

Avatar 1441

Chapter 1441: Fireworks Style

Mo Fan had previously been playing extremely slow, taking nearly three minutes to close the distance. But suddenly, he sped up. Step back and turn around in one fluid motion. A new offense had begun practically the instant the several shadow clones disappeared.

As for Song Xiao?

Song Xiao was still whirling around looking for traces of Deception. By the time he turned backwards, Deception had reached him.

Flame Slash!

The dense fog seemed to boil as flames leapt into the air. The fiery attack was incomparably fast, slashing Receding Tides directly in the face.

Boom!

The flames clung onto Receding Tides and burned him.

One, two, three, four, five...

Five consecutive hits and then Deception vanished into the fog.

The excitement had just reached a peak, but all of it just collapsed in an instant...

This again! Those familiar with Mo Fan's style collectively gave out a sigh. The fast-paced burst had revealed his skillfulness, but the display always went away immediately afterwards. Beautiful but brief like fireworks.

"Fireworks Style," Pan Lin said. He wasn't the one who came up with this name, but rather a nickname people in the forums had given Mo Fan's weird playstyle. When Pan Lin found it, he felt that it was a very suitable name, and so when Mo Fan showed it off, he called it out.

"Oh, I've heard of this name before, too. It paints a pretty picture," Li Yibo chuckled.

Two consecutive offensives. The first Shadow Dance had been beautiful, but Song Xiao's timely response to deal with it had been outstanding as well. But Mo Fan's sudden change in pace had caught Song Xiao off guard. The five-hit combo performed from five skills had been perfect. By the time Song Xiao readjusted himself, Mo Fan's Deception went into hiding.

Song Xiao wasn't going to sit and wait for his death to come. He had Receding Tides chase in the direction that Deception had disappeared into.

Mo Fan simply hid behind a tree and went in a circle around Song Xiao. Deception was behind Receding Tides again. This time, Mo Fan didn't wait too long before launching his next wave of attacks. The sudden sneak attack from behind had caught Song Xiao in a fluster. But this time, Mo Fan's combo had been stopped. Receding Tides was able to escape the third wave of attacks from Mo Fan.

Not waiting for the counterattack, Mo Fan had Deception immediately retreat after seeing the attack miss.

“Speaking of which, Mo Fan is much more familiar with this playstyle than Song Xiao is...” Pan Lin said.

“I think it’s quite clear who’s going to win this round. I’m a bit worried for Song Xiao though. He had fought against Ye Xiu for a long time, and he must be quite tired. Now, he’s against Mo Fan, who’s playing this sort of grind game that won’t let him ease up. Song Xiao... will he have spent too much energy in today’s group arena?” Li Yibo said.

“Ah... this is truly...” Pan Lin wasn’t able to find the right words. Blue Rain had tried to tire out Happy’s Ye Xiu. Not only did they fail, Song Xiao had a rough time while trying to exhaust Ye Xiu. And now, he was up against another tiresome opponent, Mo Fan. Not only did it look like he was going to lose, he would most likely be affected in the following team competition by the fatigue from his group arena matches.

“Perhaps Song Xiao should give up,” Pan Lin said.

“But do you think he will, with his personality?” Li Yibo said.

Pan Lin fell silent.

Although Song Xiao wasn’t a God, with the nickname Mr. Clutch, he would often shine in important matches. As such, Song Xiao’s pride was no lesser than that of a God’s.

Facing against a rookie, Mo Fan, and against a grind strategy that Happy was using against them, Song Xiao shrinking back would be admitting that Blue Rain’s strategy today was an utter failure. It would mean that he had given up to a certain extent.

Song Xiao would not give up. It was because he never gave up that he made plays at critical moments and became known as Mr. Clutch.

Shrink back, give up? Never!

Receding Tides traversed through the thicket. After experiencing such a long battle, Song Xiao could still muster up another burst of energy. Receding Tides looked to be even nimbler than before.

Poof! Bang!

Deception launched another sneak attack, which brought upon a powerful counter from Song Xiao. On this fourth wave of attacks from Mo Fan, Receding Tides surged with qi. With a Flash Burst, he completely toppled Mo Fan’s wave of attacks.

“Where are you running!”

Song Xiao would not let this opportunity go and had Receding Tides chase after him. As long as he could stick close to him, he would have the chance to stop Mo Fan from disappearing and attempting another sneak attack.

Despite only having 3% health, he wouldn’t cower. He would continue forward!

This Mo Fan player didn't seem to like trades. With only 3% health left, Song Xiao felt like he could take advantage of this habit. He couldn't miss this final opportunity. He had to stick close!

Spiral Qi Kill!

Receding Tides whirled his arms, spinning qi in the air. Because of this map's dense fog, the traces left behind from this skill was very clear. A spiralling white dragon flew forward.

Boom!

The qi exploded, but it was just a straw dummy that was torn to pieces.

Substitution Technique!

Song Xiao immediately looked around, trying to find Deception. But he didn't think that it would come from below...

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Deception tunneled out of the ground. The ninjato in his hands, Sixteen Leaves, looked like tree leaves again. But this time, the leaves weren't floating down. Rather, they seemed to dance with the wind, sending a ribbon of blood into the dense fog.

Dead!

Receding Tide's health finally hit zero. Song Xiao hadn't been able to bite at Mo Fan one last time.

Scrap picker...

Song Xiao thought of Mo Fan's background. In terms of running for his life, Mo Fan was a master. Song Xiao couldn't help but think of their match against Happy during the regular season. Team Happy's defeat had been certain, yet Ye Xiu and Mo Fan had frantically played hide-and-seek with them**.

What a troublesome kid!

Song Xiao shook his head. He stood up and then left the player booth.

Right now, only the Happy fans on the west platform were cheering excitedly. The rest of the stadium filled with Blue Rain fans had worry and gloominess written all over their faces.

The home team had the advantage of picking the map and should be trying to take the initiative. But this match? Blue Rain's plans for this map completely failed. Instead, Happy's Mo Fan was like a fish in the water as he handled Song Xiao like a worm.

84%.

Deception still had this much health left. Would Blue Rain's next player be able to deal with him?

It was just a rookie, but Team Blue Rain's fans were worried for their team. Mo Fan's skill was unquestionable, perhaps even feared.

"Who is Blue Rain sending up next?" Pan Lin said.

Song Xiao went back to Blue Rain's player bench with his head down. Mr. Clutch wasn't able to clutch it out today.

"You did well. Take a rest!" Yu Wenzhou did not scold him. Instead, he took the initiative to console him.

The Blue Rain fans watching with an omniscient view could grasp the true situation faster than the players playing on the stage.

Song Xiao had fallen for Ye Xiu's trap. While Ye Xiu was sandbagging, he had been completely focused on defending and tiring out Ye Xiu. During that time, he was no longer tiring out Ye Xiu, but rather, it was Ye Xiu tiring out him.

Afterwards, he was stuck in Mo Fan's slow and dragged out pace. Song Xiao was truly exhausted. But he could not relax. The more crucial team competition still needed him. He could only follow his captain's words. He hurried to the sidelines to rest as much as possible before the team competition began.

"Go!" At this moment, Yu Wenzhou called out to Blue Rain's third player.

Li Yuan, Summoner Eight Notes.

Last round, he had encountered Mo Fan in the group arena, but had lost miserably. He met him again in their game. Li Yuan was pleased. He needed to take revenge for last time.

"Good luck, Li Yuan!" The entire stadium stood up and cheered for him. Their opening wasn't good, making everyone nervous and worried.

"Watch me," Li Yuan waved his hands to his teammates and to the crowd as he walked onto the stage.

The match soon began.

Li Yuan finally switched up Blue Rain's initial strategy and went along the central path.

Mo Fan still took the roundabout route, but he took a rather strange path. He first had Deception move west. Once he moved far enough, he took a path north and slightly to the east.

"What is Mo Fan thinking?" Pan Lin wondered.

"This... it looks like he's planning on cutting off Li Yuan after calculating his movement speed," Li Yibo said.

"Cut off?"

"The choices at the start of the match are the central path, the path slightly to the west, and the path slightly to the east. Because of the dense fog, you can't deviate too far east or west from the central path, otherwise it's pointless. That's why Mo Fan is having his character move tangentially. If the opponent takes the central path, the opponent will be moving towards the southern end. If the opponent takes the west or east path, the opponent will move slower south than if the opponent took the central path. If Mo Fan continues along his current route, he'll come across two intersections on either the central or eastern path. Three possibilities. He's covering three possibilities before he tries anything else," Li Yibo said.

“In that case, he’s already succeeded! Will they meet on the central path?” Pan Lin looked at their movements.

“That’ll depend on what Li Yuan does,” Li Yibo said.

Li Yuan’s Eight Notes quickly reached the center of the map. He had Eight Notes stop and look at his surroundings.

“If Eight Notes doesn’t move, Deception might not run into him,” Pan Lin said.

“He’ll probably move!” Li Yibo said.

“Not only does he need to move, he needs to move forward,” Pan Lin said.

Just as he said this, Li Yuan’s Eight Notes continued forward towards the south. In Pan Lin’s eyes, Eight Notes was already doomed.

Chapter 1442: Summoner Formation

Would Deception be able to cut off Eight Notes?

After listening to Pan Lin’s and Li Yibo’s analysis, the viewers began to ponder over this question. Through their observations, they calculated their speed and pathing to deduce whether the two would meet.

However, Li Yuan didn’t push forward mindlessly like Pan Lin and Li Yibo said he was. As Eight Notes moved, he would summon creatures from time to time, preparing for a fight preemptively.

“Li Yuan has started summoning... but in this map, if Mo Fan plays slow, it’ll be unfavorable for Li Yuan! All of us know that Summoners are very mana-hungry, and summons only stay on the field for a limited duration. Li Yuan is putting out summons, but if he doesn’t encounter his opponent within their summon duration, wouldn’t that mean he’s just wasting his mana?” Pan Lin said.

“But what can he do... it’s far too easy to get ambushed in this map. If Li Yuan doesn’t summon creatures in advance, would he have the time to summon them when the fight begins?” Li Yibo added.

“In that case, Happy’s side can just not do anything and run around in circles. If Li Yuan has no choice but to keep a few summons around, then in theory, couldn’t MO Fan just wait for him to run out of mana?” Pan Lin said.

“Haha, Li Yuan will summon, but he certainly won’t summon a lot of them!” Li Yibo laughed.

Eight Notes was a Spirit Summoner. If he mobilized his entire army, the scale would be massive. Sure enough, Li Yuan only had Eight Notes summon two Little Spirits. The two Little Spirits didn’t stick close to him. Instead, they spread out to Eight Note’s left and right side.

“Hm? The positioning of these spirits!” Pan Lin suddenly called out when he saw this scene.

“It’s very similar to what Ye Xiu had done with his Goblins!” Li Yibo laughed.

“Yes!” Pan Lin nodded his head.

Li Yuan had the two Little Spirits on his left and right side move around freely, extending the range of his vision to the sides. Although he wouldn't be able to directly see what the spirits saw, Li Yuan's effective vision had increased considerably.

"In this case, wouldn't this..." Pan Lin was just about to criticize Li Yuan, when Eight Notes drew another two summoning circles and called out two more Little Spirits. One of these two spirits moved to the front, while the other moved behind him. Li Yuan had now expanded his effective vision in every direction.

