

## Avatar 1401

### Chapter 1401: Blind Spot Operation

Instantly, another textwall.

The referee's eyes were hurting. To be honest, for Glory matches, there wasn't much that the referee had to supervise. After so many years, the main reason why people got carded was for trash or otherwise inappropriate talk. It could only be imagined how much of a burden a Huang Shaotian match was on the referee. The opponent could ignore his screens of text, but the referee couldn't!

All messages sent during a match were recorded, and the Alliance would review them after the match. If they discovered something inappropriate that the referee had failed to catch at the time, then that would be the fault of the referee.

Against Ye Xiu last round, Huang Shaotian's trash talk was unusually scarce, which the referee greatly appreciated. But this round against a rookie, Huang Shaotian's chatterbox status was on full display. Especially since Huang Shaotian had already earned a yellow card, the referee was quite motivated to find another fault so that he could give a second yellow card and directly end the pain to his eyes.

But, there wasn't anything...

If it were really that easy to find a flaw in Huang Shaotian's trash talk, then it wouldn't be so hated. Instead, the various teams would love watching the phenomenon.

No one would need to do anything, he'd just talk himself off the stage. How fortunate would that be?

But right now, everyone could only quietly mourn for Happy's rookie.

This sky full of trash talk, there was no way he'd experienced it before, right? What kind of mood was he in right now? Is he already irritated beyond belief?

Pan Lin also wanted to find something interesting in Huang Shaotian's trash talk to talk about, but Huang Shaotian's trash talk always emphasized quantity over quality. He muddled his way through half a screen without finding a single thing worth reading, and eventually the broadcast just maximized the chat window to let the audience experience it for themselves.

The two characters were still moving on the map, yet the televised broadcast was showing the nonstop jumping of text messages.

"As expected of Huang Shaotian!" The audience understood that this chat channel close-up was very rare to see outside of a Huang Shaotian match!

"Mo Fan's Deception still hasn't made a move, he's still trailing along. He wouldn't be paying so much attention to the chat that he forgot about the battle, would he?" Pan Lin chuckled.

"Probably not...?" Li Yibo was a bit hesitant. The pro players all knew Huang Shaotian's style, but Mo Fan was a rookie. If he couldn't adjust to this, then maybe he really would become distracted.

Finally, Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain arrived at Happy's spawn point. Of course, he didn't discover Deception over here, and Deception still did not reveal himself.

"You want to test my patience? Then let me tell you, you're done for," said Huang Shaotian.

"I'm a patience expert, I can watch all of my teammates slaughtered one by one and still endure without moving!"

"Damn you, is that example worth bragging about? You're completely missing the point!" The crowd immediately started discussing this. This sentence didn't demonstrate how frightening his patience was, it just became another example of why his trash talk was of insufficient quality.

"The longer you make me endure, the scarier I become," Huang Shaotian continued.

"So in other words, if you still want that sliver of a chance at victory, then if you come out now, it might not be too late."

"You don't have much time, I'll give you 12 seconds."

"Why 12 seconds? Because this is the limit of my patience right now. It's very precise, isn't it?"

"The timer begins now, don't lose count."

Message after message after message...

But a few audience members really couldn't help but look at the clock and begin to count the so-called twelve seconds.

Was Mo Fan counting?

No one knew, but indeed, he wasn't just sitting around. Deception had arrived at the revival point and quietly hidden in a corner.

Ninjutsu: Disappearing Body Technique!

Mo Fan's Deception activated this skill. Climbing, hanging upside down, he used all sorts of movements he couldn't normally use to quietly advance, swiftly approaching Troubling Rain.

"Is he making his move?" Pan Lin shouted. "But it hasn't been twelve seconds yet!"

Li Yibo gave him a look. Twelve seconds, you took that seriously?

"Huang Shaotian is still studying the area around here. Is he still sending a report to his teammates?" Pan Lin said.

"So that's what it is! Mo Fan's about to attack!" Li Yibo suddenly reacted.

"What?" Pan Lin was caught off-guard.

"Blue Rain has already walked this path three times, so they already have an understanding of the ambush points to the left and right. But right here is Happy's spawn point. Up until now no Blue Rain player's character has arrived here, and Ye Xiu immediately took the roundabout path in all three of his rounds. Blue Rain hasn't gotten the chance to actually study what this area is like walking straight

forward!” Li Yibo called out excitedly. As he watched Deception’s movements on screen, he grew more and more confident.

That’s right, this was definitely it!

The path that Deception used Disappearing Body Technique to take was the path that Ye Xiu hadn’t taken in any of his three battles. Huang Shaotian shouldn’t have an impression of this area in his mind.

In other words, this was a blind spot in Blue Rain’s understanding of the ambush points on this map! And Mo Fan would definitely attack immediately, because with Huang Shaotian’s experience, even if he didn’t have prior knowledge of this area, if he studied it long enough, he would quickly discover that there was an ambush point here.

“Is that so?” As soon as Pan Lin spoke, Deception was already flashing forward.

The status from Disappearing Body Technique was still active, and unlike the Thief’s Stealth skill, it wouldn’t lower the movement speed of the character. In fact, under this condition, the Ninja could use any skill, and whether it was movement or attack, it would be silent.

Mo Fan timed it precisely, and Deception silently rushed out, silently approached, silently began forming seals.

Huang Shaotian wasn’t an actual God. He didn’t see it, and there was no sound, so he truly had no idea that this attack was coming. He was constantly rotating his camera view left and right to observe the surroundings, but when his view discovered Deception’s silhouette, the attack was already beginning.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh...

Numerous Deceptions seemed to simultaneously leap into his view.

Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance!

Mo Fan started off with a powerful skill. Instantly, dozens of shadow clones surrounded Troubling Rain.

The attack began.

“A cheap trick!” Huang Shaotian shouted, without panicking. Troubling Rain’s sword flashed with light, warding off the encirclement’s attack. He himself, meanwhile, was calmly observing all of the Deceptions before him, and he swiftly determined which Deception was the heart of the Shadow Dance.

This one!

Huang Shaotian zeroed in on his target. The light of Troubling Rain’s sword condensed in an instant, and pierced forward.

Puff!

The Deception burst into a cloud of smoke.

“Pretty fast reactions!” Huang Shaotian shouted. He was extremely confident in his judgment, and he believed that he hadn’t seen incorrectly. He hadn’t been able to break the skill only because Mo Fan’s

reaction and controls weren't slow either. Before Troubling Rain's attack landed, he had already switched the heart of Shadow Dance to another Deception.

But because Troubling Rain had approached so close, the Shadow Dance attack was greatly disrupted.

Puff puff puff!

In an instant, Troubling Rain broke another three shadow clones.

"Watch me!" Huang Shaotian's messages were still nonstop. From this, it could clearly be seen just how different his showdown against Ye Xiu last round was. At the same time, it caused people to once again ponder the tragic, age-old question: if this guy could always be that focused, instead of getting distracted by typing and chatting, then just how frightening would he be?

But those who would think this clearly didn't understand that for Huang Shaotian, sometimes, his chatting and typing was his way of focusing all of his attention on the match.

Shadow Steps!

Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain activated a skill that was somewhat similar to Shadow Dance.

Instantly, seven false images of Troubling Rain spread out. Unlike shadow clones, the images created by Shadow Steps were truly false. They couldn't be attacked, nor could they take damage. From the explanation of the skill, these were afterimages left behind by the high movement speed of the Blade Master combined with the light of his blade.

So, unlike Shadow Dance, Shadow Steps needed constant controls to maintain the images after they appeared. On the other hand, if no more controls were given after using Shadow Dance, the clones would simply remain inactive, but they wouldn't disappear. Furthermore, even if one didn't control them individually, they could be given to the system to be automatically controlled.

The Shadow Steps needed controls, but controls meant that as long as the skill's duration hadn't run out, it could change at any time.

Seven Troubling Rains spread out, but in the blink of an eye, they became four, and then five again.

The battlefield was a blurry mess. The referee, who had already gotten dizzy just from Huang Shaotian's messages, now felt like he wanted to throw up.

This was really so difficult!

A few members of the audience also pulled out eyedrops.

Just like this, Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain, in the midst of these illusory afterimages, defeated Deception's clones one after another.

"So strong!" Pan Lin was shocked. The player who had silently ambushed his opponent would just be broken and taken care of like this?

"There's only two left now, so which is it?" Huang Shaotian laughed. His Shadow Steps had ended, and there were now only two Deceptions left on the field.

Whoosh!

As soon as his message sent, one vanished by itself. The Shadow Dance skill had run out of time as well.

The audience once again looked at the health bars of both sides. Deception's heart in the Shadow Dance had never been caught, so he hadn't taken any damage. Troubling Rain had taken a bit of damage, but only 4%. For a successful ambush with the powerful Shadow Dance move to only deal this much damage, it was somewhat depressing.

"Tell me, what use was there in ambushing me?" Huang Shaotian shouted. Troubling Rain charged forward!

Whoosh!

Another cloud of smoke.

What?

Huang Shaotian was stunned. This was also a shadow clone? He actually hadn't discovered this or expected this at all.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Deception flew up from the ground. The flash of a ninjato was never particularly bright, but its sharpness didn't lose to any weapon.

Blood flew from Troubling Rain's neck.

4%!

The Shadow Dance that he'd worked so hard for had only taken 4% of Troubling Rain's health, but now, an Underground Tunneling Technique attack was successful, directly taking 4%.

When Mo Fan exploded, he didn't just use one attack. His flurry rush was generally at least five combos long.

The attack was continuing!

## **Chapter 1402: Fight on the Tree**

A sneak attack via Underground Tunneling Technique was a common technique of Mo Fan's. In the battle prep against Happy, Blue Rain wouldn't neglect him just because he was a rookie. They made sure to look deep into each of Happy's players, including Luo Ji, who only fought in the last few rounds, and their first captain as well as the first guild leader of Blue Brook Guild, Wei Chen.

However, knowing was one thing, actually being able to use this knowledge on the field was another.

If knowing could solve all problems, then that would make competitions far too easy.

Mo Fan had used Shadow Dance to open up this exchange, and the mass of shadow clones distracted Huang Shaotian. This was a very clever opening move and Huang Shaotian had been completely tricked by it. He hadn't thought for a moment that this SHadow Dance was a mere distraction.

By the time the strike from the Underground Tunneling Technique slashed at Troubling Rain's throat, it was too late for Huang Shaotian to react.

Bird Fall, Flame Cut, Neck Bind Technique, Flickering Charge!

Four consecutive Ninja skills, the first three flawlessly executed in midair, the speed making the audience watch on in awe. By the time applause rose from the audience, Deception had already completed all four skills. Their eyes could barely keep up with the movements and Troubling Rain was completely helpless against it, all the skills hitting solidly.

Who would spare a thought for caring about how Deception was a scrap-picker now? The audience roared their excitement; this was a rookie! And right now, God Huang Shaotian was completely helpless against this rookie! What skill!

After Flickering Charge, there was a slight pause in the offensive. It seemed that Mo Fan had hesitated for a moment, but upon seeing Troubling Rain still struggling to orient himself, he immediately charged forwards with another attack.

Ninja Arts: Cicada Shell Double Slash!

Deception chopped both hands towards Troubling Rain's staggering form, but didn't expect a sword to flash out at him.

Sword light swept right into Mo Fan's line of sight.

Hit!

Blood splashed out and this time it was Mo Fan who didn't have time to dodge. Troubling Rain was still staggering, trying to orient himself after those attacks. He might not be steady, but his sword was. What terrifying adaptability and control!

At the same time, Huang Shaotian's typing was also very steady.

"Heh, you're stretching yourself a little too thin." Huang Shaotian said even as Troubling Rain continued to steady himself and unleashed another attack.

Blade Storm!

