaria. Thus, in the end, their strategy was isolation! Vaccaria is still on the field, but he's been cut off from the rest of Tiny Herb. Thunderclap has gone to fight a Tiny Herb without Wang Jiexi,

while Wang Jiexi is actually still on the field, right? Coach Li?” Pan Lin gave commentary after commentary and suddenly realized, didn’t it seem a little too quiet over here?

Chapter 1350: The Battle Never Ends

Li Yibo didn’t speak because he felt like he had been enlightened. From not daring to be certain of Wang Jiexi’s intentions, to Thunderclap’s changing strategy. If dividing Tiny Herb up and ganging up on Vaccaria was something within his expectations, the double back and isolation afterwards was completely unexpected for him.

Brilliance, brilliance that he couldn’t predict at all. His own skill really had fallen behind. He had once been a member of a championship team, and now he had fallen this low? His minds drifted to Team Tyranny; his once teammates, his once captain, who were still fighting on the frontlines. Every time people thought “that’s enough, it’s time he retires”, he would reply resolutely: next year.

Next year next year next year.

It had been six years since Li Yibo’s retirement. Li Yibo was a little older than him, but back then, had he really reached the point where he had no choice but to retire? No... it wasn’t like that. It was only because that year, they had won the championships, so Li Yibo, who wasn’t all that young anymore, decided that it would be the optimal time to retire.

This was called knowing when enough was enough. Li Yibo had always thought his decision wise, yet now, he was beginning to question himself. Was his decision made because he lacked a certain quality? Why had Han Wenqing, who had also gained one championship, still fighting for another with all his might? Why was Wang Jiexi, who had gained two championships, still suppressing his preferred playstyle for the good of Tiny Herb? He had fallen.

Tiny Herb’s healer had shockingly become the first casualty in this battle. After all that, Thunderclap’s actual primary goal was the most typical ‘kill the healer first’. In this, how many strategic maneuvers and details had helped them secure their success? Li Yibo felt his head spin. He really was... absolute trash.

Losing the healer was a problem for any team. Perhaps it was because Thunderclap had let their guard down for a moment, relieved at being able to get rid of the healer, but Tiny Herb had managed a powerful wave of counterattacks then. It was good that Thunderclap had managed to steady their footing. They didn’t rush to end this, instead slowly pulling the battle into one of positional warfare and utilizing their healer advantage to its fullest. In the end, Thunderclap won, overturning Tiny Herb 6 to 4, managing to defeat Tiny Herb both in their home and away games this season with 6 to 4. They generally fell behind on the one on one matches, proving that the strength of their individual players weren’t the best, but when they acted as a team, they were a force that didn’t lose to any other team in the alliance.

This was no longer just about their tactics. Thunderclap’s players were the pinnacle of the alliance in terms of their tactical execution and their teamwork and cooperation.

“Thunderclap wins, in their away game too. Spectacular, especially in the team competition!” Commentator Pan Lin cheered.

“Yes. However, while Thunderclap might have spectacular results in the team competitions, they’ve never entered the top four in the rankings. Their performance in the 1v1 rounds are rather worrying. With the current playoffs format, falling too behind in the 1v1 rounds will place huge pressure on their team competition!” Li Yibo considered aloud. According to the playoffs format, the five person group arena and the team competition would be calculated by headcount. If Thunderclap lost too many points in the group arena, then they’d be playing under much more pressure and more restrictions in the team competition. This would certainly impact the flexibility of their tactics.

“You’re right, but this problem isn’t so easy to solve,” Pan Lin said, finding it unfortunate.

“Thunderclap might really need one or two players with strong individual strength to help them!” Li Yibo lamented.

“Indeed.” Pan Lin nodded in agreement. “Now, this match between Tiny Herb and Thunderclap has come to an end. A few other matches have also finished. We still have some time left, so let’s take a look at the results of the other matches.”

“Ah!” Just as Pan Lin finished speaking, he cried out in surprise after receiving the results from the other matches.

“In the match between Misty Rain and Void, Misty Rain didn’t have a healer!” Pan Lin exclaimed.

“Oh? They’re copying Wind Howl’s playstyle,” Li Yibo said.

“No, they... none of the six players in their team for their competition were healers,” Pan Lin said.

“And the results?” Li Yibo questioned.

“Void won...” Pan Lin’s tone held a hint of disappointment. It wasn’t that he was taking sides, but seeing Misty Rain dedicate themselves like this, it was natural for people to be anticipatory for what they could achieve. Unfortunately, Wind Howl had been successful, but Misty Rain still lost.

“To be honest, Misty Rain’s lineup isn’t very suited to this sort of playstyle...” Li Yibo also lamented, seeing Misty Rain’s roster. This problem was something that many people had noticed, but how many were there who knew of how helpless Misty Rain truly was right now?

“Seven to three, Void won against Misty Rain. It seems like this is it for Misty Rain this season...” In the live broadcast, Pan Lin finally dared to say this. Void was the team who stood in front of Misty Rain in the rankings, and now that they had defeated Misty Rain in a direct confrontation, it was naturally a huge blow to Misty Rain. With only six rounds left to the regular season, this really was it for Misty Rain. “Amongst the other matches that have ended, 301 Degrees has swept a 10 to 0 against Bright Green, Samsara defeated Parade 9 to 1, Tyranny crushed Radiant 9 to 1 and Happy won against Conquering Clouds 8 to 2,” Pan Lin rapidly announced the results of the finished matches.