"Beautiful! I don't know if Li Yuan thought of it himself, or if got inspiration from Ye Xiu," Pan Lin praised. He saw that the four Little Spirits were positioned neatly to the front, back, left, and right of Eight Notes. All of them were moving at the same speed too.

"However, this method has dead angles. Li Yuan's vision is in fact in a cross shape. His vision at the corners is a bit lacking. But if he wants to make up for those corners, he'd have to summon four more Little Spirits, which would be too wasteful. He could have his spirits rotate in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction, but it would slow him down and would also place an extra burden on his mana," Li Yibo said.

"Li Yuan should be aware of this weakness!" Pan Lin said.

"Of course he knows. Take a look at his line of sight. He's focused on those four corners," Li Yibo said.

"In that case, even if Deception comes in from one of those four corners, he'll still be discovered," Pan Lin said.

"Not just that... if he comes in from one of the four corners, he won't be seen by the Little Spirits. That also means that Mo Fan won't know about the existence of the Little Spirits. If that moment comes, the two Spirits on that side can circle around and ambush him from behind," Li Yibo said.

"Oh! If you say it like that..."

"This is an interesting and well-thought-out formation. We originally thought that this map was rather disadvantageous for Summoners, but Li Yuan unexpectedly answered back with this brilliant formation," Li Yibo said.

"Ha, if the map really was disadvantageous for Summoners, I doubt Blue Rain would have sent Li Yuan up for the group arena!" Pan Lin said.

"True. The two players are approaching," Li Yibo said.

"Yes! Mo Fan's Deception is cutting in diagonally. At this speed, Deception will come in from the southwest corner of Eight Note's summon formation!" Pan Lin began speaking louder. He hadn't expected this match's high point to come so quickly. They had seen through Li Yuan's formation in theory, but how would it work in practice?

The camera shifted to Mo Fan's point of view. Would he notice the two Little Spirits?

Step by step, he approached.

The two moved quite fast, especially Mo Fan's Deception. As he moved, he would borrow his surroundings as cover from time to time. This map clearly hadn't been chosen by Happy, but he seemed to know this map inside and out. You could reach a certain level of understanding from looking at the map through an omniscient view, but to adeptly utilize the map required real practice. Mo Fan was able to quickly maneuver through the map stealthily as soon as he loaded into the map. It had to be said that he had quite the talent in this area.

Deception's footsteps gradually slowed down and became more and more careful.

Almost there...

Mo Fan had been calculating. If Eight Notes had taken the central path, it should be about time for the two to come across each other. As a result, when it was about time for them to meet, Mo Fan had Deception slow down.

Hm? What's that over there!

At this moment, a glimmer of light suddenly appeared in his view. Mo Fan turned to take a closer look and saw an Water Spirit charging towards him.

"They've found each other! But..." Pan Lin shouted. Everyone knew what he meant by 'but': Mo Fan had noticed the Little Spirits.

Li Yuan's cross-shaped formation had been very balanced. If one wanted to pass through the formation diagonally without being noticed by Spirits, one would have to take an extremely precise route. Mo Fan's path clearly wasn't precise enough. He came in from angle just slightly off from the center, resulting in him being discovered by the Little Spirits at the front.

Mo Fan was quite calm. He didn't hurry to attack and instead tried escaping from this Little Spirit.

After watching Ye Xiu's and Yu Wenzhou's match, Mo Fan knew what these summons could do. The summon's movements could warn the owner of his position, but at the same time, he could use them bait the opponent to a position which he could ambush from.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Deception immediately formed a hand seal. His shadow clone remained there and continued to run forward as the Water Spirit chased after it. As for his real body, he moved to the side and ran forward along with the shadow clone.

"This..." Pan Lin was stunned.

Wasn't this a replay of the Yu Wenzhou versus Ye Xiu match?

At that time, Yu Wenzhou had used Shadow Clone Technique to trick Lord Grim's Goblin. Right now, Mo Fan was using Shadow Clone Technique to trick Eight Note's Little Spirit.

"This... both sides are doing what their opponents did in the first round of the group arena..." Pan Lin remarked. But just when he finished saying these words, he realized his mistake.

Mo Fan was doing the exact same as Yu Wenzhou, but Li Yuan? Li Yuan wasn't Ye Xiu. Eight Notes wasn't an unspecialized, so his following reaction would be very different from Ye Xiu's.

After noticing the abnormal movements of his Little Water Spirit, Li Yuan knew Deception's general location despite not being able to see Deception, so he had the other Little Water Spirit on Eight Note's left to draw closer. The movements of the two Little Dark Spirits on his right and back were also adjusted.

Why did he choose to group the same-element Spirits together? There was naturally a reason behind it. Because Big Spirits required two Little Spirits to fuse together. Li Yuan had arranged it in preparation to create a higher-staged Big Spirit.

The other difference with Ye Xiu... When Ye Xiu found Swoksaar, Lord Grim chased after him relentlessly. But when Li Yuan ascertained Deception's position, Eight Notes slowed down, only making sure his summons were within his line of sight. Afterwards, he summoned more Little Spirits. They didn't all move in the same direction. Rather, the Little Spirits spread out like chess pieces. The viewers had an omniscient view, and from the bird's eye view from the broadcast, they could clearly see Li Yuan's current formation.

As for Deception, his real body and his clone were trapped inside the net. The ambush Mo Fan had been waiting for never came because Li Yuan didn't seem to have any plans of getting near him. Eight Notes stayed outside of his vision.

The situation seemed poor for Mo Fan, but many people were feeling doubtful.

Because in the last confrontation between Li Yuan and Mo Fan, Mo Fan had displayed masterful skill at escaping. Last time, despite being searched for by an army of summons, Deception hadn't been caught and was actually able to slowly approach Eight Notes.

"What will happen this time?" Pan Lin spoke out everyone's thoughts.

"I'm afraid, it's unlikely..." Li Yibo replied.

"Oh? What are your thoughts, Coach Li?"

"This time... Mo Fan doesn't even know where Eight Notes is!" Li Yibo said.

"Indeed!" Pan Lin suddenly realized the issue.

"But if it's just escaping, I'm quite confident he can do it," Li Yibo followed up.

"If it's just escaping?" Pan Lin looked at the match, "He's already escaped, no?"

Deception's Shadow Clone had dissipated, while the real Deception was carefully hidden. After the Little Spirits lost their target, they didn't know what to do and immediately stopped moving. But the viewers soon discovered that apart from the Little Spirits that had lost their target, the rest were following Li Yuan's orders and heading towards a predetermined location.

Chapter 1443: Patience

Deception was hiding inside a bush. Let alone with this fog, even without the fog, he was completely hidden. The camera zoomed in on Deception's hiding spot, but it still took a lot of effort for the viewers to find him inside the bush.

This type of hiding spot was somewhat deceiving. If you didn't look carefully at that exact spot, it would be easy to miss it. However, the system summons could not be deceived in this way. If even a single strand of Deception's clothing stuck out from the bush, the summons would find him.

Last time, Mo Fan was able to escape from a map-wide search by an army of summons. He clearly understood that the system AI was far better than real players in this aspect. He had intended to sneak attack Eight Notes by hiding in this bush, but seeing that Eight Notes still wasn't here yet, he knew that for the summons, his current hiding spot was the same as no hiding spot. As a result, he immediately came out from the bush.

To avoid summons, he needed to be 100% outside of their vision. Escaping the notice of summoned spirits was more troublesome than escaping the notice of summoned beasts. The Big and Little Spirits were balls of elemental energy, thus the structure of their bodies were uniform on all sides. In comparison, summoned beasts had eyes and noses, so their line of vision was much easier to figure out. When running from other players, you could run, while peeking your head out from a corner once in a while. A player in pursuit might not notice such a small detail like half a head sticking out, but summons definitely would not. It could still be done with summoned beasts, if you knew that their back was to you. But it was best not to try it against summoned spirits because it was hard to tell where the spirits were facing. If you snuck a glance at them, it likely that the spirits would notice.

Shaking off the pursuit of summoned spirits required fast and decisive movements. Hiding one's movements as best as possible was far better than trying to observe their movements and then coming up with a plan.

After Deception came out from the bush, his movements weren't fast, but they were well hidden. He spent 80% of his time either crouching or lying flat on the ground while moving.

"I should really record this part. It's a master class on how to move around covertly!" Li Yibo was full of praise after seeing Deception's movements.

As for Li Yuan?

Li Yuan was in no hurry.

After Deception's Shadow Clone Technique ended, he had lost his target. However, his summons had reached their designated positions, so he didn't make any more unnecessary commands. Eight Notes seemed to just be heading carefreely towards a direction.

The spirits quickly stopped moving. The elemental light emitted from the spirits pulsed amidst the dense fog. They no longer seemed to be chasing after a target. Instead, they were more like landmines or traps patiently waiting for their prey to run into them.

"Smart!" Li Yibo suddenly yelled out.

"Ah?"

“Li Yuan’s current plan is much more effective than an automatic search. In a hard-to-see map like this one, a player’s eyes can’t compare to the system AI of summoned spirits. The immobilized spirits can react faster than Mo Fan. Mo Fan’s method of dodging the spirits greatly reduces his vision,” Li Yibo explained.

“He’s been found!” At this moment, Pan Lin discovered a change in the battle.

When Deception passed between two trees, a Little Light Spirit hiding in the fog suddenly started moving extremely accurately towards Deception.

“Mo Fan’s been found, but he hasn’t seemed to notice it yet!” Pan Lin yelled.

Deception continued to move stealthily, but he seemed to be unaware of the Little Spirit chasing behind him.

“But the Little Spirit is slower than him. If Li Yuan doesn’t do anything, he’ll probably lose sight of Deception again,” Li Yibo said.

Would Li Yuan not do anything?

Of course not!

The spirits that he had positioned were under his control. As soon as a sudden movement came about, he immediately knew that he had found a target. And in this map, there were no other targets besides Deception.

And from his Little Light Spirit’s movements, Li Yuan was able to deduce Deception’s pathing and immediately gave all of his spirits new commands.

These commands weren’t just to charge over. Depending on their current positions, each spirit received a different coordinate to move to. As for the spirits far away, Li Yuan gave up on them. Eight Notes summoned new spirits to replace the ones far away and then commanded those spirits to rush over.

The Light Little Spirit that had first found Deception really had been shaken off by Deception, but two new Little Spirits had taken its place.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo believed that Mo Fan had become aware of that Light Little Spirit chasing him, which was why he had suddenly sped up to escape from its pursuit.

He had escaped from it, but two new Little Spirits were biting at his heels now.

“What great patience**!” Li Yibo had a high evaluation of this match.

Li Yuan had been quite patient. Eight Notes had mobilized quite a few spirits. He had the max limit of eight Little Spirits, as well as an Ice and Fire Big Spirit, scattered around the map.

Had he taken inspiration from how Ye Xiu dealt with Yu Wenzhou in the first round?

Pan Lin and Li Yibo took back their words.

This was Blue Rain’s home game, and Li Yuan deserved to be part of Blue Rain’s main roster. This map seemed to be unfavorable for Summoners, but he was able to fully utilize it. The spirits scattered around

became traps. Did it matter if Mo Fan was an expert at escaping? The spirits weren't chasing after him. All of them stood at their designated positions and then waited for Mo Fan's Deception to run into them.