Even under the current circumstances, the skill Huang Shaotian had managed to unleash was the powerful Level 65 Blade Master skill. The relentless stabs had blades sweep at Deception like a storm.

Substitution Technique!

Mo Fan resolutely gave up on resisting, using an escape skill.

The straw man that was substituted in was instantly torn asunder by Blade Storm. Mo Fan didn't dare have the escaping Deception launch another attack, aiming for a large tree behind him and leaping up into it with a few swings on his ninjato, looking down at Troubling Rain from up high.

Has he seen through me? That was what Mo Fan was thinking to himself then.

“Blue Rain’s seen through it,” Ye Xiu, on the bench, had already come to this conclusion.

You’re stretching yourself a little too thin.

The audience probably hadn’t thought anything of Huang Shaotian’s words. Even the commentators were discussing the moment of hesitation after Flickering Charge and before Cicada Shell Double Slash.

“He shouldn’t have hesitated!” Li Yibo said.

“He is a rookie, after all. He lacks experience!” Pan Lin sighed.

The two had noticed Mo Fan’s hesitation, but didn’t know the true reason behind it.

Mo Fan’s hesitation was because he knew that he couldn’t execute the following attack flawlessly. After that Flickering Charge, he could feel his focus slipping. It was just that it seemed like a great chance, so after hesitating for a moment, he went for it.

However, as reality had proved, Huang Shaotian wasn’t an easy opponent to take on when he wasn’t at his peak state. Even with his character stumbling around for balance, the Sword Draw Troubling Rain had used had still accurately struck Deception.

So, Mo Fan gave up trying. No matter what Huang Shaotian followed up with, he already had his Substitution Technique at the ready, fleeing first and thinking later.

“Huh?” Seeing Mo Fan’s Deception dart up a tree, Pan Lin and Li Yibo were completely befuddled.

“That was a great chance for an attack! How come he didn’t take it?” Li Yibo mumbled. This Happy! He could never manage to figure out what they were thinking! What was this strategy now? Just now, after he had used the Substitution Technique to escape Blades Storm, Deception had landed in a prime position to counterattack! Yet Mo Fan had Deception run all the way up a tree to escape. Was this Substitution Technique really just for an escape?

“Mo Fan’s being very cautious!” Pan Lin tried to be optimistic about it.

“Yeah...” Li Yibo agreed noncommittally. This was one explanation, but his intuition told him that there was another reason behind it.

Blade Storm ended up hitting a straw substitute and Huang Shaotian naturally cancelled the skill as soon as he could. He looked around, immediately finding Deception.

“You climbed so high? Trying to capitalize on the fact that I can’t climb trees?” Huang Shaotian sent a sneer emote and Troubling Rain charged.

Blade Masters didn’t have the ability to climb with ninjas like Ninjas. Troubling Rain darted to the base of the tree, sword light flashing, aimed right at the trunk of the tree.

It was all normal attacks, but slice, slash, cut, swipe, the sword light slid around the trunk and instantly carved out a path in the bark. Then, over and over again, sword light cut into the bark, splintering it and sending wood shavings everywhere.

“Is Huang Shaotian trying to cut the tree down?” Pan Lin stared in shock.

“So fast!” Li Yibo exclaimed over Huang Shaotian’s mechanics. In just a few moments, the cut around the trunk had deepened greatly. Mo Fan didn’t even manage to react before Troubling Rain suddenly jumped back twice, Ice Rain hanging to his left before being swung out.

Sword Draw!

Dark blue sword light arced out beautifully, but soon enough, the middle of the arc dimed and died. This part of the arc had sunk into the deep cut on the tree.

Rumble!

This Sword Draw had the tree finally succumbing to it’s injuries and gravity, splintering and swaying before tilting to one side.

It really did get cut down!

Everyone stared in shock. That tree wasn’t thin at all. A character definitely wouldn’t be able to put their arms all the way around it. Yet, in these few short moments, Huang Shaotian had gotten Troubling Rain to cut it down.

“Huang Shao so fierce!!!” On the spectator stands, Blue Brook guild’s leaders led the fans into cheering.

Huang Shaotian didn’t stop to gloat, retracting his sword quickly. He didn’t even bother to pose before he leaped onto the tree and ran up the angle at which the tree was still falling.

Triple Slash!

Sword light opened up his path, and with the tree slowly falling and the angle becoming lower and lower, Troubling Rain was swiftly heading towards Deception, who was steadily losing his height advantage.

Shuriken!

Mo Fan was no sitting duck either, sending out a shuriken under the cover of the leaves.

Clink!

Triple Slash just so happened to collide with this Shuriken, knocking it aside. Troubling Rain’s speed didn’t slow in the slightest.

On this steadily falling tree, both characters moved rapidly.

Troubling Rain was charging forwards and Deception was retreating.

The tilting tree had created a lot more cover for the characters.

Hundred Streams!

Troubling Rain continued to charge, when suddenly several streams of water erupted from a nearby patch of leaves.

Rising Dragon Slash!



Huang Shaotian's reaction speed was nothing to laugh at. Troubling Rain ascended into the sky. The streams arrived, rising up and weaving into a prison, yet Troubling Rain had used this Rising Dragon Slash to escape from above, clearing the attack in a jump.

Falling Light Blade!

Then, Troubling Rain once again plummeted onto the tree. Huang Shaotian had already caught sight of Deception.

Collapsing Mountain!

Troubling Rain leaped up again upon touching the ground, slashing down towards Deception.

Deception hurriedly jumped away.

This Huang Shaotian, he'd somehow managed to twist in the air, changing Collapsing Mountain's angle and sending his Collapsing Mountain after Deception.

Mo Fan had no choice but to have Deception parry, bringing his ninjato up to meet the sword.

Clank!

The weapons clashed. Collapsing Mountain had very high priority. Just raising a ninjato to meet it wouldn't be able to deal with it at all. Deception spat blood. This represented that he had taken damage from the strike and he fell back against the tree from the force, but with a quick roll, he was back on his feet.

The two danced their deadly dance of skills along the fallen tree, their skilled mechanics sending the stadium into awe.

But that was when, in the chat, two shocked words popped up under Huang Shaotian's name, "Holy crap!!!!!"

What?

Everyone blinked in confusion for a moment before they saw Troubling Rain disappear into the foliage of the tree with rustle.

Boom!

Soon after, the tree finally crashed fully against the ground, everything that was squashed under the tree roared with rage, dust and rocks flying up and engulfing the area like the aftermath of an explosion.

The entire scene was plunged into a cloud of dust.

Where'd Huang Shaotian go? Where was Troubling Rain? What happened?

Everyone noticed then, with shock, that Troubling Rain's health had plummeted in that moment by 50 percent. In addition to Deception's previous attacks, he only had 10 percent remaining, already at red blood.

It was lucky it was a TV broadcast, allowing them to replay a close up of what just happened. Then, everyone realized, that after Troubling Rain's Collapsing Mountain, he had stepped down to land, only

to miss the tree and fall through the foliage. He had landed on the ground first, and then, the tree landed on him...

The replay was wound back a little first and then everyone realized what had actually happened.

Before, it was Deception at that position, so Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain attacked. However, back then, Deception had stabbed his ninjato horizontally into the tree and stood on his ninjato. When he jumped away, dodging, he had taken his ninjato. The area he was perched on, hidden by the leaves, was actually devoid of branches, so there wasn't actually anything to land on there.

God Huang Shaotian had ended up falling for such a simple trap, causing his character to misstep in battle.

Even the experienced and skilled commentator pair Pan Lin and Li Yibo were lost for words in the face of this scene.

Jouissance: And thus this is why we call Huang Shaotian "Master of Fighting Trees" (战树大师 zhàn shù dà shī), which has the same pronunciation as Master Tactician in Chinese (战术大师) and only one character difference, except instead of "fighting tactics", it's "fighting trees"

### **Chapter 1403: Disparity**

The battlefield was silent. The stadium was silent. The computers and TVs tuning into the match were silent.

The Glory competitive scene had ten years of history. It was quite common for players to damage the surrounding terrain in certain special maps, but it was the first time anyone had ever seen someone personally chop down a tree and squish their character underneath it like Huang Shaotian did.

He truly is Huang Shaotian! The viewers thought to themselves. It was the playoffs, yet he still had the guts to pull off such a hilarious scene.

At the stadium, after a moment of stunned silence, applause erupted. Another high point of the group arena had unexpectedly come. It was just that this high point came with lots of laughter too.

Clap clap clap clap clap.

Ha ha ha ha ha!

"Huang Shao! Huang Shao!" The Happy fans imitated what the Blue Rain fans shouted when Huang Shaotian executed a brilliant play. They shouted these words again and again in rhythm. This sort of opponent was just too likeable. Happy's fans didn't mind clapping and cheering for him.

The pro players on both teams looked at one another. Whether it was Blue Rain or Happy, neither team had expected such a play. Even the experienced experts had only realized what had happened from the replay.

"Nice job, Mo Fan!" A smile spread across Chen Guo's face.

The others experts such as Ye Xiu were all sweating. They put themselves in Huang Shaotian's shoes and felt like such a scene could have happened to any of them.

"Huang Shaotian's mistake really... uh... makes a deep impression!" Pan Lin took awhile to organize his thoughts before finally saying these words. The viewers watching the match heard the comment and started laughing. Yeah! Apart from "deep impression", what else could be a better description?

"How surprising!" Not to be outdone, Li Yibo immediately followed with another fitting reaction.

"Troubling Rain still has 10% of his health left," Pan Lin didn't forget that the match was still underway.

"Deception has..." Li Yibo checked Deception's health and choked.

When the two exchanged blows, Mo Fan had opened with a sneak attack, and the following combo brought away 20% of Troubling Rain's health. Then, Huang Shaotian chased after him aggressively before finally being squashed by a tree.

During this chase, Huang Shaotian hadn't been able to deal continuous steady damage, taking away only 6% of Deception's health.

94%.

Deception had 94% of his health left.

A 6% vs a 70% trade.

A rookie against the Sword Saint, Huang Shaotian.

If they hadn't seen it personally, who would believe it? In terms of numbers, Huang Shaotian had been crushed by Mo Fan. Only those who actually watched the match would know how Huang Shaotian had been wronged.

A tree fell, and 50% of his health disappeared...

Pan Lin's and Li Yibo's update on their health bars brought everyone back to the match.

Dust filled the air from where the tree fell, and the tree leaves quivered from the violent crash to the ground.

As for the two characters?

Everyone hastily looked for them.

The camera quickly locked onto the two characters.

Troubling Rain's blood-drenched body showed just how much damage he took from the falling tree.

Troubling Rain struggled unable to move. He was clearly stuck under the tree. Swordlight flickered as Troubling Rain twisted his body and cut behind him.

Rumble!

The tree trunk on top of him suddenly lurched, but Troubling Rain had already rolled away.

The viewers took note of the chat. Was Huang Shaotian going to say something?

Actually paying attention to Huang Shaotian's trash talk was truly a rare scene.

But Huang Shaotian disappointed them. When everyone was annoyed, he wouldn't stop talking. When everyone wanted him to talk, he shut his mouth.

Fine! The viewers understood. They may be laughing at how Huang Shaotian lost 50% of his health, but for Huang Shaotian, he was probably so furious he was going crazy, no? This was even more of a tragedy for the entire Blue Rain. Their ace player had inexplicably lost 50% of his health. This group arena was looking more and more unfavorable for them.

Troubling Rain's movements became more cautious. He only had 10% of his health left, but he wasn't willing to give up just yet. Troubling Rain still had plenty of mana, and his fighting strength was normal. He needed to carefully protect this 10% health.

Where's my opponent?

Huang Shaotian looked around in search of Deception.

Where's Deception?

It wasn't just Huang Shaotian, everyone was looking. Despite having an omniscient view, they unexpectedly weren't able to find him. The camera cut to Mo Fan's point of view. His screen was filled with branches and leaves. There was only a small sliver that he could see out of.