“Oh? How did Happy lose those two points?” Li Yibo asked. “It... was the individual competition...” Pan Lin scanned the report on the match, “Luo Ji and Wei Chen each lost a round.”

“Happy’s two players...” Li Yibo really did want to comment on them, but he once again lost his confidence. They were Happy’s players after all... No matter who it was, if they were Happy’s, then he felt like he had no grasp over them.

This really wasn't a good feeling at all... Li Yibo began to worry again. He imagined his current self, standing on the battlefield. What would that be like? He wouldn't be able to figure out his opponent's intentions, he'd hesitate in indecision, his heart would constantly be in his throat. On the battlefield, he'd lose like that, and right now as a commentator, his current self kept getting slapped in the face to the point where he was hesitant to speak.

"Ah! Another match's results have come out!" Pan Lin really was his savior this time, not giving Li Yibo the chance to continue his commentary on those two players and instead running off to announce the news.

"Wind Howl... swept Hundred Blossoms 10 to 0 in their home game!" Pan Lin's announcement was full of surprise, after all, it was no easy task to get a 10 to 0 against Hundred Blossoms. Last round, Hundred Blossoms had even defeated Tiny Herb. Yet this powerful team had been obliterated by Wind Howl. Wind Howl had powerful individual strength, and now they seemed to have found something that works for the team competitions, too, like they had suddenly all achieved enlightenment.

"301 Degrees and Wind Howl are neck and neck!" Pan Lin exclaimed with a smile, "After this round, their scores are still the same!"

"But the other teams' scores have changed!" Li Yibo said.

Pan Lin paused for a moment and then checked the rankings. After each getting a perfect victory of 10 to 0, especially since Wind Howl's opponent had been Hundred Blossoms, 301 Degrees and Wind Howl were now both in the top eight. Instead, Team Hundred Blossoms had fallen to ninth with 199 points, 5 points away from the top eight.

"If I recall correctly, Hundred Blossom's following match schedule won't be easy on them," Li Yibo noted.

"That's right." Pan Lin had already brought out the match schedule. "Team Hundred Blossom's next six opponents are Misty Rain, Void, Royal Style, Thunderclap, Tyranny and Samsara..."

"It seems like... Team Hundred Blossoms is really in need of some luck!" Li Yibo said.

"I didn't expect for such a change at a time like now. Looks like you really can't relax until the very last moment," Pan Lin said.

"Indeed!"

"Alright, our broadcast ends here. We'll see you all again next time," Pan Lin announced the ending of the broadcast. Round 32's matches all soon came to an end. The uneventful rankings had experienced a whirlwind of change after this round, especially in the top ten. Blue Rain had risen to third, Tiny Herb fell to fourth, Happy rose to fifth, Thunderclap fell to sixth, Wind Howl and 301 Degrees had risen to seventh and eighth respectively, while Hundred Blossoms had fell by a full two places and out of the playoffs cut-off.

As for numbers ten to twelve after them, the three teams hadn't budged. However, after Royal Style, Misty Rain had also more or less given up on the playoffs.

"In the end, we still lost..."

The current round was still Misty Rain's home game. Chu Yunxiu, after the match, sat on the player bench, gazing at the score on the big screen. Seeing the audience leaving, she heard a lot of sighs and cursing from them. She saw her teammates sit next to her, silent.

"You guys head out first, I'm going to sit for a while," Chu Yunxiu said.

"It's almost time for the press conference," Li Hua came over to remind her.

"How about you take charge for it? I want to rest a bit," Chu Yunxiu replied.

After a match that crushed their last hopes for the season, the captain wasn't going to attend the press conference. This clearly wasn't very appropriate. However, after a moment of hesitation, Li Hua still nodded. "Alright." Her teammates left one after the other and some of them looked back at Chu Yunxiu, worried. Chu Yunxiu ignored it, continuing to stare at the score on the big screen. The audience behind her were exiting the stadium in an orderly fashion, sighs and reproachful comments towards Misty Rain audible amidst the clamor.

How exhausting...

Chu Yunxiu really wanted to just lie down on this player bench.

Everyone said that she was too soft, and in turn caused the team to become soft. Perhaps that was true. She wasn't strong enough, and it was easy for her to feel fatigued. Wouldn't it be great if she wasn't captain? Chu Yunxiu thought to herself, absentminded.

With Round 32, yet another team bid the season an early goodbye. What was to be of Misty Rain's future? Perhaps people would wonder, but this wasn't the focus right now. After Round 32, the top eight had gone through a whirlwind of change and Hundred Blossoms had been squeezed out of the playoffs by 301 Degrees and Wind Howl. It seemed like the fight this season was far from over. From number 5 to 9, there was only a 13 point difference. It wasn't just 301 Degrees, Wind Howl and Hundred Blossoms fighting. If Happy and Thunderclap slipped up, they might get left behind, too.