If this were a normal map, after encountering a spirit, Mo Fan would have plenty of room to run. But the visibility in this map was low. By the time he noticed a spirit, the distance between them would be close, making it much more difficult to escape.

Li Yuan fully utilized this point. Blue Rain's reason for choosing this map in the group arena was becoming more clear.

Yu Wenzhou and Song Xiao had tried to tire out Ye Xiu. Blue Rain failed to achieve this goal, but that wasn't their only strategy in mind. They had no plans of banking all of their hopes on crushing the team competition.

Li Yuan's performance on this map illustrated this point. After Yu Wenzhou and Song Xiao, Blue Rain planned on winning as many points in the group arena. From the way Li Yuan was playing in this dense fog, Eight Notes appeared extremely powerful. Mo Fan didn't even know where Li Yuan was, yet he was already running for his life.

After escaping one spirit, two more came. Before he could shrug off these two spirits, a third and a fourth one came...

Li Yuan had not ordered any of these spirits to give chase. He just had them stay at a certain position. But because of the terrain in this map, Mo Fan's Deception kept running into more and more of them, and now, he could no longer move about freely.

Substitution Technique, Shadow Clone Technique...

Smoke Bomb, Caltrops...

All sorts of escape skills were used, but he just wasn't able to cleanly escape from all of them.

Eight Notes seemed to have an endless number of spirits. As soon as Mo Fan shook off one spirit, another would take its place.

Compared to Mo Fan's frantic actions, Li Yuan's actions were methodical. Whether it was summoning replacement spirits or moving them around, he appeared calm and collected. He didn't waste the spirits he would replace either. Four Big Spirits were in position now. The spirit army that Mo Fan would face was becoming increasingly large.

"If this continues, it won't be good for Mo Fan!" Li Yibo expressed his opinion.

"Yes, if this continues, he'll be harassed to death..." Pan Lin said. Deception had taken quite a bit of damage while trying to escape. There were moments when the spirits caught up to him. What's more, the Big Ice Spirit and Big Light Spirits had long-ranged attacks.

Suddenly, Deception stopped moving.

Shuriken!

Deception attacked, throwing a shuriken towards the Big Light Spirit. Then, he charged forward, not in the direction he had been running in, but backwards.

Empty Cicada Double Kill!

With his ninja blade in one hand and the sheath in the other, Deception let out two attacks simultaneously.

Zi zi...

The two attacks hit two Little Spirits, letting out a sound like lightning. Spirits consisted of elemental energy, not flesh and blood. After being hit by attacks, they would make strange noises.

Empty Cicada Double Kill was a powerful attack, and Little Spirits were extremely frail. Although it was just a single attack, their health bars dropped to nearly zero.

Flame Slash!

The Dark Little Spirit didn't have a high fire resistance like Fire Spirits. The Little Ice Spirit had a negative resistance against fire.

Boom!

Without fire resistance, neither of them could withstand the blow. A wave of fire descended, damaging the two Little Spirits' elemental energy. The fire burned for a few moments before the two spirits dissipated.

"Mo Fan isn't running away anymore. He's started fighting the two Spirits directly," Pan Lin said.

"He's trying to force Eight Notes to come out! The spirits alone aren't enough to contest against a pro player. Eight Notes will need to personally come out and take command, which would mean Deception will be able to see him..." Li Yibo said.

"So it's like that... Sure enough, Li Yuan's Eight Notes is heading over," Pan Lin shouted.

The two players were finally in each other's line of sight for the first time in this match.

"Will Mo Fan directly rush towards him?" Pan Lin yelled.

"Ah, he's rushing over. He's charging towards Li Yuan!"

Chapter 1444: Break Out

Mo Fan had always been careful. There were often times where everyone thought that he could definitely continue his offense, but he would always run away and then look for another opportunity to launch a sneak attack on his opponent. Right now, his opponent was directly in front of him and spirits were all around him, yet he didn't hesitate to rush him.

"Direct combat? But this time, the situation's completely different," Pan Lin said.

Last time was referring to the first Happy versus Blue Rain playoffs round. Li Yuan let out all of his summons to scout the surroundings and only left a Devil World Flower near him. Mo Fan's Deception beautifully dodged around the spirits and cut straight to Eight Notes' side. He instantly killed the Devil World Flower and then attacked Eight Notes.

But this time? Deception had only killed two Little Spirits. He hadn't escaped from the predicament. Moreover, when Li Yuan's Eight Notes prepared to personally take command of his summons, he had ordered all of his spirits to gather towards this place.

"He has no choice." Li Yibo had no time to give a thorough analysis and simply gave out the main reason for Mo Fan's actions.

Attack!

Deception rushed forward. Mo Fan may be silent and taciturn, but once he made a decision, he would take it all the way through. As a master of escape, he had a much clearer understanding of his predicament than others. If he didn't have this sort of perception, there was no way he could have been able to pick up whatever he wanted on the chaotic PK fields and then escape.

He had grasped his opponent's strategy. In this map, it was indeed flawless. A person's observational abilities were far less precise than the system AI under these conditions. That was what he kept on bumping into spirits. What's more, by the time he noticed it, the spirit would already be fairly close, making escape extremely difficult.

As a result, he started attacking the spirits. He recognized that today, there was no way to avoid these obstacles. If he couldn't avoid them, then his only choice was to destroy them.

But after killing just two spirits, their owner appeared.

Mo Fan wasn't too surprised. The spirits were this easy to kill because the system AI controlled them. Mo Fan wasn't so naive to think that Li Yuan would just let him slaughter his way out. Li Yuan would certainly come out and take command of the spirits.

Fight the summons and the Summoner together? That was Tang Rou's style.

The scrap-picker-borne Mo Fan had a clear goal: lock onto Eight Notes. That was all he wanted to do. Anything else was a waste of time.

Thus, as soon as Eight Notes appeared, Deception charged at him.

Mo Fan's actions seemed incongruous with his usual playstyle, but it actually coincided perfectly with his usual decision making.

Storm Shuriken!

Deception lifted his hand and threw out several shurikens. As he dashed at him, Eight Notes, who had been in a blurry silhouette in the dense fog, became easier to see. Mo Fan saw as Eight Notes waved his magic staff and finish a cast. A summoning circle appeared in front of him. The soil under the summoning circle turned into a different color. The earth split apart, and vines from a Devil World Flower extended out.

Pu pu pu pu pu!

The shurikens were swatted down by the Devil World Flower. The Devil World Flower trembled and a vine drilled out from the ground.

Shua!

Deception leapt into the air. The vine tried to wrap around his ankle, but he threw out another shuriken, pinning the vine to the ground.

“Beautiful!” Pan Lin shouted. These precise and fluid movements showed just how skilled Mo Fan was. Pan Lin just didn’t understand. If Mo Fan possessed such technical skill, why was he insistent on his Fireworks Style?

Seal!

Deception quickly formed several hand seals. His two hands were like a blur to the eyes. The average viewer had no way of telling what seals he was forming. However, from the complexity of it, they could tell that it was a powerful skill.

What is it?

Ninjutsu – Exploding Flame Dragon!

Mo Fan had used this Level 75 skill last time to instantly kill off Li Yuan’s Devil World Flower. This time, the Devil World Flower had already been hit by Storm Shurikens. An instant kill was certain. Eight Notes was behind the Devil World Flower. The Exploding Flame Dragon had a large AoE and would swallow Eight Notes along with the Devil World Flower.

Boom!

A whirling fire dragon flew out from the triangle formed from Deception’s hands. However, at this moment, a wall of fire erupted, blocking the fire dragon.

These flames weren’t as overbearing as the dragon’s flames, but they were just as restless.

Big Fire Spirit!

The Big Fire Spirit acted as shield for the Devil World Flower, and facing the Exploding Flame Dragon, it rushed out to defend against it.

Using a Big Fire Spirit to take the attack was perfect. Fire elemental attacks had no effect on a Big Fire Spirit. Not only did it have no effect, the Big Fire Spirit seemed to expand; its flames danced even more wildly.

Fire Blade!

The Big Fire Spirit seemed to form an arm made up entirely of flames. The arm slashed downwards towards Deception.

Boom!

Deception suddenly went ablaze, instantly vanishing into smoke.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Mo Fan relied on this quick skill to avoid the Fire Blade and to instantly move to Eight Note's back.

"He's behind him!!" Pan Lin cried out.

The fast exchange between the two sides was too brilliant. Deception was able to successfully get to Eight Note's back. Although it was hard to say how much he would be able to do with so many spirits surrounding him, he at least had the initiative during this short period of time, no?

But there was nothing!

The instant Deception moved behind Eight Notes, a sharp thorn shot from the ground. Mo Fan had no time to react. Deception was launched into the sky as if he had been pricked in the butt by it.

Thorn!

The Summoner knock-up skill was completed using summoning as well. Eight Notes had predicted that Deception would move behind him. Li Yuan knew that the Big Fire Spirit's Fire Blade wouldn't be enough to stop Deception's advance.

Pa!

A crisp sound.

Eight Notes turned around. The magic staff in his hands seemed to have turned into a creature. It struck Deception, launching him even higher into the air.

Lash.

The skill was intended to be used on summons to increase their combat ability, but it could also be used as an attack against enemies.

Deception had used Substitution Technique previously to escape from the spirits. Right now, it was still on cooldown, so he had no way of escaping.

Boom boom boom!

The Big Light Spirit's attack also arrived. A bolt of lightning crackled, crashing down onto Deception. Amidst the dense fog, spirit after spirit emerged, gathering together. Eight Notes retreated to the side, calmly commanding the army of spirits to attack Deception.

He hadn't summoned a Spirit King yet. It required four Big Spirits to fuse together. It was more effective to use numbers to trap Deception. If he fused together four Spirits, Mo Fan might just be able to escape.

Li Yuan was calm, very calm. Blue Rain's previous plans had failed to achieve their goal. Blue Rain's situation wasn't looking good either. He wasn't a senior member of Team Blue Rain, only having one more year of experience than Lu Hanwen, yet he seemed to have the strength of a core member, keeping the battle under his control.

Deception's health rapidly fell as the spirits swarmed him. And Eight Notes hadn't taken any damage. If this situation continued at this pace, this round could be considered a perfect win for Li Yuan.

In an individual competition, apart from praise and a boost of morale, a perfect win was no different than a narrow win. But in the group arena, a perfect win was truly a perfect outcome.

“Is this going to be a perfect win?” Pan Lin started having his doubts. Deception only had 42% of his health left, while Eight Notes had an army of spirits at his command. The spirits had Deception completely surrounded. Under Li Yuan’s personal command, the spirits circled around Deception, attacking him.

Everything seemed to be going perfect for Li Yuan. Suddenly, Li Yibo’s eyes lit up: “Chance!”

“Chance?” Pan Lin didn’t understand, but Mo Fan’s Deception suddenly moved.

Substitution Technique!

While taking hits, Deception used an escape skill. A straw dummy lay in the center of the encirclement and fell apart, while Deception’s real body flashed to a different position.

This abrupt movement had sent Li Yuan’s army of summons into a fluster. Then, Ninjutsu – Shadow Dance!