Mo Fan wanted to take advantage of this opportunity, but Troubling Rain had escaped from the trap faster than he thought. He wasn't able to find the right opportunity to act, so he used the dust as cover to roll to the fallen tree, and hid behind the dense leaves and branches.

Huang Shaotian's situation was so tragic already, but he didn't show any mercy, carefully preparing for another sneak attack.

Through the help of the broadcast, the viewers quickly locked onto Deception's position. Troubling Rain didn't dare make any rash moves. He simply stood in place, observing his surroundings cautiously.

Finally, the dust settled, and the leaves stopped shaking. Troubling Rain jumped onto the tree trunk and slowly turned, examining everything in his surroundings.

Pop!

A gentle sound rang. Huang Shaotian nimbly turned his viewpoint and had Troubling Rain dash towards the source of the sound.

Purple smoke instantly expanded from beneath the leaves.

Ninja Tool – Smoke Bomb!

With only 10% of his health left, Huang Shaotian could not charge in. Seeing that he wouldn't be able to get anything out of this situation, he chose to retreat far away to outside of Smoke Bomb's range and waited patiently for the purple smoke to dissipate. Only then did he start moving forward again, his gaze locked onto a certain spot.

While he waited on the side, Huang Shaotian didn't just wait there doing nothing. He carefully observed the flow of the purple smoke and grasped Deception's movements from it, because he knew Mo Fan would definitely borrow the purple smoke as cover to move about. From these small details, he had been able to locate Deception's current hiding spot.

Quite hidden.

Huang Shaotian thought to himself as he looked at the dense bunch of leaves. Even though he didn't see Deception, he had determined that he was over there.

Troubling Rain continued to be cautious, taking each step slowly. He didn't make any moves in a single clear direction. He didn't want Mo Fan to know that he had already found him.

And just like this, Troubling Rain walked into Deception's attack range.

Still not moving?

Huang Shaotian had kept watch on that location. Troubling Rain had walked into a position that gave Deception plenty of opportunities. Still not satisfied?

Too greedy!

Huang Shaotian was helpless. He also knew the patience that a hunter had because he was that type of person too.

He was giving out openings that would let him make a counterattack, but it clearly wasn't enough to move his opponent.

Fine! Let's see just how patient you can be. Huang Shaotian thought to himself as Troubling Rain made another step closer.

Still no movements.

Another step, nothing.

Huang Shaotian felt his head hurt.

He had experienced Mo Fan's skills. His instant bursts were incredible. Although he couldn't keep it up for long, Troubling Rain only had 10% of his health. A short burst from Mo Fan was more than enough.

If he got any closer and let the opponent initiate, he might not be able to counterattack.

"He can't keep delivering himself over!" Li Yibo shouted. Through their omniscient spectator view, they could clearly see the situation on both sides and had a clear grasp at Huang Shaotian's intentions. From the analysis he had given previously, everyone agreed with Li Yibo: he can't keep delivering himself over.

But Huang Shaotian still had Troubling Rain take a step forward.

This was perseverance, bravery, and more importantly, confidence.

The situation was unfavorable for him, yet he still had the confidence that he could turn it around.

Deception rushed out!

For him, it was the best opportunity he was going to get. The previous opportunities were indeed quite good, but he wasn't tempted by them. He patiently waited until the golden one appeared.

The patience trained from being a scrap picker wouldn't lose to anyone.

"Good!" At this crucial moment, Huang Shaotian first typed out a message.

Storm Shuriken!

Numerous shurikens flew out. Under this cover, Deception quickly formed a seal, Shadow Clone Technique!

Troubling Rain, Sword's Divine Judgement!

Huang Shaotian didn't hesitate even though this skill had gotten him into a bad situation last match. When it was time to use it, he was still confident in his judgement and used it with no second thoughts.

Sword qi flew out in every direction. Deception, who had used Shadow Clone Technique to get behind him, was swept away by the sword qi.

Stun!

The damage from Sword's Divine Judgement wasn't great, but the Stun effect was remarkable.

Troubling Rain turned around with a Rising Dragon Slash.

Deception was launched into the air. Rising Dragon Slash into Falling Phoenix Slash was a very common combo, but Huang Shaotian decided to go more complex. He used a Headwind Strike in the air into an Immortal Guides the Way. Before Deception was blown away, he immediately followed with a Falling Phoenix Slash.

The sword pressed down on Deception as he fell. Although this combo dealt more damage, the difficult execution meant that a slight flaw in the chaining of skills could lead to Deception breaking free from it.

But everyone could also see why Huang Shaotian took the risk. By chaining these skills together, his character fell slightly slower, allowing him to dodge all of Deception's Storm Shurikens.

Huang SHaotian would not let himself waste the 10% health he had left.

#### **Chapter 1404: Technique**

Boom!

Falling Phoenix Slash's knockdown priority was very high. Deception crashed down against the ground, even forming a small crater upon impact, but the flashing sword light had already caught up.

Falling Light Blade!

Almost as if flying on his sword, Troubling Rain and Ice Rain arrived in front of Deception in the blink of an eye.

Deception was rapidly forming hand seals with his hands.

Substitution Technique!

Huang Shaotian could predict this. This was one of the most disgusting things about fighting Ninjas. They had numerous escape techniques that could brutally murder their opponent's attack combo.

Luckily, most Ninja techniques required hand seals, which was their form of casting. Even though a Ninja's casting speed was decided by affective APM, it still gave their opponents the chance to interrupt.

His mechanics were very fast, but, it wasn't fast enough!

Huang Shaotian's calculations were very precise. He had executed his offensive with Mo Fan's escape techniques in mind, aiming to make sure the other didn't have a chance to use them. The time between the short stun after Deception crashed into the ground from Falling Phoenix Slash and Troubling Rain's Falling Light Blade hitting wasn't enough for Mo Fan to use the Substitution Technique. These detailed calculations were one of the many factors that differentiated top Gods from rookies. No matter how talented a rookie was, their lack of experience meant that they wouldn't be able to make such detailed and accurate estimations.

Hit!

Ice Rain swung down, and Huang Shaotian already had his next moves all planned out.

But in that moment, he noticed the hand seals Deception was making.

This wasn't the Substitution Technique!

Huang Shaotian's eyes were sharp, able to capture the tiny and rapid hand movements Deception was making.

This... was the Underground Tunneling Technique!

Mo Fan had actually decided to choose to counterattack at a time like this. This was shocking to Huang Shaotian. He hadn't predicted such a possibility because when they had been prepping for their battle against Happy, they had found two clear and fundamental traits to Mo Fan's style.

Patience that wasn't second to anyone's, and an absolute aversion to risk-taking.

Considering this player's background, it wasn't hard to understand this style.

Thus, this Underground Tunneling Technique completely contradicted his style. This was a risky move, and Huang Shaotian hadn't expected Mo Fan would consider such a decision at all.

But, he could probably interrupt it, right?

The hand seals required by the Underground Tunneling Technique were more complex than the Substitution Technique!

That's what Huang Shaotian told himself, but he still had a bad feeling about this.

Different techniques had different complexities, but players also had different levels of familiarity and mastery for different techniques. For rookies, this was more evident. It was completely possible that the more complex Underground Tunneling Technique would be faster than the Substitution Technique.

Hit!

In the end, Falling Light Blade struck Deception, but had it interrupted the hand seals?

There was only a slight difference in timing, so miniscule that not even Huang Shaotian could make a judgement. All he saw was Deception thrown back by this Falling Light Blade and then suddenly disappearing into the ground.

He had completed the hand seals!

Huang Shaotian's reaction was immediate. Troubling Rain, having just landed on the ground, once again jumped up without hesitation and slashed down.

But... it hit air.

Deception hadn't jumped out to attack him. Now, he was once again displaying that disgusting patience of his.

What an annoying opponent!

Huang Shaotian cursed under his breath. Actually, god knows how many times his opponents had cursed him with the very same words. Partially because of his trash talking, partially because of his battle style. It was extraordinary, and extra annoying\*.

Huang Shaotian didn't know when Mo Fan planned on attacking. The moment he landed would be the most dangerous, so he accompanied his landing with another strike downwards.

Deception still hadn't struck, and Huang Shaotian felt that it was quite the shame. Though his patience was admirable, but in Huang Shaotian's eyes, the other's decision wasn't the best. The optimal moment to strike with Underground Tunneling Technique was the moment it was activated. In that moment, Huang Shaotian had been a bit of a mess. However, now, he had oriented himself and was prepared, quietly awaiting the moment the attack was launched. Did Mo Fan really think he could succeed in a sneak attack now? Not unless Huang Shaotian disconnected.

"What a shame!" Thus, Huang Shaotian began spamming the chat again. Even underground, Mo Fan could still see the chat channel.

"You missed your best opportunity," Huang Shaotian continued.

"Now I can even have my character easily walk out of your Underground Tunneling Technique's range," Huang Shaotian finally said.

Range?

After he typed down this word, Huang Shaotian startled.

And then Deception's Underground Tunneling Technique activated.

Not under Troubling Rain's feet, but in the farthest corner of the skill's range from Troubling Rain. Just like that, Deception jumped out of the ground to face Troubling Rain.

Holy shit!



Huang Shaotian realized that he had made a mistake.

This Underground Tunneling Technique wasn't about offense at all. In that moment, it was used as an escape skill. And now, hadn't it successfully interrupted his offensive? The two of them, facing off directly? With Troubling Rain's 10 percent health, a few skills exchanged was enough to kill him.

Seeing Deception's emotionless avatar face, Huang Shaotian felt like he was looking directly at Mo Fan's expression. While he was rambling away, the other was probably emotionless like this, not even sparing his words a glance!

Deception turned, and escaped, once again using the environment to hide himself. His opponent only had 10 percent health left, yet he didn't directly attack.

However, this time, he was very active. While hiding, he would often throw a shuriken or something to harass Troubling Rain, baiting his opponent into coming closer.

Huang Shaotian didn't know if he should cry or laugh. He, a God, was now... being played around with by a rookie?

However, he didn't have any way to deal with. This rookie was no joke, and his own character only had 10 percent of his health left, and so he was set in a very awkward circumstance.

After patiently tormenting him for a good while, Mo Fan finally found an opening he was satisfied with. Deception charged out, unhesitantly showing an air of 'yes, that's right, I'm taking advantage of the fact that you barely have any health left'.

What a damn bastard!

When Troubling Rain finally fell, Huang Shaotian was so angry he couldn't even type anything anymore, only slam the desk and curse.

Mo Fan won!

Though everyone had expected this result when 50 percent of Troubling Rain's health was smashed by a tree, when the victory actually occurred, it still sent the audience into an uproar.

Counterattack of the grassroots?

This was it!

This wasn't the first time Mo Fan had achieved something like this before. Last time, he had defeated Sun Xiang in the regular season, no?

However, that time, he had the clear advantage from the beginning of the match. This time, 100 percent versus 80 percent, rookie versus God, how many people would even consider that 20 percent advantage? From the beginning, everyone was expecting Huang Shaotian to win.

Though this match included a hilarious catastrophe of getting 50 percent of his health smashed by a tree, making Huang Shaotian's situation look like an unfortunate accident, this situation was artificially created, and they couldn't neglect to consider the role Mo Fan's skill played. Plus, in their head on exchanges, Mo Fan hadn't been completely suppressed by Huang Shaotian. Compared to the last round

where Ye Xiu had 30 percent of his health knocked off in one go by Huang Shaotian, Mo Fan had yet to fall into such an ugly situation. On the contrary, he had started off with a successful ambush, taking out 20 percent of Troubling Rain's health in one.

"What a glorious victory!" Pan Lin exclaimed in the live broadcast, purposefully reminding everyone to not overlook this victory because of that lost 50 percent.