Multiple Deceptions appeared.

Zi zi zi zi...

Several Little Spirits were killed instantly. Mo Fan’s observational skills were truly frightening. There were so many spirits, yet he was able to identify which ones had low health. These discerning eyes had been trained through years of scrap picking.

“Is he going to counterattack!” Pan Lin yelled excitedly. If Li Yuan completed a perfect win, true, it would be incredible. But a match with ups and downs was more fun to watch!

“He’s probably going to try to escape!” Li Yibo said. He had seen the opportunity previously and had a clearer idea of Mo Fan’s intentions. But the situation was tense, so there was no time for a more detailed analysis. The multitude of Deceptions incited chaos into the field. Suddenly, one of the Deceptions retreated.

The heart of Shadow Dance!

Everyone thought of this term. Li Yuan had no way of reforming the encirclement. If he tried to surround one of the Deceptions, the heart of Shadow Dance would quickly switch to a different clone.

After one clone ran away, a second one took off. Deception after Deception retreated in different directions, and Li Yuan had no way of stopping them.

“He’s going to run!” Just as Pan Lin said this, the first Deception that tried to escape went “shing” and turned into a block of ice.

Chapter 1445: Near Perfect

“Frozen? How? Is it Falling Ice?” Pan Lin cried out in surprise. Falling Ice was the skill Big Ice Spirits used to attack with. Currently, the camera was on the Deception which had ran the furthest. His form was enveloped in mist, blurry from Eight Note’s point of view. Falling Ice? There was no hint of any Big Ice Spirit using that attack from the audience’s omniscient view. The freeze effect from Falling Ice wasn’t certain either. What sort of luck would you have to have in order to make sure that each hit was a freeze at such a crucial time?

What was it? As everyone mired in their bewilderment, the second Deception that charged turned into a block of ice with a pop!

Two? Everyone remained dumbstruck, and Mo Fan began to hesitate as well. The remaining Deceptions became uncertain. After spreading out, they weren’t strong and were quickly destroyed by the spirits. Mo Fan paused, but knowing that there was no other choice, he had all the Deception clones make a run for it.

Pop pop pop pop....

Miraculously, all the escaping Deceptions were turned into blocks of ice.

At the same time, three clones, clearly having left the range of Shadow Dance, shattered with the ice encasing them.

The shattered ice, along with the other two frozen Deceptions formed a circle. This circle wasn’t some random circle. It had blocked Deception’s escape and pulled away the heart of the Shadow Dance, causing the three clones to disappear at once.

“Ice Line!!!” Li Yibo suddenly realized, crying out his discovery.

Everyone who heard this immediately understood.

Ice Line, the Elementalist’s Ice Line skill.

An Ice Line would be left wherever the ice elemental power touched. The Ice Line would form an enchanted area within one second, and afterwards, whoever touched the Ice Line would be frozen with a 100 percent chance...

The skill that Li Yuan had set into his Eight Note’s staff was no longer Teleportation, but Ice Line. It was an Elementalist skill, but right now, Ice Line had turned into the key skill that would turn the tides. A skill set into the weapon having such a crucial effect was definitely more than worth its while!

With only two frozen Deceptions left, Eight Note’s spirit army would easily surround them. Li Yuan clearly had a masterful grasp of the freeze time, replenishing his summons as he had the two Deceptions surrounded.

He didn’t use this chance to summon any Spirit Kings. Perhaps it was because he didn’t see the need, or maybe he thought that the opening created by summoning Spirit Kings would be too big for this situation.

When the two ice blocks cracked open and the two Deceptions charged out, the spirits immediately swarmed over.

The broadcast director, thinking that nothing significant would occur, had already switched the shot to a replay of Li Yuan's Eight Note using Ice Line. When Deception used the Substitution Technique to try and escape, his Eight Notes began to cast Ice Line. Everyone, including Mo Fan, had been focused on the army of spirits, not Eight Notes. This Summoner, that seemed useless in a direct battle, had become the key.

"Switch back! Switch back!!" But not two seconds into the replay, one of his colleagues cried wildly for him to switch back to the shot of the ongoing match.

"What?" The program director fumbled, realizing that they were probably missing a spectacular play from the other side.

Two seconds was enough for everything to change.

The camera switched back to the match.

Of the two Deceptions that came out of the ice, one had already disappeared while the other was on his way to disappearing...

Shadow Clone Technique!

Deception, who had just escaped from the ice, immediately used Shadow Clone Technique. This real body was, naturally, the one that attempted to escape, so the two clones were left behind. One immediately disappeared because it left the range of Shadow Dance. The other was instantly blasted into smithereens by the siege of spirits.

Deception's real body didn't escape so successfully.

After that false alarm, Li Yuan didn't relax from relief, instead raising his guard, watching out for such a possibility. This time, he had considered the Ninja's escaping ability when he swarmed the other with spirits.

The shadow clone was instantly destroyed, but his real body didn't manage to escape immediately either.

Lightning!

Falling Ice!

Under Li Yuan's personal direction, the light and ice element spirits immediately struck with their long ranged skills. The two attacks were both priority attacks, blocking Deception's escape route, especially the light element large spirits' Lightning. A row of Lightning striking down at once formed a wall of electricity.

Break through forcibly!

Mo Fan, with no other choice, made his choice resolutely. Without hesitation, Deception charged out straight through the Lightning. The Lightning struck, but Mo Fan was pretty lucky; the stun didn't activate. However, right after, a row of Falling Ice descended. His attack came right after the Lightning. Since Deception had charged right through the Lightning, he wouldn't be able to dodge this one....

A chill enveloped him from head to toe. A 100 percent freeze? It didn't have that, but this strike had activated the 50 percent freeze. Deception could still move, but he had been slowed by 50 percent...

This dangerous situation wouldn't let him take his leaving. The swarm of spirits encircled Deception completely. It wasn't that there was no way out, but there was no chance given for escape. The escape skills of Ninjas had been considered when Li Yuan made these arrangements.

"I guess... that's it..."

Deception's health was about to hit zero, and Li Yibo finally made this conclusion.

Even under Li Yuan's careful, meticulously planned encirclement and direction, everyone watched with their hearts in their throats as Deception's health dwindled.

He didn't give up. He didn't give up until the end.

In the encirclement of spirits, Deception darted this way and that, trying to break out. He used all the tricks he had up his sleeve. Dart for an opening, killing his way through, open feints, sounding the east while heading west... As expected of an escape artist like Mo Fan, he had a plethora of tricks and schemes. Several times, he had charged out of the encirclement, but because he was unable to fully shake off the spirits, he didn't manage to fully escape.

Deception fell, but this match wasn't perfect. While he was over here trying to escape with everything he had, he had taken the time to suddenly throw a shuriken over at Eight Notes.

At that time, it was very crucial that he focused on blocking Deception's way with spirits. Li Yuan's judgement was very precise. If he had Eight Notes dodge and relaxed his grasp over the spirits, then Mo Fan would've gotten a chance. Thus, he didn't dodge the shuriken, and had Eight Notes take the damage. The damage wasn't much at all, and it was quite a shame, since it meant that this match wouldn't be a perfect. However, Li Yuan didn't bother pursuing this perfection, only wanting to continue the match steadily, and gaining a compliment from Pan Lin and Li Yibo.

This strike became the only damage Eight Notes had taken in the entire match, losing him 2 percent of his health.

The system didn't judge it as a perfect victory, but a loss of 2 percent of his health was probably equal to a perfect in the eyes of the audience. The value and advantage a perfect gave wouldn't be impacted any by this loss of 2 percent health.

The crowd erupted into cheering. Blue Rain had brilliantly made up a match after the two losses prior.

"Unfortunately, Mo Fan has lost this match, falling behind by a huge amount," Pan Lin said.

"This gap is only the result. If we really consider the actual progress of the match, then, while he hadn't managed to deal much damage, what sort of atmosphere surrounded this match? It was tense! Very tense. From this, it's clear that the two opponents were evenly-matched. Though the result is very one-sided, but against a Summoner, one successful ambush from Mo Fan could mean his victory," Li Yibo commented.

"That's true. Though Mo Fan lost, he performed well this match," Pan Lin agreed.

“Yes, and in a match of equal strength, what would become the deciding factor? The home game advantage! Li Yuan’s victory was built primarily on his brilliant grasp and usage of his terrain. His playstyle and strategy was founded on this map, and his actual performance was flawless. A very spectacular battle indeed,” Li Yibo said.

However, the audience in the venue clearly wouldn’t be able to analyze things as objectively as those two.

Last round, Mo Fan had used a tree to squash their God Huang Shaotian, and then narrowly won against Li Yuan as well. A rookie accomplishing a 1v2, especially when one of the opponents was Huang Shaotian, was a huge blow to Blue Rain’s morale. Today, his victory against Song Xiao had Blue Rain’s fans even more displeased. Seeing such a brilliant counterattack from Li Yuan, it would be a waste if they didn’t take the chance to unleash a wave of mockery.

Li Yuan was still in the player booth, so he couldn’t hear the applause, so the Blue Rain fans’ cheering didn’t last too long. When Mo Fan walked out of the player booth and came offstage, mocking applause and jeers also arrived like a tidal wave.

A rookie player generally would have a hard time facing such a situation, especially when they lost an almost perfect match to their opponent in the group arena. That was a burden for the entire team and put great pressure on them. However, Mo Fan remained emotionless, as if none of this had anything to do with him, as if he were a bystander, walking right back the way he came. His reaction, or lack thereof, had the audience soon losing interest.

To Mo Fan, the jeers weren’t just because of the match. The ones guiding the fans in the audience stands were Blue Brook’s higher ups, and scrap picker Deception had been a huge trouble to them. Some of them had even been scrap picked by Mo Fan before and never managed to get revenge.

Now that they had a chance for revenge, they would naturally put their all into guiding these jeers. Yet Mo Fan’s reaction had them losing interest.

“Not bad,” The jeers that filled the stadium didn’t bother Happy’s members. Ye Xiu stood and spoke to the returning Mo Fan. “You might not have dealt much damage, but you’ve at least depleted a lot of his mana!”

“Yeah,” Mo Fan nodded and returned to his seat.

Chapter 1446: Calculating Position

Mo Fan was still expressionless, and he didn’t have any interaction with the others. But in the few minutes that had just passed, Ye Xiu was able to determine what Mo Fan’s plan had been on the battlefield.

After being restricted by Eight Notes’ Ice Line, Mo Fan was still working hard and persevering.

And behind this perseverance wasn’t just his searching for a chance to escape. With Mo Fan’s skill in this area, he probably already recognized that so long as the opponent didn’t make a mistake, his Deception would have a very difficult time breaking through that encirclement of spirits.

His perseverance was his refusal to give in, but at the same time, it was prolonging the battle. And the goal of prolonging this battle was the same goal that Blue Rain had at the very beginning.

Wearing down.

Mo Fan wasn't able to wear down the opponent's health much, but through his perseverance, through the prolonging of the battle, he was able to wear down a significant portion of Eight Notes' mana.

The Summoner class was a mana-hungry class. Even in this seemingly perfect match, because of Mo Fan's unflagging perseverance, he was still able to leave a hidden scar.

Mo Fan couldn't take advantage of this hidden scar. In a 1v1, under conditions like that, it was fairly unlikely that he could drag the battle out until Eight Notes ran out of mana and he could counterattack. But he still held on, all in order to help his next teammate.

The solitary Mo Fan had always been alone; he had been at Happy for almost two years without really becoming anyone's friend. But now in this match, in the group arena, in a situation where his own chances of success were already unlikely, he understood how to fulfill his greatest potential – for his upcoming teammates, achieve the greatest chance of victory.

Ye Xiu couldn't help but think of that one team match they had against Blue Rain, where he covered for Mo Fan's retreat, but that guy turned around and came back to save him.

By that point in that team battle, there wasn't much suspense. No action would have had a major effect on the battle's outcome. But for Happy, for Mo Fan himself, it had unusual meaning. His actions that day allowed Ye Xiu to see that Mo Fan was steadily growing to become a competent pro player, a pro player who was beginning to recognize the importance of teammates and teamwork. Mo Fan's actions that day didn't affect the battle's outcome, but the fact that he now had this recognition would definitely prove valuable on the battlefield one day.

And that day had arrived, the opponent once again Blue Rain. In this group arena, Mo Fan's realization of the importance of team allowed him to finally move away from someone who was always pursuing individual endurance and victory. In a situation where he didn't have much chance of winning on his own, he thought of how to best ensure the team's overall victory.

Lose the battle, win the war.

This phrase was perhaps an excellent annotation for this match and Mo Fan's future professional career.

"Now it's up to me!" Fang Rui stood up, holding out his fist toward Mo Fan. Mo Fan looked at him without reacting.

"No passion at all!" Fang Rui grumbled, heading toward the stage. The stadium screen was already displaying Happy's next player and character, and in the broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo could discuss how they thought Fang Rui would perform in this next match.

"Even though Li Yuan won beautifully, he's exhausted himself quite a bit." Li Yibo had also noticed that Eight Notes had used up a significant amount of mana.

"Now, let's see how Fang Rui will take advantage of that point," Pan Lin said.

Group arena, both sides were on their third player. Soon, the match began. Before either player moved, messages were exchanged.

“Always guessing around is such a pain. Name a place and let’s meet up!” Fang Rui said.

“How about the central path!” Li Yuan said.

“Alright,” Fang Rui answered, and Boundless Sea immediately turned toward the left path.

The crowd instantly booed.

This was why it was very difficult for a player like Fang Rui to become the ace player of a team. This kind of action was sometimes shameful even for his own team’s fans, so there was really no way he could become the symbol of a team.

Li Yuan’s Eight Notes had very honestly taken the central path. Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea, under the booing that he couldn’t hear, was very calmly taking the roundabout route.

Li Yuan had also clearly realized that Eight Notes was rather low on mana, so he took a while before summoning a creature. He only released his first summon when he was right near the central path, letting it walk at the front before summoning two more to bolster the left and right. Evidently, he wasn’t naive enough to believe that Fang Rui would actually take the central path after saying he would.

Finally, Li Yuan arrived at the very center of the map, where the two had agreed to meet.

But where was Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea? The display screen switched point of view, and the entire Glory world was speechless.

“Left... The upper left corner? Why is Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea heading over here?” Pan Lin exclaimed, shocked.

Fang Rui’s roundabout travel here was roundabout to the very extreme. Boundless Sea was directly charging toward the very upper left corner of the map, and his current distance from Li Yuan’s Eight Notes was only growing.

“This... Maybe he just wants to be a bit farther from the opponent, so they don’t meet too quickly...” Li Yibo said.

“...” Pan Lin instantly became speechless as well. Just during the last battle, he and Li Yibo had analyzed the disadvantages this map had for a Summoner.

Because the field of view on this map wasn’t very large, if a Summoner waited until discovering the opponent to summon a creature, it might already be too late. So, a Summoner had to always have summons on hand, whether to protect or to investigate. Therefore, under these conditions, even though the two sides hadn’t met yet, the Summoner would continue to use up mana.

So right now, Fang Rui was using the simplest and crudest method. Just hide far, far, away! You can’t find me, so just continue to waste your mana!

This method capitalized upon the awkwardness a Summoner faced on this map. But for him to play dirty to this extent, it was really quite ugly to watch. The booing of the crowd now became much louder now than they had been with Fang Rui's initial deception.

"Where you at?" Li Yuan now asked in the chat.

"Ready to ambush you at any moment," Fang Rui said boldly, who was currently over half the map length away from Eight Notes.

"Hiding away to waste my mana?" Li Yuan actually directly called out Fang Rui's intention.

"Haha, how could I." Fang Rui refused to admit it.

But even though he'd completely guessed Fang Rui's intention, Li Yuan didn't hesitate. He began summoning one after another, and instantly eight small summons were released, scattering outward in all directions.

It was all very fast, very resolute, as though in a race against time. And when these summons spread out, everyone immediately realized that on the west side, the left side where Fang Rui had gone, there was a summon directly heading toward Boundless Sea's position.

"Based on the character's movement speed, he predicted the most likely path. For this kind of decision, the faster it's made, the better. If too much time passes, then there's no way at all of judging where the opponent might have gone," Li Yibo said.

"Then based on that, maybe it would have been better if Fang Rui hadn't moved at all at the start," Pan Lin said.

"It seems that way, but he did move, and the distance he moved is within Li Yuan's calculations," Li Yibo said.

On an overhead view of the map, a line was drawn between Boundless Sea and that light-aligned summon, marking the place where they were likely to meet. Right now, both were steadily heading toward that point.

"Li Yuan has made ample preparations on this map," Li Yibo exclaimed.

"There!" Pan Lin shouted. Boundless Sea and the Light Spirit weren't battling yet, but the two had entered into each other's sights.

At this distance, Li Yuan himself could no longer see his own summon, but he could check its movements. If he received notification that his summon was attacking, then he knew without question that that was Boundless Sea.

But at this moment, the signal he received was stronger than that. This Little Light Spirit directly vanished.

The summon's time hadn't expired. For it to simply vanish, that meant it was killed. Again, it could only be Boundless Sea.

Li Yuan immediately had Eight Notes to rush toward that direction, at the same time restarting his summoning. He replaced the four spirits that had headed toward the east, combining these four into two Big Spirits, and then adding four more Little Spirits, spreading out in a fan toward that direction.

This dense forest map was rectangular in shape, longer in the north-south direction, narrow in the east-west. Searching horizontally already increased the chance of encounter, and with the current formation of Li Yuan's summons, everyone could see that Boundless Sea's position was restricted to a very small area.

Watching this, Blue Rain's audience felt very satisfied!

You wanted to play around, so think you can play your way out of this?

Seeing the opponent's dirty play end bloodily was always fun to watch.

But at this moment, Fang Rui suddenly stopped playing dirty. Boundless Sea was no longer continuing toward the upper left corner, and as though he was leading an army of a million soldiers, he charged straight toward the encirclement of summons.

"Is he trying to forcefully attack his way through?" Pan Lin shouted.

But Li Yibo furrowed his brow. The rhythms of the battles on this map so far had all been fairly slow, which gave him more time to observe and analyze. Because of that, he had been commenting at a fairly high level today. At this time, carefully studying the movements of both sides, Li Yibo once again felt that something was off.

They met!

Boundless Sea, who had voluntarily made his way toward the encirclement of summons, finally met them. But because the formation of his summons was so spread out, Eight Notes couldn't have all of them in his view. That was to say, Li Yuan couldn't personally control every single one of the summons in the encircling formation. And the summon that Boundless Sea crashed into now was one of the independently moving summons.

Cloud Pushing Palm, Qi Bullet, Countercurrent...

Boundless Sea never stopped moving, and with a series of booms, low-level skills came out one after another. This small summon was acting like an innocent bystander passing through, and was easily taken care of.

"He broke through! And very easily, it looks like!" Pan Lin shouted.

"Yes... Li Yuan wasn't the only one calculating the opponent's position. Fang Rui was also anticipating, and then he guessed the surrounding formation he would use. Encirclements always surround a large area before shrinking to a smaller one. When the area's large, the encircling members don't have very close contact with each other, especially on a map like this. Fang Rui took advantage of this point and actively attacked, breaking through Li Yuan's plan before the encirclement became an effective containment!" Li Yibo calmly explained what happened, but this time, he still overlooked a point.

Boundless Sea hadn't simply escaped out of the encirclement. After killing the Little Spirit, he suddenly dashed in a slanting path.

Chapter 1447: Genius Fang Rui

Pan Lin and Li Yibo stared blankly. The audience members misled by the commentators were stared blankly.

Break out from an encirclement? That didn't seem to be the right direction! If he goes in that direction, won't he crash into a spirit?

Li Yibo started thinking. But this time, the development came too fast. Before he could think it through, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea ran into a Little Spirit.

Boom!

It was another low-level skill into a normal attack, extinguishing the Little Spirit. Then, he continued.

Li Yibo finally understood: "He's going around the circle, killing them one by one!"

Li Yuan didn't have an omniscient view like the spectators. When the Little Spirit was killed, he could deduce the general area where Boundless Sea was located from the pathing of the Little Spirit. He didn't have a precise grasp of Boundless Sea's position. The spirits that he had placed far away weren't within his command range, so he could only make adjustments for the spirits within range.

Fang Rui was targeting this point through forceful attacks. Even though his initial actions were rather dirty, Fang Rui was now attacking like thunder and moving like the wind. After killing two Little Spirits, he finally encountered a Big Spirit.

Hua!

Ice Fall. This Big Water Spirit threw a cube of ice at Boundless Sea. Boundless Sea rolled to avoid it and then shot out a Qi Bullet.

The Big Water Spirit unexpectedly moved to the side, dodging the Qi Bullet. Fang Rui realized that this Water Spirit was under Li Yuan's control. Although he couldn't see Eight Notes, this Big Water Spirit just happened to be within both players' field of vision.

The situation immediately became tense. Should he continue forward, or retreat temporarily?

Pan Lin and Li Yibo had just brought this point up, when Boundless Sea rushed forward decisively.

Spiral Qi Kill!

With a wave of his hands, spiralling qi tore through the dense fog, making it increasingly more visible. The Big Water Spirit wanted to run, but this Spiral Qi Kill chased after it. In the end, a Summoner couldn't control its summons as well as his own character, and the attack landed.

Gelala...

The Spiral Qi Kill struck the Big Water Spirit, giving off a strange sound. The Big Water Spirit shot backwards along with the rotating qi.

Spiral Qi Kill didn't have a blow away effect. Li Yuan had decided to retreat, controlling the Big Water Spirit to move backwards borrowing the knockback from Spiral Qi Kill to reach such fast speeds.

Qi Flowing Cloud!

Boundless Sea activated Qi Flowing Cloud, buffing his movement speed. His steps quickened like moving clouds. In the blink of an eye, caught up to the Big Water Spirit and slammed into it.

Qi Break!

Qi poured into the Big Water Spirit. The qi circulating inside the Big Water Spirit could be seen due to its transparent body. Then, with a "bo", a crack appeared inside the Big Water Spirit. The crack spread until it spread throughout the entire surface of its body. Finally, with a shatter, the Big Water Spirit crumbled into several pieces.