"After all, it was Huang Shaotian who cut down that tree..." Saying this, Pan Lin had to stifle his laughter. No matter how he described it, it would sound hilarious.

Huang Shaotian left the stage amidst laughter; some were mocking, some sympathetic, some just cheerful, all sorts of different emotions accompanied by applause and people yelling "Huang Shao, Huang Shao". He didn't know how to feel.

After returning to Blue Rain's player bench, his teammates all came up to shake his hand, or pat his shoulder and whatnot to comfort him.

"What the hell? What the hell you think you're all doing, huh??? If you want to laugh, just laugh!!" Huang Shaotian exploded. These assholes! He could tell they wanted to laugh, but all came over pretending to comfort him. They were terrible actors, none of them seemed sincere at all.

"True, it's too hard not to laugh!" Song Xiao was the first to burst into laughter.

"We're already lagging way behind! Be more serious!" Huang Shaotian warned everyone with a serious expression. In the group arena, three of Blue Rain's players had been beaten already, including their ace player Huang Shaotian, while Happy was only at their second player. Plus, Deception still had 64 percent of his health left.

"Yes. We're at a huge disadvantage. We need to be more cautious." Captain Yu Wenzhou directed his words at the next player in line.

"Yes sir!" Li Yuan saluted his captain.

Li Yuan was a season eight debutee, playing a Summoner. Unlike other newbies who were usually careful and docile upon joining the team, Li Yuan was very lively, enthusiastic no matter who he was faced with, and quickly became familiar with Blue Rain's players and other staff.

Though Li Yuan had amicable relationships with other people, Li Yuan wasn't the kind of rookie who made waves. He hadn't appeared at all in the Season Eight Best Rookie nominations because he hadn't had many chances to play that season. Then, in Season Nine, Lu Hanwen, the youngest player in history, debuted in Blue Rain, directly taking over the position Yu Feng had left and completely outshining their second year player Li Yuan.

However, Li Yuan hadn't let this bring him down, and he wasn't at all jealous of this rookie that had outshone him so much. He treated Lu Hanwen like everyone else, taking care of the other. Finally, in the past year, Li Yuan gained more chances to play and cemented his position in the team.

Then in this season, Thief player Lin Feng transferred to Wind Howl and Li Yuan stepped forward once more, becoming a permanent core member of the team and gaining more chances to perform in the

individual competition, group arenas and team competitions. His performance was admirable. Now, on the final stage of the playoffs, he was fielded.

## **Chapter 1405: Search**

Li Yuan...

Happy looked at Blue Rain's next player. He wasn't a particularly talented player, yet he was a player no team could lack. Talented players also needed accompanying leaves to serve as contrast for them. No team consisted of only Gods. There were only so many Gods!

Li Yuan wasn't a God, but anyone who could be a part of a powerhouse like Team Blue Rain certainly had to have the skill to back it up. To be allowed to participate on such an important stage, how could he be underestimated?

Li Yuan. Summoner, Eight Notes.

Three of Blue Rain's players had been eliminated. By now, Blue Rain had a fairly good understanding of this originally unfamiliar map. Li Yuan did the same as his three previous teammates and had his Eight Notes boldly take the central path.

This time, Mo Fan unexpectedly did not have Deception take a roundabout route, instead choosing the central path as well.

"Is he planning on a direct confrontation?" Pan Lin said in surprise.

Mo Fan's patience and caution had left a deep impression on everyone. Even when his opponent only had 10% of his health left, he still stuck with his usual strategy of searching for an opportunity to make a sneak attack. His scrap picking habit of always prioritizing his safety first was truly suitable for the group arena!

So why did he suddenly want a direct confrontation?

Pan Lin wondered as the two characters quickly came into each other's view.

Li Yuan's Eight Notes immediately stopped and started summoning creatures. As for Mo Fan's Deception? With a sudden stride to the side, he scurried into a bush and disappeared...

He still intended on launching a sneak attack. Everyone let out a sigh of relief. They weren't used to seeing Mo Fan's character charge forward fiercely. Hiding was more like it.

Li Yuan noticed that Deception had hidden himself, but he didn't care. He was a Summoner. He wasn't too afraid of an ambush. He continued to summon creatures, soon letting the viewers know his playstyle.

Spirit Style!

Creating an enormous army was easy for Spirit Style summoners. Little Spirits could be stacked up to a total of eight for each element. Every two same element Little Spirits could merge to form a Big Spirit. Four Big Spirits of different elements could merge to form a Spirit King.

A maxed out Spirit army could have a total of eight Little Spirits, four Big Spirits, and a Spirit King. Compared to the four beasts of the Four Sacred Beasts, the number of summons was far greater.

But because the higher staged spirits required lower stage spirits to be formed, finding a balance between them was the difficult part. Let's say a Spirit King was suddenly killed in a battle. To make it up, two more Big Spirits were needed. To make these two Big Spirits, the Little Spirits needed to be merged. Performing these many spells to merge them together wasn't easy to do quickly. As a result, for the Spirit Style, replenishing one's summons was crucial. Waiting for one's Spirits to be killed before summoning more wouldn't work. And because of the complications involved in maintaining a Spirit army, Spirit summons had a fairly long durations. Little Spirits could stay on the field for a minute, Big Spirits two minutes, and Spirit Kings four minutes.

Four minutes was a long time. In 1v1s, Ye Xiu and the others on Happy could crush noobs in tens of seconds.

Li Yuan didn't panic. When he saw that Deception had gone into hiding, he sent out a Little Fire Spirit to chase after him, while Eight Notes continued to summon. Other classes needed to worry about not being ambushed when pursuing their opponent, but Spirit Style Summoners had plenty of Spirits to protect them, so there was nothing to fear.

The Little Fire Spirit looked like a small fireball. Not long after it reached the grass, the grass began to wilt because of the heat. The Little Fire Spirit had a bit of burning power, but when a Big Fire Spirit came over, it was like moving lava. The brushes started to smolder and smoke spread through the air.

By now, Li Yuan's Eight Notes had summoned four Big Spirits, six Little Spirits, a grand crowd. He boldly stepped into the previous area to the side of the central road that Song Xiao, Lu Hanwen, and Huang Shaotian had avoided due to their unfamiliarity with the map.

"Where'd you go?" With the Spirits protecting him, Li Yuan appeared completely calm and had time to type. Even though he didn't talk non-stop like Huang Shaotian, he was clearly the type who liked to say a few words when there was time to.

Mo Fan could even ignore Huang Shaotian's map attacks. How could he be bothered by Li Yuan's simple words?

For a moment, Li Yuan wasn't able to find Deception. He found a spot and planted a Devil World Flower. Because Devil World Flowers were rooted to a location, they weren't suited as the core of a style, but no Summoner style would let go of such a powerful summon.

For example, the Devil World Flower didn't rely on sight or sound to search for a target. It would automatically detect any target within its range and attack the target with its vines.

But when the Devil World Flower was planted, there were no movements from it, meaning this surrounding area was safe.

"You ran quite far away!" Li Yuan muttered again. Eight Notes immediately waved his wand, sending out a command with each wave. The summons started spreading out to search the surroundings. All of the summons were set to auto-attack. As soon as a target was discovered, the summon would automatically attack and Li Yuan would immediately know.

“Playing hide-and-seek with a Summoner isn’t a good idea!” Pan Lin said. The spectators had an omniscient view, so they obviously knew of Deception’s current location. The previous Devil World Flower had worried them. Fortunately, Deception had moved away. However, now that Eight Notes had started conducting a wide area search, Deception’s constant movements to escape Li Yuan’s notice gave them even more anxiety.

“He’s up against a Spirit Style Summoner, after all!” Li Yibo sighed. Eight Notes had maxed out his Big Spirits. He now had four Big Spirits and eight Little Spirits searching the area. As soon as a fight broke out, a Spirit King would inevitably be summoned. The Spirit King was the most powerful Spirit and could use the skills Elemental Cut, an Elemental Split, and an Elemental Explosion, each skill stronger than the other.

“Perhaps finding a way to escape would be the wisest decision,” Pan Lin thought.

But Mo Fan clearly thought differently. He had Deception stay there and play hide-and-seek with the summoned spirits.

Happy’s fans were on their edge of their seats for Mo Fan, while the neutral spectators and Blue Rain’s fans felt like this time, Blue Rain had this match in the bag. Mo Fan’s sneaky playstyle had met his nemesis!

But after watching for a bit, they noticed that something wasn’t quite right.

Again and again, just when it looked like the spirits would find him, Mo Fan would immediately have Deception evade them.

“Wow... how incredible!” Pan Lin stuttered. Mo Fan’s ability had once again exceeded his expectations.

“Yes, this is the skill trained from scrap picking.” Li Yibo said.

Anyone who had experienced with Glory immediately thought of a scene: in a dusty battlefield covered in countless blade and bullet marks, a cold ninja nimbly wandered through the battlefield, carefully dodging any attacks and avoiding attention. Afterwards, he filled his bag with all sorts of precious equipment and materials until it was full before disappearing into the fringes of the battle...

Compared to that environment, twenty enemy spirits was nothing!

The viewers sighed. As for Li Yuan? His spirits still hadn’t uncovered Deception. He was starting to lose his patience.

While the spirits were searching, he wasn’t staying idle. Eight Notes stood within the Devil World Flower’s protection range, while he carefully observed his surroundings. His spirits weren’t wandering around aimlessly. They were moving towards his dead angles according to the terrain. Even so, Deception was still nowhere to be found. Could he have already run far away?

It was hard not to be suspicious. In reality, the spectators with an omniscient view all knew that Deception had uncovered himself before. Unfortunately, Li Yuan couldn’t see 360 degrees, otherwise he would have noticed Deception not just once or twice.

Unable to find Deception in any direction, Li Yuan wasn’t sure what to do. His search had lost focus. He couldn’t just keep spreading out his search forever, could he?

Li Xuan carefully observed in a circle. After reflecting on his search plan, he felt like there weren't any holes, so he had his spirits increase the radius of the search area another step.

Not good!

Everyone saw this scene and shouted in their hearts.

Deception hadn't run far! And by increasing his search radius, Deception was now inside the circle, giving Mo Fan an opportunity. Had he insisted on staying, anticipating this sort of opportunity would appear?

Sure enough, Deception started approaching. However, Eight Notes still had a troublesome Devil World Flower. Li Xuan was still a pro player. He wasn't so naive as to wait for his Devil World Flower to disappear before planting another one.

As a result, Mo Fan didn't keep waiting. He watched as the spirits spread out further, and after seeing Li Yuan summon another Devil World Flower to replace his current one, he rushed out.

Whoosh!

Devil World Flower's vines suddenly climbed out of the ground towards Deception. Mo Fan had predicted this move. The Ninja's biggest advantage was that he could form his seals while moving or while in any position.

Ninjutsu – Explosive Flame Dragon!

Another Ninja Level 75 skill. After forming the seals, Deception held up his two fingers and formed a triangle, putting it in front of his mouth. A light purple flame flew out from his mouth. As soon as it touched the air, it immediately started exploding wildly creating a chain of flames towards the Devil World Flower.

Fire attacks dealt additional damage to Devil World Flowers. With just this one move, the Devil World Flower turned pitch-black. The extending vine instantly turned lifeless and dispersed into ash.

At this moment, Li Yuan's Eight Notes had lost his only protection.

## **Chapter 1406: Restricted**

Fighting a close-ranged battle?

Honestly speaking, the Summoner's common weapon of choice, the Wand, had a very high attack speed, usually having a rating of around 9 to 10. Because of this, there had even been some Wand users among Battle Mage players, focusing their playstyle on their magic abilities. When it came to Summoners, their close-ranged fighting power was pretty much close to zero. If they relied on themselves to fight in close quarters, they could only use some superficial skills that any class had access to, and if they really had to, they could use Lash, which was normally used to buff their minions. Evidently, these few skills weren't enough.