At this moment, Li Yuan's Eight Notes and his countless spirits were now inside Fang Rui's line of sight. After Fang Rui killed the two Little Spirits, Li Yuan immediately had Eight Notes replenish and send them out again. He had also recalled the wave of spirits he had spread out previously. Eight Notes had summoned a Big Fire Spirit too with numerous Little Spirits beside it.

Seeing that Boundless Sea was nearly within reach, Eight Notes commanded the spirits to form a line.

Spirit Style combat relied on numbers and cooperation between spirits. Besides a Spirit King, a single big spirit couldn't even compare to a Death Knight or one of the Four Beasts.

Li Yuan's attempts to surround Fang Rui's Boundless Sea with spirits had failed. At this distance, trying to surround him would require even greater precision.

But Boundless Sea unexpectedly stopped there. As soon as he saw the line of spirits formed by Eight Notes, Fang Rui typed out a smiley face in the chat and then ran away into the dense fog.

Li Yuan wasn't going to let him go so easily, sending out several spirits to give chase.

The spectators had a clearer grasp of the battlefield because of their omniscient view. Boundless Sea's retreat was a fake one. After retreating, he circled back. Fang Rui had played boldly for a bit, but then switched back to playing dirty.

Not long afterwards, a Little Spirit found Boundless Sea. Fang Rui didn't hesitate to kill it.

He continued to wander.

Fang Rui seemed to be doing what Mo Fan had done, but in fact, there was a difference in purpose. Mo Fan had been trying his hardest to escape from the notice of the spirits. However, Fang Rui was actively seeking to kill the spirits. As soon as he found one, he would quickly destroy it and then continue on with his hunt.

Li Yuan's army of spirits started to dwindle in numbers. Seeing this scene, Pan Lin couldn't help but sigh: "Couldn't Mo Fan have done the same?"

"It's different," Li Yibo said.

"Ah?"

“Fang Rui is able to do it, but Mo Fan could not have.”

“Why?”

“Because of Eight Note’s mana. If you take a closer look at the situation, you’ll notice that Li Yuan’s spirit formation doesn’t have the same compactness as when he had deployed it against Mo Fan. Fang Rui is able to play in this way because of the foundation that Mo Fan had built. Because of the mana Li Yuan had used up in the previous round, he cannot play as boldly as he did before. If he did, his mana wouldn’t be able to last this fight.”

“But if this continues...”

“He has no way of catching Fang Rui right now. I think he should give up on beating him and instead try to take out as much of Fang Rui’s health as possible...” Li Yibo said.

Li Yibo was correct. Li Yuan currently faced a difficult situation. Those who played dirty were masters at digging into wounds. They’d take your weak spot and then mercilessly stab at it again and again. Whether it was playing boldly or playing dirty, Fang Rui had always been targeting Li Yuan’s weak point.

Whether it was the unfavorable terrain for Summoners or the mana issue created by Mo Fan’s efforts, Fang Rui took advantage of both.

“He’s not wasting the foundation that Mo Fan lay down for him. What a reliable guy!” Ye Xiu sighed. Everyone looked at Mo Fan. They wanted to see if he would put on a face of gratitude after seeing the advantage that he had built up being used. But all they was him continue staring at the screen.

“There shouldn’t be any problems with this round, right?” Chen Guo asked Ye Xiu.

“No problems,” Ye Xiu said with certainty. Li Yuan’s Eight Notes had almost no mana left, “At this point, Li Yuan will most likely try for one final all-out burst. We’ll see how Fang Rui deals with it.”

Ye Xiu analyzed it deeper than Li Yibo.

None of Li Yuan’s attacks could reach his opponent. He knew that he couldn’t let his time on the battlefield go to waste, and if this continued, it would be a waste. As a result, he decided to make use of all his remaining mana. He didn’t think too much and immediately sped up the pace, increasing the density of summons, forming new spirits to make up for the missing ones.

Fang Rui immediately noticed the change in pace. He knew Li Yuan had no choice but to bet his all to win as much as possible for his following teammate.

“Come! Let’s decide it!” Fang Rui shouted in the chat. Boundless Sea rushed forward, not towards Eight Notes, but towards the outer perimeter...

“It’s match point! What is Fang Rui planning?” Pan Lin yelled excitedly.

“He’s... running away?” Li Yibo said weakly.

“Fu...” Pan Lin nearly cursed but caught himself in the end. When he checked the map, Boundless Sea was heading straight for a direction away from all of the spirits. Wasn’t he running away?

“Mo Fan’s skill at escaping is truly outstanding. But Fang Rui is more experienced in comparison. He immediately noticed the sudden change in pace from Li Yuan...” Li Yibo said.

“Then, he ran...”

“Yeah...”

Their voices gradually became gloomier as if they felt embarrassed about reporting this reality.

At the deciding point, Fang Rui ran, quite successfully too. Because at that time, Li Yuan had just readied himself to go all out. Just when he sped up the pace, before he could spread out his new summons, his opponent smelled the air and ran.

Yes, smelled the air and then ran. It was an unglamorous description, but it fit Fang Rui’s style. The outcome was even more infuriating. Li Yuan’s Eight Notes was now out of mana. A bunch of spirits roared as they chased after him. Then, as time went by, spirit after spirit crumbled. Finally, Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea showed up majestically.

“Are you going to GG, or do I need to help you out?” Fang Rui typed out arrogantly.

The entire stadium was filled with boos!

“His way of doing things is too ugly to look at. But from a practical standpoint, his plan was extremely effective... for such a dirty plan, even if you had the capability to think of it, you might not be able to do it,” Li Yibo tried his hardest to justify Fang Rui’s actions.

“Yes, for example, if Fang Rui didn’t have an extremely acute sense of awareness, he might not have succeeded in the final escape, right Coach Li?” Pan Lin said.

“Yeah...” Li Yibo said.

“Then... I guess that’s it?” Pan Lin said.

“Yeah...”

A Summoner with no mana had practically zero combat ability. What’s worse was that he still had 18% of his health left. Apart from the Shuriken thrown by Mo Fan last round, he hadn’t taken any damage. Now, he had no mana, and attacks would certainly come his way.

“Watch me destroy you!” Fang Rui became bold, facing this manaless Summoner.

“Fang Rui’s history is quite rich...” Pan Lin tried to look at things from a different perspective as he explained the origins of this master of playing dirty.

“Yes... when he first started playing competitively, he had created a random team with a few friends and participated in the Challenger League...” Li Yibo said.

“A bunch of very dirty-playing friends and a team that played very dirty,” Pan Lin said.

“Their win record wasn’t anything amazing, but Fang Rui had caught Team Blue Rain’s eyes...”

“Blue Rain has always been good at digging out people with personalities.”

“Then, Fang Rui joined Blue Rain’s training camp...”

“Afterwards, he was dug out by Wind Howl.”

“Now, he’s gone to Happy...”

“And he’s changed classes several times during this time.”

“Truly a genius.”

Chapter 1448: I’ve Got Good Eyesight

Li Yuan’s Eight Notes fell without any suspense.

For a Summoner without mana, no one would blame Li Yuan for surrendering. But Li Yuan still had Eight Notes run around left and right. He had no way of resisting, but he dodged around to drag the fight.

Dragging the battle would tire out Fang Rui a bit more. This seemed to be the name of the game for this round’s group arena. However, Li Yuan had trouble dragging the fight out, and the effects were poor too. Even so, he didn’t give up until the end. He didn’t give up until Boundless Sea took away the last drop of life from Eight Notes.

Li Yuan went down from the stage.

The entire stadium roared with applause in praise of his outstanding performance last round and his perseverance this round.

Trying to drag the fight without any mana seemed like he was just haggling over pennies, lacking the air of a powerhouse. However, in this group arena, neither side was giving in, so no one was bothered by Li Yuan’s methods.

“Good job.” Li Yuan received praise from his teammates, but he himself looked dispirited. He was very unhappy with his match against Fang Rui.

Next, Team Blue Rain’s fourth player went up: Lu Hanwen, Flowing Cloud.

The crowd went into an uproar. If Lu Hanwen was fourth, then Team Blue Rain’s final fifth player was most likely Huang Shaotian. Placing the ace player as the anchor was a very conservative arrangement for this competitive format. By universal agreement, winning the group arena was only meaningful if you won by more than two points. As a result, teams usually placed their ace player as their fourth member to end the group arena then and there.

But despite this being Blue Rain’s home game, they had Huang Shaotian as their last player. Was such a conservative arrangement an indicator of their lack of confidence?

Whispers spread throughout the stadium. Blue Rain’s unusual arrangement made their fans feel uneasy.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo discussed this issue quite a bit. In the end, Li Yibo summarized it by stating a reality: “Given the circumstances, Blue Rain is temporarily on the backfoot.”

Blue Rain was on their fourth player, yet Happy was on their third. What's more, Fang Rui had only lost 26% of his health last round against Li Yuan. He still had 74% health left and nearly full mana. It was hard to say who would win this next round. If Fang Rui won, Happy would have an overwhelming advantage.

Who will win?

Everyone in the stadium wondered as they watched Lu Hanwen go onto the stage.

He was still a young teen who hadn't fully grown, yet his footsteps were firm. Step by step, he walked onto the stage.

The sixth round of the group arena began.

"Little demon, where do you want to meet?" Words immediately popped up into the chat as soon as the match started. Fang Rui spoke as if he was a villain in a drama.

"The center!" Lu Hanwen replied.

"Okay. You'd better not go back on your word!" Fang Rui said.

The boos were ear-deafening. Quite a few Blue Rain fans started throwing curses at Fang Rui. Last round, Fang Rui had went back on his words, yet now he was telling the other side not to go back on his words. How could they not be infuriated?

On Team Happy's side, Chen Guo felt like she couldn't lift her head. It was true that she was happy about winning, but she was far from agreeing with the phrase, the end justifies the means. When she looked at Wei Chen, she saw him react with a big grin at Fang Rui's shameless display.

"Senior, I don't think you're in a position to warn me." Lu Hanwen said what everyone wanted to say to Fang Rui.

"Haha, do you want to guess if I'm going to go or not?" Fang Rui said.

Shameless! Everyone cursed.

"Senior, I don't know if you're going to go, but I definitely will be," Lu Hanwen replied.

"Little Lu, what a good kid!!" The crowd cheered. They didn't know who would win this round, but at least in terms of morals, Lu Hanwen had already won a hundred fold.

Sure enough, Lu Hanwen went straight along the central path like he said he would.

"What an honest kid!" Wei Chen sighed.

"What, you disapprove?" Chen Guo said.

"I don't disapprove. As long as you win, then I don't care," Wei Chen replied dully.

As for Fang Rui? He lived up to expectations. After telling his opponent to meet in the center, Fang Rui went back on his word and took the roundabout route to the right.

A short moment later...

"Senior, I'm here." Flowing Cloud raised his greatsword and stood at the very center of the map.

“Okay, I’m almost there,” Fang Rui replied. Boundless Sea continued along the path to the right.

“I’m guessing that senior won’t be showing up from the front!” Lu Hanwen said.

“Smart.”

“Then from where?”

“Keep guessing!” Fang Rui said.

“The left or the right!” Lu Hanwen said.

“I could come from the back!” Fang Rui said.

“Right!” Lu Hanwen seemed to have been enlightened.

“So you’ve got to be careful.” Fang Rui said. His Boundless Sea was already positioned by Flowing Cloud’s right side. If he wanted to ambush Lu Hanwen, he needed to find a good hiding spot first. He couldn’t use the dense fog as cover. If he did, while it was true that the other side wouldn’t be able to see him, he wouldn’t be able to see the other side either.

Like a thief, Boundless Sea rolled around forest.

“I wonder if Zhao Yang’s watching this match,” Pan Lin suddenly said.

“Haha,” Li Yibo laughed. He immediately understood Pan Lin’s joke. He wanted to know what Zhao Yang was feeling, seeing his Boundless Sea become a dirty Qi Master rolling around in the dirt.

Fang Rui finally found a position. Boundless Sea let out a peek from behind a tree. After checking his surroundings, he immediately went back into hiding.

He could see Flowing Cloud. The other side was just standing there as if he were waiting for him. Was Lu Hanwen planning on reacting to his moves instead of taking the initiative? Because of the visibility issue, the distance between the two sides was closer to each other, and there might not be enough space to react.

While Fang Rui was pondering over how he should mount his sneak attack, a message suddenly popped up in the chat: “Senior, I see you.”

“Oh?” Fang Rui laughed. How could someone as experienced as Fang Rui be tricked by these words. He simply laughed inwardly at his opponent’s naivety.

“Yeah, I’ve got good eyesight,” Lu Hanwen said.

“Really? Ah, how terrible! You’re going to rush over and attack, so I’d better run!” Fang Rui chatted, while thinking how he should open the fight. However, the crowd outside had started growing excited.

Lu Hanwen’s Flowing Cloud was quietly moving ahead straight for Boundless Sea’s hiding spot.

“He really saw him!” Everyone was astonished.

“Put on a replay from Lu Hanwen’s perspective.” The broadcast immediately displayed a replay. Lu Hanwen had constantly been checking his surroundings, looking left and right.

“Slow it down.” No one noticed anything, so the call to slow it down was made.

1/2 speed.

1/4 speed.

1/8 speed.

Everyone finally saw it. It was just an instant, but Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea could be seen taking a peek from behind a tree.

Even under 1/8 speed, it had just been an instant. Fang Rui had moved extremely fast. He had only exposed his head for a short moment.

A normal player might not have caught it, but Lu Hanwen had.

I’ve got good eyesight. That wasn’t a joke!

Lu Hanwen wasn’t as naive as Fang Rui had thought. As he continued chatting with Fang Rui, Flowing Cloud closed in quietly, step by step.

“That idiot!” Wei Chen cursed, obviously referring to Fang Rui.

“That kid really has incredible eyes.” A replay of the moment was displayed on the big screen. The broadcast even put a red indicator on Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea to make it easier for people to see. When Ye Xiu saw the replay, he had been astonished by Lu Hanwen too.

Fang Rui still had no idea. However, he had finally thought of how he should start his offense. Before doing so, he needed to confirm his opponent’s position.

Boundless Sea quickly peeked his head out.

Sword light!

All Fang Rui could see was sword light. Right when his head peeked out, sword light had cut his way. Fang Rui hastily moved his mouse back, and Boundless Sea retracted his head. The sword light flew past the tree.

“How fast!!” Pan Lin cried out. As for whether he was talking about Flowing Cloud’s attack or Boundless Sea’s head, no one knew. Both were correct though.

“It’s a pity he’s using a greatsword,” Li Yibo noted.

Greatswords were far slower than lightsabers and tachis. The attack speed limited how fast a player could attack. Pro players could rely on their hand speed to attack faster than normal players, but when the hand speeds were equal, a greatsword would certainly lose out to a lightsaber or tachi.

Flowing Cloud’s Sword Draw had missed by just a hair. If he had used a tachi or a lightsaber, it would not have missed.

After almost being hit, how could Fang Rui not realize the situation. He completely abandoned his previous plan to ambush Lu Hanwen. Boundless Sea had peeked his head out from the right side. After pulling back his head, he didn’t hesitate and prepared to attack from the left.

But then...

A heavy wind blew by. Flowing Cloud's greatsword once again swept over.

Boundless Sea could only go back into hiding behind the tree. Fang Rui finally understood that the little demon truly had demonic reaction speed and eyes. Those traits were being put to full use in this terrain.

It became even more clear why Blue Rain had chosen this map.

Chapter 1449: Preventing Sneak Attacks

Underneath a giant locust tree, Flowing Cloud held the greatsword Flame Shadow in his hands and stood motionless, directly facing the trunk of the locust tree. Boundless Sea had his back against the locust tree and stood motionless too.

The battle seemed to have frozen. No one knew what would come next.

The two players were very close to each other. If either character breathed, the opponent might be able to hear in this silent forest.

Boundless Sea, with his back against the locust tree, quietly crouched down.

Let alone sneak attacks, just trying to circle around the tree to the left or right would be difficult. Lu Hanwen had fast reaction speeds and played quickly too. He was on guard against these two directions. See head, chop head. See hand, chop hand. See foot, chop foot.

The battle had frozen, but the two players were thinking non-stop.

Fang Rui was constantly looking around, observing everything in front of him. He was searching for a tree to use as cover to escape.

A bit difficult. Fang Rui thought. He didn't have a better choice though. It would be easier to run than approach from the left or right. If he tried that approach, Lu Hanwen would definitely steal away the initiative.

Fang Rui began to move.

First, Boundless Sea crouched down.

Then, he gently turned 180 degrees and started to retreat one step at a time.

Fang Rui didn't choose to roll. He didn't dare let his line of sight leave the tree in front of him.

No signs of movement from the left or right.

What is he waiting for?

Fang Rui didn't know, but he had made his decision and he would stick with it. Boundless Sea continued to retreat.

Suddenly, several figures flickered from behind the tree.

Six Flowing Clouds rushed out.

Shadow Step!

It could only be Shadow Step!

Six shadows. Lu Hanwen controlled them adeptly such that Fang Rui wasn't able to tell which one was real.

Unable to continue retreating, he could only fight. Fortunately, Fang Rui had Boundless Sea retreat backwards, so his line of sight had been fixed in this direction. In the end, he wasn't caught off guard.

Landmine Quake!

Boundless Sea slammed the ground. The shockwave would reach all six shadows. He wanted to fish out the real one.

But all six shadows leaped up at the same time, dodging the qi attack.

Falling Light Blade!

Six swords crashed down with a silver light as if forming a sword formation.

Boundless Sea didn't dodge and crashed into one of the light blades.

"Did he see through it?" Pan Lin cried out.

"Probably not!" Li Yibo replied. He wanted to say more, but he didn't have time. The six swords and six Flowing Clouds all moved towards Boundless Sea.

Six swords, five fake. But if Boundless Sea continued to brashly charge through the attacks, all six swords would hit, which would mean the real one would hit.

Falling Light Blade guaranteed a knockdown. Although the knockdown could be Quick Recovered, Lu Hanwen could react to it and continue with follow ups.

Qi Wave Shield!

Boundless Sea waved his hands and a wave of qi condensed into a shield.

"This..." Pan Lin didn't understand. Qi Wave Shield wasn't Qi Guard. It couldn't block attacks from every direction. If he used Qi Wave Shield to block, it would at most block two swords.

"Genius!" Li Yibo saw through it and shouted out.

He didn't have time to explain though. Hit!

Shockwaves from six Falling Light Blades spread out. Even if five of the Falling Light Blades were from fake shadows, the visual effect would still remain. Boundless Sea tumbled out in a direction. In the end, he had been hit by the real sword.

But Boundless Sea immediately let out a palm.

A Qi Bullet shot towards one of the Flowing Clouds.

Was that the real body?

It was!

After Boundless Sea took the hit, he immediately figured out which of the six sword shadows was real from the direction he was hit in.

“If he just randomly chose a sword shadow to run into, the chances of getting hit by the real one is rather low. However, Lu Hanwen had all of the sword shadows switch directions. It can be seen that the one Boundless Sea chose before wasn’t the real one.”

“After that, although Qi Wave Shield could only block two, those two swords were the most difficult to deal with if they were real.”

“In reality, neither of these two swords was the real one. The real one was among the remaining three. Fang Rui had eliminated three of them, allowing him to deal with the other three with more focus. He was eliminating each choice one by one.”

Li Yibo spoke quickly to explain Fang Rui’s thought process in the short amount of time he had.

“Amazing!” Pan Lin sighed. Fang Rui had considered so many things in just an instant. That was what it meant to be a top Glory expert.

Fang Rui was able to reset the situation with his series of reactions.

Qi Blade!

Boundless Sea slashed out a Qi Blade.

But in this dense fog, the skill’s trajectory was extremely obvious, which was quite annoying for Fang Rui.

“Senior, I’ve said it before, but I’ve got good eyesight.” Lu Hanwen saw it clearly. Flowing Cloud easily dodged it and continued his attack.

“Okay, I’ll make sure to remember it,” Fang Rui replied as Boundless Sea retreated back a few more steps.

In the past, Fang Rui would have definitely tried to use the surrounding trees to hide in and then try for an ambush.

However, Lu Hanwen’s eyes and reaction speed were impressive. Fang Rui had experienced just how bad hiding behind a tree could be. He didn’t plan on challenging Lu Hanwen in those two aspects.

The current situation was unfavorable for him. Fang Rui understood this well.

In this map, Lu Hanwen’s eyes and reaction speed were powerful weapons and just happened to be the most effective against sneak attacks.

It was extremely rare for the opponent to become aware of a sneak attack after the sneak attack landed. Usually, the sneak attack caught the opponent off guard. Glory wasn’t army against army. In

1v1s, each player had complete control of their character. If you could react in time to a sneak attack, then the sneak attack would be meaningless.

At the moment, thinking of a sneak attack was too early. Lu Hanwen was too close to him. The two sides looked to be falling into the pace for a direct battle. This wasn't Fang Rui's style as a master of playing dirty. In other words, a direct battle wasn't a style he was proficient in.

As for Lu Hanwen, don't look at how he was still young. He was the attacker in Team Blue Rain and a first-class expert in face to face combat. In addition to his personality and energy, face to face combat was one of his biggest strengths.

"Senior, watch my sword!"

When Lu Hanwen slashed downwards, he also typed out a challenge in the chat. In the beginning, people were worried. If this continued, would this kid become like Huang Shaotian and talk non-stop while fighting?

But after two years, everyone understood. Lu Hanwen sometimes talked because he had so much energy that he needed somewhere to direct it to. His hands felt uncomfortable not moving fast, so he typed to make up for it.

It seemed like he was wasting his efforts, but this kid had endless energy. A bit of wasted energy wasn't a problem, so no one criticized it.

An oppressive wind blew from Flame Shadow. The dense fog rumbled as the sword moved, and the flow of the game began to change.

Fang Rui was gradually being suppressed. He didn't hold the advantage in this sort of fight. He was used to taking advantage of the terrain, but because of Lu Hanwen's eyes and reaction speed, he couldn't do that.

"Little demon, don't be too arrogant!" Fang Rui spoke.

"Senior, please advise me," Lu Hanwen said. Who knew if he was being sincere or being sarcastic.

"Okay, little kid, I'll teach you a lesson," Fang Rui said. Boundless Sea suddenly leand to the side and let out a palm.