As such, some Summoners would opt to learn some of the Battle Mage's initial skills, like Dragon Tooth, Falling Flower Palm, Circle Swing, all of which were very popular. This would let the Summoner have at least some capability of defending themselves in an unexpected close-ranged battle.

However, skill points were precious, and learning these skills wasted too many points, making many Summoners very reluctant to use this method. As such, there was now another more sketchy method of dealing with the problem: putting a skill on their weapon.

Teleport!

This high level skill from the Elementalist class was undoubtedly a strong option for escaping, and Li Yuan's Summoner, Eight Notes, had chosen this path. The moment he saw Deception charging towards him and instantly dispatching the Devil World Flower, he cast Teleport without hesitating.

Teleport was an instant cast spell. It wasn't impossible to interrupt, but the window of opportunity for doing so was extremely short, making it very difficult to interrupt. Deception had yet to properly latch on to his opponent, and in such a scenario, interrupting the spell was pretty much impossible.

Zap.....

A sound like an electric current sounded out, and Eight Notes had already been teleported several units away from his original position, leaving only a trace of magic power behind.

But then, Flame Cut!

The flames frantically swept towards Eight Notes. Li Yuan looked over, and Deception was clearly still back there, but then how was the attack already so close to Eight Notes?

Shadow Clone Technique.....

Running into a Ninja was Li Yuan's misfortune. Using Teleportation could indeed instantly create some distance between the characters, but the Ninja could use Shadow Clone Technique in this way to immediately close the distance. A Summoner's Teleportation could only be level 1 at best, meaning that the distance travelled was the shortest possible.

Li Yuan hadn't overlooked the fact that Deception was a Ninja, but he had no other options. His usage of Teleportation was just an attempt, trying to see if Mo Fan's reactions were fast enough to catch up. Unfortunately, Mo Fan did catch up. He wasn't just an expert in escaping, but also in pursuing his target.

The distance moved by Shadow Clone Technique wasn't enough to let Deception completely close in on Eight Notes, but Flame Cut, a skill with some range on it, was already enough to reach Eight Notes.

Eight Notes turned over and rolled.

Summoners were only lacking close-range skills, but these basic movements were obviously something that every character possessed. Some Summoners with excessive self-confidence would choose to use their basic movements to dodge attacks, a method even more economical than putting Teleportation on their weapon.

However, within the professional scene, no Summoner would choose to use this 'economical' method. Simply put, there were no noobs for them to bully in the Alliance, so purely relying on sidestepping attacks wasn't going to cut it against an offensive from any pro player.

Shining Cut!

Mo Fan used a low-level Assassin skill, and in a flash, Deception had completely latched on to Eight Notes.

Ninja Arts: Cicada Shell Double Slash!

With this skill, after the Ninjato was unsheathed, both the blade and the scabbard would attack together, crossing and attacking enemies to the left and right of the character. But Glory's mechanics allowed for a great deal of freedom in controlling the character, and as such, when there was only one opponent, there was obviously no need to attack on both sides. When Deception used this Cicada Shell Double Slash, the Ninjato and scabbard both slashed towards Eight Notes.

Once one hit connected, the offensive immediately began. When fighting against a Summoner, Mo Fan didn't need to attack too explosively. After just two or three moves, Eight Notes had already been thoroughly suppressed.

Even when a Summoner was under siege, the commands that they issued to their summons couldn't be interrupted. But in order to control their summons, they still needed to be within the Summoner's field of view in order for them to select the unit to control. At this time, Deception had already forced Eight Notes into a corner, cutting off part of his vision, and the attacks afterwards caused his camera to shake and sway non-stop. The broadcast cut to Li Yuan's point-of-view, and it was really a tragic sight: the summons roaming around freely in the distance had become fragmented on his screen, intermittently cutting in and out of view. Under these circumstances, it was exceedingly difficult for Li Yuan to control his summons to come over and save him.

"Player Mo Fan seems to have a lot of experience in fighting against Summoners!" Li Yibo said surprisedly. He was just a rookie, and he hadn't appeared much on stage in this season, but at this moment, he showed incredible adeptness at the techniques used to fight against Summoners.

At Happy's player bench off-stage, upon seeing Li Yuan's point-of-view, Luo Ji had a traumatized expression on his face.

Why was Mo Fan so used to fighting against Summoners? Because there was one in the team! When it came to their skill levels, there was quite a gap between Luo Ji and Mo Fan, but Mo Fan held nothing back when he played with opponents weaker than him. Mo Fan was earnest in every practice session, and as such, Luo Ji had been beaten into a pulp by Mo Fan hundreds or thousands of times. At one glance, the spectacle unfolding from Li Yuan's point-of-view was just too familiar. When he fought individually against Mo Fan, he had similarly been forced into a corner and killed an untold number of times.

However, Luo Ji's Concealed Light was a Elemental Beast Summoner, primarily making use of those four summons, but Li Yuan needed to control roughly ten spirits. United against a common enemy, Luo Ji involuntarily felt a sense of kinship with Li Yuan, unexpectedly feeling worried on his behalf.



Li Yuan was obviously suffering greatly. Now that he had been latched on to, there was definitely no room for him to finish a summoning spell. He had his back against the wall, and the summons in the distance were completely uncontrollable. At this time, seven of the spirits would flicker in and out of his view, but Mo Fan's offensive tossed him from side to side, making commanding the spirits nigh impossible.

However, everyone could see that there were three spirits coming over in succession to protect him. Even under such restricting circumstances, Li Yuan had still managed to complete commands for three of his Spirits, showing off his significant caliber as a pro player.

But, only three of them.....

Upon seeing the three Little Spirits charging over, the more knowledgeable viewers could only silently mourn. Spirit summons relied on creating an army of sheer numbers to achieve victory, so evidently, their individual attack power wasn't too powerful. Whether it was in terms of Attack, Defense or Health, the spirits didn't have particularly impressive stats. Spirits were more notable because their duration was long, and their attacks had a chance to proc elemental effects. But if it was just Little Spirits, they'd be easily dispatched in two or three hits by other players. Would the spirits charging over really be able to do anything, especially given that Li Yuan wasn't able to arrange and deploy them properly?

Li Yuan was completely aware of this point, not taking Mo Fan as an opponent that could be easily harassed by a few Little Spirits. The three Little Spirits didn't charge over and immediately attack, instead stopping and waiting at a point that Li Yuan had indicated earlier. This point was in a far more convenient location for Li Yuan to control the Spirits. Evidently, Li Yuan was arranging his Spirits against Mo Fan constantly tossing him from side to side.

"Not bad, Li Yuan is very prudent. Don't think that he's just taking a beating. His response to the situation clearly displays the defensive skills that players from Blue Rain possess," Li Yibo exclaimed in admiration.

At Happy's player bench, Luo Ji's eyes flashed with understanding. He could see the wisdom in Li Yuan's tempo. The three Little Spirits going up to attack was only a minor irritation, not serving any real purpose. But now that he had the three spirits stop at a convenient place, he had once again put himself in a good position relative to his spirits.

Mo Fan's harassing attacks were mainly meant to disrupt the stability of Li Yuan's field-of-view, but now, no matter how his vision was disrupted, Li Yuan would always have an option, and given his hand speed, as long as he had an option, it would be a cinch to grasp it. As expected, another Big Spirit was controlled from afar, beginning to move over and rescue him.

"It's a Fire Spirit!" Pan Lin said.

"Mm... After all, Li Yuan doesn't really have much of a choice. If he could choose, I think he would have prioritized the Ice Spirit or the Light Spirit," Li Yibo replied. The Big Fire Spirit's attack was Flame Blade, a close-ranged attack. On the other hand, the Ice Spirit's Falling Ice and the Light Spirit's Lightning were long-ranged attacks, and on top of that, there was a chance to freeze or paralyze the opponent with the attacks, something that would be of great help to Eight Notes. The Fire Spirit had high offensive power,

but it needed to get close to attack. In the worst case scenario, Deception could easily beat it up along with Eight Notes.

“Let’s see what Li Yuan plans to do,” Li Yibo said.

“At this point, there isn’t much duration left on the Little Spirits either,” Pan Lin mentioned.

The broadcast immediately displayed the duration remaining on the Little Spirits, since there was a difference in when the spirits were summoned, and as such a difference in remaining duration. The spirits that were far away weren’t taken into account. Of the three that were close by, one had 9 seconds, while the other two had 14 seconds and 19 seconds.

The Big Spirit still had 2 minutes worth of duration, so at this point, there was no need to worry about it disappearing by itself. However, the Little Spirit with only 9 seconds left looked as if it wouldn’t be able to make any real contribution.

Li Yuan clearly understood this, and a convenient opportunity arrived to control the three Little Spirits, so he commanded the one with 9 seconds remaining to charge over. If it was going to disappear by itself anyways, it would be better to bring it over and cause some irritation for Deception.

This was a Little Ice Spirit. All the Little Spirits had to be close to the enemy to attack, and while they had a chance to inflict an effect on hit, the probability was much lower when compared to the Big Spirits. The Little Spirit floated over, but Mo Fan completely ignored it. When it was almost in range, he suddenly used Neck Bind Technique, and Eight Notes was flung over his shoulder, crashing into the Little Ice Spirit. Immediately afterwards, he used Flame Cut, slashing towards both the Little Spirit and Eight Notes in one swing, and the Little Spirit died. And Eight Notes? Li Yuan used this opportunity and continued to tenaciously control his Spirits. One Little Spirit had died, but two more rushed over to take its place. At the same time, one Big Spirit finally rushed over to surround him.

“Is this enough?” Pan Lin cried, betraying his concern. Everyone could clearly see that Mo Fan was an expert at dodging and escaping. With how little duration there was left for the Little Spirits, Mo Fan could just put in a little effort to contend with them, and they would disappear by themselves.

“There’s already no other options,” Li Yibo sighed. As time went on, the Summons’ duration was extremely disadvantageous, meaning that Li Yuan no longer had time to continue waiting.

One Big and four Small, five Spirits advanced, and Deception jumped out of the way.

“As expected!” Pan Lin shouted, Mo Fan was indeed planning to wait out the duration. The spirits that had encircled him hit nothing but air.

However...

“It’s a sacrifice! Spirit Sacrifice!” Li Yibo cried out.

### **Chapter 1407: Scrap Picking Your Health**

Spirit Sacrifice. A Level 75 Summoner ultimate skill. It wasn’t just for spirit users, but it was the skill with the highest attack power across all Summoner skills. After this skill came out, countless Summoners

started calculating the damage this skill could do and, from the current tests, Spirit Sacrifice seemed to be the second skill after the Assassin's Life-Risking Strike that could accomplish a One-Hit KO.

Of course, like Life-Risking Strike, wanting to successfully accomplish an OHKO was very troublesome.

For Life-Risking Strike, most of the time, one had to achieve the requirements for "Assassination Arts", "Critical Strike" and other damage increasing bonuses. As for Spirit Sacrifice, it was even more troublesome. The skill damage had to do with the number of spirits, the remaining health of spirits, and the remaining time the spirits had. In theory, when all these numbers were at their max, that was when Spirit Sacrifice was at its strongest. However, this was only theoretical; it was impossible to accomplish ingame. Just with the remaining time, it was impossible to have all spirits at their maximum at once. There would always be differences between those summoned first and those summoned later.

All this was still in testing. In real combat, it would be even harder to find an opportune moment and conditions to activate a powerful Spirit Sacrifice. Plus, after Spirit Sacrifice was used, all spirits would disappear. For a Summoner, that was equal to losing all protection. If this strike missed, or failed to be fatal, then it would be a huge problem.