Spiral Qi Kill!

Boom!

The distance was too close. Lu Hanwen wasn't able to dodge it. However, in order to land this attack, his Boundless Sea was hit by a Downwind Sword Slash.

Boundless Sea was covered in blood. Flowing Cloud was covered in violent qi.

The audience was dumbstruck.

This was the lesson Fang Rui was giving to Lu Hanwen?

What was this?

Wasn't he just brute-force trading?

Trades happened all the time in pro matches, but everyone always did it cautiously, calculating who would come out on top. These trades weren't just for health, but more importantly, to create opportunities for follow ups.

But Boundless Sea's trade?

That was just purely you-hit-I-hit. There was no change in the flow of the battle. Whatever it was before was the same after.

How stupid! Fang Rui really was dirty. The crowd booed.

After Flowing Cloud was hit by Spiral Qi Kill, he quickly rushed back. As for Boundless Sea? Because of the Downwind Sword Slash, he was stunned for a certain amount of time and couldn't immediately react.

This was the reason why everyone thought the trade was stupid. If the trade had allowed Fang Rui to push Lu Hanwen away, then Fang Rui could have created more room for him to maneuver around dirtily. That would be a meaningful trade. But because he was hit by Downwind Sword Slash, this trade was completely pointless.

Triple Slash!

Flowing Cloud used this skill to approach.

The greatsword Triple Slash was ferocious and threatening. By the time Flowing Cloud reached Boundless Sea, Boundless Sea had just gotten out of the stun.

Roll!

Boundless Sea immediately rolled to dodge the third Triple Slash.

Falling Blossom Form!

Lu Hanwen's offense was extremely fast. Flowing Cloud pressed down on the rolling Boundless Sea.

Knockdown!

Falling Blossom Form forced the knockdown. Boundless Sea was now lying flat on the ground.

Falling Phoenix Slash!

Usually, a Rising Dragon Slash would follow. Lu Hanwen used it on the ground. Flowing Cloud twisted his body. His sword drew an arc across the ground, rising in the air, and then falling down...

Boom!

A powerful surging qi appeared in front of Flowing Cloud.

Dragon Wave!

The surging qi pushed Flowing Cloud, sending him flying into a tree.

How?

Lu Hanwen was surprised. Falling Blossom Form forced a knockdown and could not be Quick Recovered, so Boundless Sea shouldn't have had the time to cast the skill. Could it be...

The Falling Blossom Form had missed?

Lu Hanwen recalled that instant, calculating how much health Boundless Sea should have...

However, Pan Lin and Li Yibo saw it more clearly through their spectator view.

"Fuck, how despicable... he pretended to get hit. I've never seen that before..." The commentary criticized him.

Chapter 1450: A Dirty Attitude

Pretending to get hit... everyone was taken aback. There were only things people couldn't think of. There was nothing Fang Rui couldn't do. His genius went below everyone's bottom line.

But then again, successfully tricking someone in a pro match was not an easy task.

When an attack missed, pro players could feel it intuitively. Health loss was also not something that could be faked.

Lu Hanwen must have overlooked both of these points for Fang Rui's trick to succeed.

Lu Hanwen had two years of experience as a main roster player. He had far more experience than most second-year rookies, yet Fang Rui dared to cheat the kid. It succeeded too, and not without reason.

Lu Hanwen had been focused on Boundless Sea's movements. He hadn't been paying attention to Boundless Sea's health. It had been a tense moment, and his offense had been quick. Falling Blossom Form had extremely high priority too. Just getting grazed was enough to knock the opponent down, so the feeling of landing the hit was difficult to notice. Lu Hanwen had been trying to speed up the tempo and had indeed been a bit negligent.

These reasons showed that Fang Rui wasn't just playing dirty for the sake of playing dirty. He was using his brain when making decisions.

The damage dealt by Dragon Wave wasn't low. Everyone thought that given this opening, Fang Rui would have Boundless Sea run away. But to their surprise, Fang Rui had Boundless Sea follow up with another attack.

"Is Fang Rui really planning on fighting Lu Hanwen face to face?" Pan Lin cried out. No one dared to guess what Fang Rui was thinking.

Spiral Qi Rush!

Boundless Sea appeared to be ready for a fight. Qi spiraled out of his hands as his character rushed forward fiercely towards Flowing Cloud.

Flowing Cloud could use a skill like Falling Light Blade to change directions in the air, but Spiral Qi Rush had a wide AoE range. All possible paths using Falling Light Blade were blocked by it. Falling Phoenix Slash covered a longer distance, but Flowing Cloud had just used it and it was still on cooldown.

Without any moment for delay, Lu Hanwen displayed his extraordinary reaction speed. Flowing Cloud stepped on the tree behind him and raised his greatsword up.

Rising Dragon Slash!

Flowing Cloud borrowed the height of the tree to leap up instead of fall down.

Boom!

Boundless Sea's Spiral Qi Rush crashed into the tree. Leaves fluttered down as the entire tree shook violently.

Boundless Sea had turned around. His hands were pressed together, accumulating qi. He waited until Flowing Cloud started descending after the Rising Dragon Slash before pushing his hands outward.

Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

The dense qi coming out from his two palms formed a bridge as it flew towards Flowing Cloud.

Lu Hanwen knew that after dodging Spiral Qi Rush with Rising Dragon Slash, getting back to the ground wouldn't be so easy. As soon as he finished executing Rising Dragon Slash, Flowing Cloud swung his greatsword down.

Falling Light Blade!

In the end, Flowing Cloud used this move to rapidly descend from the sky. Fang Rui had predicted Lu Hanwen's reaction. He moved his mouse rapidly, causing the Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow to curve downwards towards where Flowing Cloud would land.

But...

Flowing Cloud dropped down and disappeared.

Boom!

The giant tree struck by Spiral Qi Rush had been shaking violently when it was hit again by the Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow.

When Flowing Cloud had used Falling Light Blade, he had controlled it to position him behind the tree. Although Fang Rui had adjusted his Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow, he had no way of looping the qi around the tree. Before the attack could strike Flowing Cloud, it hit the tree.

Crash!

After being struck twice, the tree swayed even more violently, the sound of rustling leaves seemed to never stop.

Fang Rui wasn't discouraged. He had Boundless Sea step to the side, ready to catch the falling Flowing Cloud. But when he looked from this new angle, he didn't see Flowing Cloud.

How?

Fang Rui was stunned. Flowing Cloud had landed behind the tree. How could he have disappeared? Was it magic?

The audience members were able to see it. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were praising Lu Hanwen's cleverness.

"The Rising Dragon Slash was a set-up for the Falling Light Blade," Li Yibo said.

"The angle of the Falling Light Blade was very precise. After hiding behind the tree, he cancelled the skill and pushed off the tree to change angles again."

Blue Rain's playoffs seemed to be interconnected with trees. Last round, Huang Shaotian's Troubling Rain had lost half his health due to a tree. This round, Lu Hanwen's Flowing Cloud used the tree to escape from Fang Rui's follow-up. His move was clever and unexpected. Fang Rui didn't know how he had escaped. He was carefully exploring the terrain to try and figure out the secret behind Flowing Cloud's disappearance. When Boundless Sea took his next step, he was met with a sword! Meteor Form!

The sword came towards Fang Rui extremely fast, and he wasn't able to react in time. Blood blossomed in the air.

"Go go go go!" The crowd cheered.

Fang Rui, the master of playing dirty, an expert at ambushes, had been ambushed by their own player. It was too exhilarating!

Fang Rui had no way of dodging the attack, but he had time to respond after getting hit. Borrowing the force of the blow, Boundless Sea slid back, but sword light was already in pursuit!

Sword Draw!

After the maxed Meteor Form, a low-level Sword Draw followed. Both these attacks were extremely fast. The two sword lights intertwined, almost as if the two attacks were a single skill.

"He's using a greatsword too..." Li Yibo liked to remind everyone that Lu Hanwen's Flowing Cloud wielded a greatsword. If he was using a tachi or a lightsaber instead, just how fast would it be?

Fang Rui couldn't dodge this follow-up either. A streak of blood flew into the air when the sword light hit. Boundless Sea stumbled backwards.

Had he lost his balance?

No!

He was faking it!

This time, the director saw through it. The moment Boundless Sea began to stumble backwards, qi had begun to circulate around his hands, which then quietly swung outwards.

Qi Blade!

He used a Qi Blade at this distance.

Lu Hanwen had been chasing after Fang Rui, when he saw the dense fog bundle together and fly towards him. He immediately rolled to the side.

Downwards Qi Flow!

The stumbling Boundless Sea suddenly jumped into the air. With his palms directed towards the ground, qi crashed towards Flowing Cloud like a waterfall.

Flowing Cloud, who was mid-roll, slashed across with his sword.

Sky-Plunging Blade!

The skill came out as Flowing Cloud stood back up.

Boom!

The turbulent qi slammed into Flowing Cloud, but at the same time, his bright sword light tore through the sky and struck Boundless Sea.

Flowing Cloud wasn't able to stay standing after getting struck by the force of Downwards Qi Flow. On the other hand, Boundless Sea was knocked down by the Sky-Plunging Blade and rolled twice to negate the momentum.

The two characters were both injured, but after taking each other's attacks, they stood back up and continued to fight.

"Fang Rui didn't run, but his playstyle..." Pan Lin said.

"Playing dirty doesn't just mean scurrying around and guerrilla warfare!" Li Yibo said.

"Yes," Pan Lin nodded his head.

The dirty playstyle encompassed many styles. It was similar to direct fights, there were many ways of going about it. The dirty playstyle had many paths branching off from it.

Fang Rui and Lu Hanwen fought. Pretending to be hit, pretending to lose balance and then retaliating were undoubtedly extremely dirty moves.

Playing dirty wasn't a technique, but a mindset.

And for Fang Rui, as the representative of the style, it didn't matter if he fought face-to-face or indirectly, all of them contained an air of dirtiness.

In this map, Lu Hanwen's acute perception and reaction speed were effective against the usual dirty playstyle. As a result, Fang Rui fought directly against Lu Hanwen, showing off his creativity in this battle...

Pretending to fall down, pretending to be off-balance... no one knew what other surprising tricks this guy had in store.

"Fang Rui isn't really utilizing the features of this map, making it so that Lu Hanwen's exceptional eyesight and reaction speed aren't as useful," Pan Lin said.

“But by not using the terrain, Fang Rui’s capabilities are also restricted,” Li Yibo said.

“It’s evenly matched!” Pan Lin sighed.

Yes, evenly matched.

Both sides had found their own rhythm and were in their peak competitive states. Both sides were going all out, using all the tricks they had at their disposal.

The two went back and forth, trading blow after blow. The only outcome was damage dealt by both sides, with neither side gaining an advantage. When Lu Hanwen found an opportunity to attack, Fang Rui might retaliate with a weird trick. When Fang Rui tried to combo, Lu Hanwen would often neutralize it forcefully.

Under these circumstances, Fang Rui’s 74% starting health became a disadvantage that could not be erased.

In the end, Lu Hanwen’s Flowing Cloud was able to win with 23% of his health left. Blue Rain had taken back a point. It was now an even 3-3.

However, of the two Blue Rain characters remaining, Flowing Cloud only had 23% of his health left, while Happy had two characters at full health.