Right now, Deception wasn't at full health, but a Spirit Sacrifice with one large and four small Spirits wasn't enough to kill him. Li Yuan's goal was merely to get himself out of his current situation. Clearly, he didn't think that his five spirits could give Mo Fan much trouble while he wasn't able to control them properly, with the other so good at escaping, so he resolutely decided to detonate the five spirits he had managed to gather.

The explosion didn't make a huge noise like the cannon fire and explosions of Launchers and Spitfires. During Spirit Sacrifice, all that was heard was the sound of the spirits' bodies shattering one after the other. The five spirits all unleashed the elemental power within them at once. Ice, fire, light and dark, the flash from the different elements erupted, striking everything within range.

This attack was an AoE, and Deception was clearly within its area of effect. This attack came too suddenly, and Mo Fan didn't even have the time to execute a Substitution Technique before the light of the different elements enveloped him.

"It hit!!" Pan Lin yelled. Li Yuan took this time to get Eight Notes out of the way as he called the spirits that were still wandering about back to his side.

The small spirits were about to disappear, so Li Yuan didn't place any hope in them. The three large spirits were more important, and then, a Devil World Flower was soon planted.

By now, the Spirit Sacrifice's shockwaves were about done. This skill was all about the damage, and the shockwaves from the explosion of elemental power would continuously damage whoever was within range. Apart from damage, there weren't any other effects. However, Devil World Flower's attack had already arrived. Using the yet to disperse flash from the explosion, a vine silently shot out from the ground and grabbed Deception.

Storm Shuriken!

Escape arts were truly Mo Fan's forte. He immediately countered when the vine came out, dozens of shurikens flying out like a storm, instantly cutting through the vine.

The skill that had KO'd Devil World Flower last time, Ninja Arts: Explosive Flame Dragon, was a very powerful skill, but its cooldown was long, and it hadn't come off its cooldown yet. Deception didn't have any way to wipe out Devil World Flower right now, and this was precisely what made it so annoying.

Hiding behind Devil World Flower, Eight Notes carefully began to summon again. The Big Spirits were on their way back, and the Little Spirits had mostly expired. He had to replenish his Little Spirits.

The offensive Deception had launched while trapping Eight Notes in the corner just now had taken out a full 61 percent of Eight Notes's health. Summoners were a fragile cloth armor class, so they couldn't take a close range ranged beating like that. As for Deception, that Spirit Sacrifice had blasted off 20 percent of his health. Though it wasn't as spectacular as his own offensive, Deception wasn't at full health to begin with, so he only had 44 percent left, in the lead against Eight Notes's 39 percent.

"Happy's Mo Fan really is a great player!" Pan Lin complimented.

"I feel that he really is a mature player already. From his playstyle, you rarely see the incompleteness belonging to newbie players," Li Yibo added.

"However, he really is a rookie. I believe that there are many who know of this player. In his first match, he took two yellow cards and was disqualified," Pan Lin said.

This event was truly surprising and unique. Even a newbie would have a hard time getting directly disqualified.

"But now, on the stage of the playoffs, we're witnessing a Mo Fan that has matured so much," Pna Lin exclaimed with a tone of "he grew up so fast".

"But right now, Mo Fan isn't in such a good position!" Li Yibo said.

With Devil World Flower on the field and no skill to kill it in one go, now was Mo Fan going to get his Ninja back on the offensive?

Run? Repeat what he had just done? Having had a taste of Mo Fan's ability when it came to hiding, it was doubtful that Li Yuan would be caught off guard like that again. Right now, faced with the current defense, was probably the best chance Mo Fan would get.

However, this guy was extremely risk-averse. The current opportunity probably wasn't enough for him to bet on.

Everyone was trying to guess what choice of action Mo Fan would take next, and Deception, while everyone was guessing, charged.

"Is he going on the offense?" Pan Lin cried out.

How many times had Mo Fan simply been feinting when they thought he was going to attack? What about this time? No matter what, the direction he had chosen didn't seem like a plan to run.

Shuriken!

A shuriken flew out, interrupting Eight Notes's casting. Then, Smoke Bomb!

Purple smoke erupted, enveloping the area, and the camera hurriedly closed in to catch the two characters within.

Deception was still moving.

Shadow Clone Technique!

He directly used this skill to send himself to Eight Notes's side.

Devil World Flower attacked, the two small spirits Eight Notes had just summoned to his side attacked, and simultaneously, Deception attacked.

"He's on the offensive! He's going for it this time!" Pan Lin shouted. This time, it was clear. Mo Fan wasn't hiding anymore, he wasn't escaping, he was directly attacking his opponent, headstrong.

"He's very good at judging the situation. If he left and then returned, it's very likely that he'd be met with an even worse situation. This offensive is another style. Another style means another thing for the opponent to worry about. A playstyle that's too focused and simple is easy to figure out."

Mo Fan couldn't hear what the commentator and guest commentator were talking about. He didn't care about what these people thought because he knew that if he wanted to hear comments, he had someone to give him even better pointers right next to him.

Right now, he only wanted to do one thing: defeat his opponent!

Mo Fan had really changed.

In the game, he was focused on scrap picking. He would dart about the battlefield, be bathed in blood, but his attention was on the ground underfoot, searching for those valuable equipment and items. That was what he was passionate about obtaining. But now, his goal had changed. The opponent in front of him became what he coveted. Killing was never something in the foreground as a scrap picker, but now it was what he was fighting for.

However, Mo Fan was also the same in many ways.

While scrap picking, the only thing on his mind was equipment. All other obstacles he would dodge, avoid, that was what he did his best to achieve. Now, against a Summoner, his only target was the Summoner. Everything else, Devil World Flowers, Little Spirits, Big Spirits, all he had to do was avoid these obstacles.

Summoners seemed to counter Mo Fan's ambush tactics, but a 1v1 fight against a Summoner really brought out Mo Fan's talents. He had practised focusing on one target, with danger coming in from all sides during scrap picking, doing everything he could to scrap pick his target.

This was a battle, but because his opponent was a Summoner, it was also like scrap picking, and the target he was trying to scrap pick? Eight Notes's health.

Everyone stared at this battle in shock.

With spirits harassing him, Mo Fan's offensive wasn't as one-sided as the previous one. Li Yuan's Eight Notes would still have chances to cast summons, and with his wandering spirits coming back, he had

more and more spirits. Yet, despite the growing number of spirits, Mo Fan had managed something. His Deception had managed to cling to Eight Notes. Perhaps Eight Notes could summon a few Little Spirits, but trying to run away from the center of the battle to focus on commanding his spirits? No way in hell. Even when he casted Teleportation upon coming off cooldown, Mo Fan had managed to interrupt it.

No one had seen someone fight against a Summoner like this: ignoring the summon creatures entirely and just going after the Summoner.

No one had seen someone execute this method so well either. Deception had been surrounded by quite a few summons already, but Deception still managed to dart between them, locked onto Eight Notes.

“Amazing! Absolutely amazing!” Pan Lin was yelling in shock. Meanwhile, Li Yibo had his eyes on the health of the two characters.

Mo Fan was doing well, but it was impossible for him to stay completely unharmed under the circumstances. The two characters’ health were both depleting at an even rate.

“If this continues...” Li Yibo seemed to see a certain future, a certain possibility. As the situation continued, this possibility became a reality.

Shlick! Deception’s ninjato buried itself in Eight Notes’s chest.

Whoosh! A chunk of ice slammed into Deception’s head.

The health of the two characters actually simultaneously struck zero.

Deception and Eight Notes, had perished together?

### **Chapter 1408: Background**

Glory!

That was when this word filled the screen.

Everyone was stunned. Glory, that word would only appear when announcing a victory, but wasn’t this match a tie? Glory shouldn’t have appeared then! Could it be...

Everyone scanned the field wildly and, as expected, amidst the light of Eight Note’s disappearing spirits, there stood Deception. Health, 0.7 percent.

He wasn’t dead yet?!

Everyone was shocked. It wasn’t until the broadcast replayed that moment in slow motion that everyone realized what had happened.

That’s right, Deception hadn’t died. In that last moment, he had completed a Shadow Clone Technique, and without their owner’s help, summon creatures couldn’t determine clones from real characters. So when Eight Note’s health hit zero, the Deception everyone had seen take a fatal blow was actually just Deception’s shadow clone.

This wasn’t a tie!

Happy's home stadium supporters exploded. Though 0.7 percent was practically no different from a tie, victory and a tie were two different concepts. When everyone saw that Mo Fan had won and not tied, the morale in the stadium soared.

"Of course it's not a tie." Ye Xiu was smiling. There weren't many people who had noticed that Deception hadn't died, but Ye Xiu was doubtlessly one of them.

"He isn't a killer, he's a scrap picker," Ye Xiu said.

That's right!

Mo Fan wasn't a killer. He didn't have the mindset of a martyr. He was a scrap picker and, no matter when, his own life was the most important. A scrap picker, where only survival would make all his actions worthwhile.

"He's practically made for the group arena," Ye Xiu praised.

Everyone watched the close up of the victorious Deception. His expressionless face was brought up close for everyone's scrutiny.

What sort of expression was the player behind this character wearing? Was he cheering? Jumping for joy? Everyone was curious, but they couldn't tell right now. Since this wasn't a tie, but Mo Fan's victory, he had the right to continue, even with only 0.7 percent of his health left. Though some believed that there was no reason to continue with this much health left, even surrendering right now would be fine, Mo Fan didn't do so.

Over at Blue Rain's booth, Li Yuan had already gotten out.

In that moment, he had really thought it was a tie, giving him some degree of comfort. Though he hadn't done excellently, he would have at least taken down someone. However, when Glory appeared on the screen, Li Yuan's spirits plummeted.

He hadn't died. It was the opponent's victory.

This result was a huge blow to their morale.

Li Yuan walked off the stage in low spirits. Right now, the screen was filled with Deception's most spectacular acts this battle, deepening his sense of defeat.

After he returned to the player bench, his teammates gazed at him, uncertain as to how to comfort him.

This result was rather comedic, but not a kind of comedic Blue Rain wanted to see.

"There's no difference," captain Yu Wenzhou spoke up then, "That much health isn't a threat anymore. It's the same as if he was dead."

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded. He knew that his captain hoped that he could look at this result logically, and try to not let it affect him too much emotionally.

"It's all up to you," Yu Wenzhou turned and spoke to another member of Blue Rain. It was the last player for them in the group arena, Spitfire Zheng Xuan.

“How stressful.” Zheng Xuan feigned wiping off sweat.

The predictions for this match had favored Blue Rain. No one had thought that Blue Rain would be in such a condition in just the first group arena.

Happy had only used two players to take down four of Blue Rain’s. If Blue Rain wanted to win, then they could only hope for Zheng Xuan to defeat three of Happy’s players. This clearly wasn’t very realistic. Being the group anchor wasn’t easy. For their opponents, they could see the match as an individual competition, because there wouldn’t be anymore opponents to defeat afterwards. So, against their opponent’s group anchor, they could fight it like an individual competition. They could be more daring, more direct. Meanwhile, the group anchor wouldn’t have the same privilege. They couldn’t be as daring, as free as they wanted. They had no one to clean up after them. They had to carefully preserve their health, doing their best against all the opposing team’s remaining characters.

Yu Wenzhou wouldn’t place such unrealistic expectations on his teammate’s shoulders, that was really giving them stress. Currently, they could pretty much ignore Mo Fan’s existence. After that, if Zheng Xuan could get them a point, allowing them to enter the team competition two points behind, that was enough. Of course, if he managed to defeat two players, leaving them at only a one point disadvantage, then that would be even better. At that point, Zheng Xuan’s performance would be perfect in Yu Wenzhou’s eyes. He wouldn’t consider the possibility of a one versus three.

“I’m off then!” Zheng Xuan got up and straightened his clothes.

“Good luck!” Everyone wished him.

“If I can’t get us a point, then let me be struck by lightning!” Zheng Xuan solemnly swore.

Blue Rain’s members were stunned for a moment before they realized that Mo Fan was also a point for them. A point with only 0.7 percent of his health left.

Everyone rolled their eyes, ignoring his joke.

“What! This is a point even Huang Shao and Li Yuan didn’t manage to win!” Zheng Xuan bemoaned.

“Just get the hell out already!!” Huang Shaotian growled. His mood clearly wasn’t the best; after all, he had left the stage amidst mocking laughter.

“Just watch me!” Zheng Xuan sounded confident.

No one was worried for him. Even if Mo Fan had a thousand tricks up his sleeve, and all sorts of unexpected tactics, health was the foundation of everything. A mere 0.7 percent of health wasn’t enough to execute any tricks. Perhaps he had the ability to combo his opponent without taking damage, but those circumstances and his current 0.7 percent health would have the opponent taking very different choices of action.

Match start.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo didn’t even bother saying anything. Actually, in most people’s eyes, It would be more acceptable for Mo Fan to surrender and leave. Continuing with 0.7 percent of his health seemed like a rather cheap move.



Zheng Xuan's Spitfire character was called Bullet Rain, equipped with the Silver rifle, Drift. He was one of Blue Rain's core players and was pretty famous in the scene.

Zheng Xuan was a player who debuted in the fourth season, becoming a pro player alongside Yu Wenzhou and Huang Shaotian.

That was a bright, star-filled season, bringing about the circle of top players now known as the Golden Generation. Zheng Xuan debuted in the same season as the Golden Generation, and from then on, his signature phrase became "how stressful."

Zheng Xuan was very talented, but back then, there was already a Spitfire player that shone like the sun, so newbies had a hard time taking the spotlight.

There were no Battle Mages, Strikers, Spitfires or Berserkers among the Golden Generation. Was this because no rookies debuted with these classes in the fourth season? Of course not. It was because, at that time, these classes were all occupied by the group of players standing at the top of the top. New rookies shoving these Gods from their positions? Not even in their dreams.

Zheng Xuan grew up beside the Golden Generation. Perhaps, in another generation, he would draw much attention, but next to the Golden Generation, he was but a drop in the ocean. Just in his own team, there were two eye-catching teammates that outshone him, not just in Glory, but also in their personal characteristics. One couldn't shut up, and the other had crippled hands.

Zheng Xuan was rather speechless. Considering how normal he was, he could only lament over how geniuses always had their quirks.

How stressful!

Day by day, he matured amidst such complaints and became a reliable helper to his two Golden Generation teammates.

Over the summer between seasons seven and eight, the top Spitfire player Zhang Jiale suddenly retired. Hundred Blossoms flailed, trying to find a successor for Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, and the first name they thought of was actually Blue Rain's Zheng Xuan.

The two came in contact, but they hadn't even said much before Zheng Xuan rejected the offer.

The reason?

He was used to being in Blue Rain. Being the team's ace? How stressful...

That was the reason Zheng Xuan gave for rejecting Hundred Blossoms' offer.

Perhaps he was a bit of a coward. That's what Zheng Xuan thought, but really, he was already used to it. From the beginning of the fourth season, under the halo of the Golden Generation, the other player from the same season all seemed negligible. In Blue Rain, he had debuted with Yu Wenzhou and Huang Shaotian, but all everyone saw was the two of them. He had stood by their side for so many years, but when people remembered him, and recalled when he debuted, they were always startled. Hey! He's also a season four debutee, from the same batch as the Golden Generation!

At first, Zheng Xuan could only reply with a strained smile, but soon enough, he really did get used to it. Whenever Blue Rain did poorly, he would see captain Yu Wenzhou and ace Huang Shaotian get grilled by reporters, sitting in the spotlight, and he would think to himself that his position was quite the blessing.

In a team like Blue Rain, he had an important, but not crucial position. Not as good as whoever was above, but far out of reach to those below. Stability was a realm of life, too!

Zheng Xuan was very satisfied with this realm he was in. He was prepared to maintain this, all the way until the end of his career. To be honest, he had no regrets and would be happy to end it here. He even had a championship.

Thus, Zheng Xuan unavoidably had some problems with motivation, even in the playoffs. However, that didn't mean he would be bullied by someone with only 0.7 percent of his health left. Mo Fan's Deception once again launched a sneak attack and was killed as soon as acted by a head-on trade of health.

He won a certain victory, but Zheng Xuan still felt his excitement rise. It was still a point! He was pretty good at cheering himself on.

Then, Happy's third player was fielded.

Su Mucheng, Dancing Rain.

"Golden Generation, huh... How stressful," Zheng Xuan mumbled.

#### **Chapter 1409: How Stressful**

Su Mucheng, Zheng Xuan.

They had debuted the same season, so even though one was a true member of the Golden Generation and the other was a forgotten character behind their dazzling light, the two weren't strangers to each other.

So when the match began, Su Mucheng already knew the first thing that Zheng Xuan would say in the chat.

"How stressful!" She beat him to saying it.

"What are you doing!" Zheng Xuan was unhappy. How could she steal his line like that!

"I'm saying it for you!" Su Mucheng replied.

"Tsk, even my line has been stolen, how stressful!" Zheng Xuan still said it in the end.

"The greater stress is yet to come!" As Su Mucheng spoke, Dancing Rain charged forward.

No circling, no hiding. A direct, head-on charge.

"Of course!" Pan Lin and Li Yibo both shouted.

During the player change, the two of them had already discussed how Blue Rain only had one player left. At this time, Happy didn't need to be too careful. Boldly taking this round and then carrying the surging morale into the team round was undoubtedly the best choice. Right now, it looked like that was exactly what Su Mucheng planned to do.

"It won't be like Mo Fan though, will it?" Right after his exclamation of "of course," Pan Lin suddenly thought of another worry. Last round, Mo Fan had also controlled his Deception to charge forward like this, but then as soon as he met his opponent, he slipped away.

"Uh... probably not?" When he heard this, Li Yibo also began to have doubt. Logically, Su Mucheng wasn't some stranger, and they were quite clear on her style. But after joining Happy, she now seemed to be surrounded by a blurred, opaque aura. Ye Xiu, Fang Rui, these old faces had changed classes, so it made sense that they would bring some surprises. But this Su Mucheng... Her class hadn't changed, her style hadn't changed, her play seemed to directly follow from what it'd been at Excellent Era. So why did she also feel different from before?

"Hm, let's keep watching," Li Yibo said calmly. He didn't dare to make any careless judgments.

This time, Zheng Xuan's Spitfire Bullet Rain was the one sneaking around as soon as the match began.

"Zheng Xuan wants to play dirty?" Pan Lin said. Playing dirty was a style, a school of thought, a choice that existed to be made in a battle. As a pro player, you liked it or you didn't, you liked to use it or you didn't, but if you said you didn't know how, then you wouldn't be a professional. Zheng Xuan was an old player now in his seventh year. Of course he knew how to play dirty.

"He's the group anchor, of course he'll have to face this carefully," said Li Yibo.

Zheng Xuan, this group anchor, still had three opponents ahead of him.

Su Mucheng was the first, but who would be next? The dirtiest player of all, Fang Rui? That girl who was like a tiger, Tang Rou? That chaotic Brawler player? Or their old senior from Blue Rain, Wei Chen?

Zheng Xuan didn't know Wei Chen. It was Season 3 when he'd arrived at Blue Rain's training camp, and by that time Wei Chen had already retired and left. Zheng Xuan had heard a few stories about this old senior, though. He'd discovered and recruited Huang Shaotian from the game, he was the original owner of Yu Wenzhou's inherited Swoksaar... No part of Blue Rain's origin story could be separated from his name. Even their Blue Brook Guild, in the box labeled "Founder," was forever marked with his name: Swoksaar.

Yes, Swoksaar.

Wei Chen's Swoksaar, not Yu Wenzhou's Swoksaar.

And then this old senior, after leaving for seven years, suddenly returned to this battlefield.

In the beginning, he'd drawn a lot of attention, but his return wasn't like Ye Xiu's. Wei Chen was not the protagonist of the stage, and his appearances were pitifully infrequent. Gradually, the discussion around him faded away.

Only Blue Rain would continue to pay attention to their old captain, their old senior.

Would he go onstage?

Zheng Xuan thought, and then suddenly jolted back to the present.

Damnit, got distracted again!

In such a critical battle, Zheng Xuan had actually gotten so lost in thought that Bullet Rain had subconsciously walked forward quite a bit. Now that he realized, he hurriedly studied his surroundings.

“This guy... He started daydreaming again, didn’t he?” Huang Shaotian said, watching Zheng Xuan’s match. He was all too familiar with this guy.

“A lack of fighting spirit remains his biggest problem,” Yu Wenzhou sighed.

“Even throwing him into the anchor position couldn’t help him focus completely,” said Huang Shaotian.

“If only he had Yu Feng’s drive,” said Yu Wenzhou.

“But if that was the case... he would have left long ago, wouldn’t he?” Huang Shaotian said. Everyone at Blue Rain knew that Hundred Blossoms had tried to recruit Zheng Xuan, that one summer.

“Yes... There’s really nothing that can be done.” Yu Wenzhou was helpless.

“If only he could be averaged out with Yu Feng,” said Huang Shaotian.

“Then what? Our team would develop a Blood and Blossoms?” Yu Wenzhou said. Blood and Blossoms had left a deep impression on the players of the Golden Generation, because Season 3 and Season 4 was when that style had been at its peak. The Golden Generation had all gone through Blood and Blossoms as a rite of passage.

“Who knows!” said Huang Shaotian.

These sort of meaningless hypotheticals always led to melancholy.

Because Yu Feng was too vigorous, too ambitious, too driven, he left them.

Zheng Xuan was too passive, too lacking in fighting spirit, and so he stayed. Staying was good, but his lack of spirit became the biggest limit to his strength. Zheng Xuan had talent, but because he lacked spirit and initiative, his talent was unable to shine.

He should have been able to accomplish more.

This was what many people had said of Zheng Xuan, and this guy had heard it all, but it still wasn’t enough to motivate him. Even in the playoffs, even as the group anchor, his mind would still wander. And this was Blue Rain – if this had been a team like Tiny Herb, with strict requirements, Zheng Xuan probably would have already been kicked out the door.

Blue Rain was a strange team, one that could accommodate all kinds of strange players. Huang Shaotian, this talkative opportunist; Yu Wenzhou, this master tactician with a slow handspeed; Song Xiao, the Mister Clutch who could only shine in the playoffs; Lu Hanwen, this surging youngster who was already so bold at fourteen years old. And even the ones who had already left: Yu Feng, who wasn’t happy even with a championship, a perfectionist who would only be satisfied with a championship he’d won as the

core player; Lin Feng, who'd gone to Wind Howl, an unorthodox battle Thief player. And Zheng Xuan, a competitive player who... lacked competitiveness.

Blue Rain was such a collection of unique players, and every player had found his place here.

People had thought about this before.

If Huang Shaotian didn't chat and instead focused his handspeed entirely on his controls.

If Yu Wenzhou's handspeed met the standard, or even surpassed it.

If Song Xiao could perform as excellently in the regular season as he did in the playoffs.

If Yu Feng hadn't left in pursuit of his ambitions.

If Zheng Xuan was a player with fighting spirit, who always put his full effort into everything.

How powerful would such a Blue Rain be?

Blue Rain was just this kind of team, filled with defective beauty. But on the professional stage, they would resolutely advance just like any other.

Right now, their lethargic Zheng Xuan was their critical group arena anchor. Awaiting him were three players, which could include two All-Stars, or this season's Best Rookie, so on and so forth.

The road ahead was covered in thorns. Just like Zheng Xuan's mantra, how stressful.

But even though he said this, when faced with this kind of pressure, he would still advance forward. He lacked fighting spirit, but he was still working himself up to fight.

Bullet Rain circled around the flank. By the time it was his turn to come onstage, Blue Rain had already thoroughly investigated the ambush points on both ends of the map. Zheng Xuan played like this was his familiar home game map, swiftly finding a suitable position from which to launch a sneak attack.

He gradually heard the sound of footsteps. Dancing Rain was beginning to approach.

And he thought about how after winning this round, there was another, and after winning that one, there would still be one more...

What a headache!

Zheng Xuan gritted his teeth.

"How stressful!" he said once more, and Bullet Rain began to attack!

"This is really so stressful!"

When Zheng Xuan said his mantra for the last time, his Bullet Rain had already fallen. The opponent he was facing was no longer Su Mucheng and her Dancing Rain, but Fang Rui and his Boundless Sea.

Zheng Xuan won one battle.

Putting in his full effort, he defeated Su Mucheng.

But after that, he was ultimately unable to defeat Fang Rui.

The group arena ended with Happy in the lead, 5-3. They were entering the team round with a two-point lead.

“1v2 really is my limit. There was just no way to go on.” After Zheng Xuan came offstage, he spread his hands helplessly and said this to his teammates.

“1v2...” Huang Shaotian’s mouth twitched. “You have the nerve to count Deception as one of your kills too?”

“It’s not me counting it, it’s the rules,” said Zheng Xuan, righteous.

“Alright, this kind of outcome isn’t entirely unacceptable,” Yu Wenzhou said calmly.

In the team competition, there wasn’t much difference between fighting until one person remained and fighting until two people remained. Normally, after both sides used up their sixth player, the side who next achieved the advantage of numbers would obtain the final victory in one swoop of determination. In the team competition, it was most common for there to be three or four players remaining at the end. Even battles with five players remaining were more common than those with only two. These were all conclusions drawn by experts analyzing the data gathered after the new playoffs format had been released.

But because this was now the established competition format, one thing that had to be considered was whether the opponent, with a two-point advantage, would use a playstyle that fully utilized this advantage.

This sort of strategic thinking had never been seen before. After the playoffs matches of last season, as of now, there were still no examples of this. Everyone could rely on experience and speculation.

And the current playoffs system gave a longer break between the group arena and the team competition. It seemed that this was to give the teams more time to strategize for the team battle, given the results of the group arena.

What was Happy going to do?

Yu Wenzhou looked over at Team Happy. Because they’d done well in the group arena, they appeared to be in high spirits.

### **Chapter 1410: Swinging Balance**

In the new playoffs format, the outcome of the group arena would cause the subsequent team round to be played differently. This was something particularly tricky about this new format. Both the losers and the winners of the group arena should think of ways to use this point advantage in the team round.

After working through all the emotions brought about by the group arena, both sides began anxiously preparing and making arrangements.

“Happy currently has a two-point lead. They’re doing much better than people expected.” Pan Lin and Li Yibo were also using this intermission to summarize the current situation.

“Speaking of which, Happy originally had the chance to win an even greater lead. If Su Mucheng had taken down Zheng Xuan, then they would’ve had a three point lead. An advantage that large is fairly uncommon in the group arena of the new format,” said Li Yibo.

“Yes, but unfortunately Zheng Xuan narrowly managed to win that battle. Too bad for Su Mucheng,” said Pan Lin.

“Team Blue Rain has been pretty unlucky today overall, but Zheng Xuan’s victory managed to let them recover a bit,” said Li Yibo.

“Happy’s Mo Fan was the highlight of today’s team round!” Pan Lin praised. “He completed a 1v2, and one of his opponents was Huang Shaotian. Truly a beautiful performance.”

“Yes, Mo Fan’s performance exceeded everyone’s expectations. This season, Mo Fan hasn’t appeared in enough matches to really be considered main roster, but his performance in this group arena was that of a core player,” said Li Yibo.

“Exactly. Even now, you can see lots of gamers commenting about how shocked they are at Mo Fan’s performance! Right here, I just saw a post from someone on Weibo named Hooked Mulberry, who was naming Mo Fan “the Godslayer.” It looks like they’re connecting his victory just now over Huang Shaotian with the time he defeated Sun Xiang,” said Pan Lin.

“Haha, two victories over top Gods, for a rookie that’s extremely worthy of praise. But to use such a title, we’ll have to continue to watch Mo Fan’s performance!” Li Yibo laughed.

“Right,” Pan Lin nodded, and he continued to scroll through the Weibo discussion of this match on his computer.

“Oh, this...” Pan Lin hesitated.

“What is it?” Li Yibo leaned over to look.

“Zuo Chenrui’s post,” Pan Lin said.

“Oh? What’d he say?” Li Yibo was delighted. Zuo Chenrui was a famous name in the circle. Because he was so opinionated in his writing, his commentary was often unexpected. And this match involved Blue Rain, the team closest to his heart, losing the group arena so unexpectedly. This guy definitely couldn’t sit still!

“Zuo Chenrui gave that tree a hundred million points.” That was all Pan Lin said. With Zuo Chenrui’s personality, his commentary was definitely filled with bitterness and outrage toward Happy, but Pan Lin couldn’t read that kind of content in their show.

“Hahahaha!” Li Yibo laughed. He knew Zuo Chenrui, and could completely imagine the look on that guy’s face as he watched Huang Shaotian’s Troubling Rain lose 50% of his health to that cut-down tree. Li Yibo suddenly wished that they could have invited Zuo Chenrui as a guest commentator for this match. That one exciting moment would make sharing this broadcast with another commentator completely worth it.

The two of them continued to look through the comments made by fans online and discuss the current situation, until at last, the team round was about to begin. The participating players on each side were summoned by the referee and began to walk onstage.

Team Blue Rain: Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, Lu Hanwen, Zheng Xuan, and Xu Jingxi as the starting roster, with Song Xiao as sixth player.

Team Happy: Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, Qiao Yifan, and An Wenyi as starting roster, with sixth player Wei Chen.

“Ah! Happy’s sending Wei Chen onstage!” Pan Lin was surprised.

Wei Chen had history with Blue Rain, but because this history was so long ago, and because Wei Chen hadn’t had a very strong presence this season, there wasn’t much speculation or hype around this topic. And the playoffs wasn’t a place to arrange a roster for the sake of hype, anyway. The fact that Happy had chosen to send Wei Chen up now, regardless, was surprising to many people.

How useful could Wei Chen possibly be? This was an issue with a very large question mark. From his current abilities that could be seen from his scarce onstage appearances this season, it was hard to call him high-level. And his history with Blue Rain was so long ago, so in terms of knowing the enemy, he probably wouldn’t be any better than Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Fang Rui, who had fought against Blue Rain for many years now. So why had Happy arranged for Wei Chen to go onstage this match? No one could guess.

On Blue Rain’s side, they were fairly calm.

Happy was a new team, and the greatest characteristic of a new team was that their strength developed with each battle they fought. On the other hand, teams like Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, Tyranny were all very mature and stable. They weren’t like new teams, who might change from day to day. Only a team that had just been created would be continuously changing and experimenting.

Happy had played through the entire regular season with this kind of rhythm, so many people might not have even noticed this point.

“Not having a mature style is usually the biggest weakness of a new team, but... Happy has turned this into their greatest strength.” This was Yu Wenzhou’s judgment of the team, prior to this match.

Because they weren’t mature, because they were always changing and experimenting, Happy became entirely unpredictable.

This was normally something that a mature team would work hard to try and avoid, but for a new team that didn’t have enough time to solve this kind of problem, they might as well just make the problem bigger.

Yu Wenzhou’s view was supported by data. From the research that they’d requested Blue Rain’s R&D to do, it was clear to see Happy’s rotating changes. As the team’s new players grew, Happy’s rotation of its players only increased, all the way until the end of the season, when even Wei Chen and Luo Ji joined the rotation as well.



This wasn't an unexpected decision. From the statistics they'd gathered, these two players joining the rotation completely aligned with Happy's trend of increasing variation. But because these two hadn't joined until the very end, they had too much blank space at the beginning and relatively few appearances overall, so they seemed a little bit painful to the eyes.

Every one of Happy's players was fully operational, all for the sake of the playoffs. Team Happy had been aiming for the playoffs since the very beginning.

Win the championships!

This wasn't something Ye Xiu just casually said to mess with everyone. He had been completely sincere. From day one of the regular season, he had been planning, adjusting, training the whole team, all in pursuit of this goal.

Right now, Yu Wenzhou's view of Happy was that no matter what roster they brought up, he wouldn't be too surprised, because they had always been swinging and changing, unlike the mature and steady teams like Blue Rain. However, even as Happy was swinging, they manifested a sort of balance. They weren't steady in an absolute sense, but they were in a relative sense.

Happy's most fearsome person ultimately was still Ye Xiu. Not only was he sturdy in combat with a thirty-seven win streak, his control and deployment of the team as a whole was a completely easy and familiar task to him.

And right now...

"Just surrender now!" this person laughed as he shook Yu Wenzhou's hand.

"Heh, it looks like that's not necessary right now!" Yu Wenzhou smiled.

"Very soon it will be," said Ye Xiu.

"You shut up!" Huang Shaotian interrupted.

"Remember to love the environment!" As Ye Xiu shook Huang Shaotian's hand, his other hand patted the back of his hand in a friendly way.

"Oh fuck off!" Huang Shaotian shook his hand free. To the side, the referee could hardly bear to watch. Ye Xiu had really twisted the knife there!

The players walked past one by one, following the pre-match etiquette. They were also generally lined up in a fixed order; for example, the sixth person was generally lined up last. So, Wei Chen was the last person to walk in front of Yu Wenzhou.

"Captain Wei." This was how Yu Wenzhou addressed him, when he shook his hand.

To the side, Huang Shaotian didn't wait for him to come over, instead taking the initiative to approach.

"Captain Wei." He used the same form of address, his tone completely respectful. Even Ye Xiu, who was also his senior and a pinnacle God who had already achieved the dazzling light of three consecutive championships before he'd even debuted, was someone he drove away with a "fuck off."

Because this person in front of him now was different. If not for this person, Huang Shaotian might have treated Glory as no more than a frivolous pastime, where he'd run over to the game to cause a bit of trouble in his free time. He would have just continued living the life of an ordinary person, until he became so busy that even this pastime was forgotten, and Glory faded away from his life once and for all.

But he met Wei Chen.

It was this person who changed his attitude toward Glory. It was this person who sparked his interest in becoming a professional player. It was this person who ultimately brought him into Team Blue Rain. It was this person who helped him walk on his journey of growth.

And then he left, and Huang Shaotian earned a name for himself as a member of the Golden Generation, formally stepping into the professional circle. He took control of a character now called the Sword Saint, and charged through this battlefield. The whole world was open to him now, in a way that he never would have imagined, even in his wildest dreams.

And all of it was thanks to the person in front of him.

After he had left, they'd lost all contact. Huang Shaotian had wanted to meet him again, but he never imagined it would be like this. On the battlefield as opponents, and in the playoffs, where only one could survive. The bitterest of opponents.

But none of this could change Huang Shaotian's feelings toward Wei Chen.

If he had to say which person in his life had the greatest influence upon him, his answer would only contain the name of this person.

"Surrender!" And then this was what he heard Wei Chen, this person who had the greatest influence on his life, this person whom he respected the most, say to him.

"How could we do that!" Yu Wenzhou smiled.

Huang Shaotian didn't have too much of a reaction either, because it was entirely unsurprising for this person to say such a thing. Even though this was someone he held in great esteem, Wei Chen was indeed an extremely unscrupulous person.

"What a shame, I can hardly bear to beat you guys on the battlefield!" Wei Chen sighed.

"The same goes for us!" Yu Wenzhou said.

"But you've already beaten me," said Wei Chen.

"It was just luck," said Yu Wenzhou.

"It won't happen this time," said Wei Chen. "I'll fight to my fullest."