

Avatar 1481

Chapter 1481: Focal Point

Su Mucheng, Bao Rongxing...

Tyranny had studied Happy for three days, and now, it was time for them to conclude their findings. They outlined a summary of these two players' performances in their match against Blue Rain.

This obviously wasn't all the information that they had obtained. Under Zhang Xinjie's meticulous guidance, they analyzed every piece of information.

What should we do?

Everyone had the same thought, much like how Zhang Jiale had tacitly understood earlier the role that he would need to play. However, because of Zhang Xinjie's caution and seriousness, even Han Wenqing, who had known Zhang Xinjie for many years, had to confirm that everyone was on the same page.

Everything was conducted anxiously but orderly.

Tyranny, Samsara, Tiny Herb, and Happy, who had entered the quarterfinals despite this being their first year in the league.

The next step was the finals.

The next step was the championship cup itself.

At this moment, who could relax? Who could give up?

Every year, when it reached this point in time, the atmosphere would turn abnormally heavy. Even the wars between in-game players would turn exceptionally heated.

The teams that made it to the semifinals were all teams with a strong fanbase. When expectations were high, people would often become sensitive and weak. Since four teams had qualified for the quarterfinals, that meant four teams had been eliminated. None of the four eliminated teams were weak teams. How could any of the fans be content with these results?

One day, two days...

Day after day of tension passed.

The first round of the semifinals was about to begin.

The first round would be Happy's home game against Tyranny. It would take place in Happy's stadium in City H.

Happy's home stadium was formerly Excellent Era's. In the Glory Alliance, there were no two teams with more enmity towards each other than Excellent Era and Tyranny. When Excellent Era was relegated from the league, countless people thought that the Alliance had now lost a piece of history. Afterwards, Excellent Era disbanded and went away... it seemed like this piece of history would never return.

But then, Happy joined the Alliance. Their leader was Excellent Era's former captain, Ye Xiu. Happy also succeeded Excellent Era's home stadium in City H. For a moment, Tyranny's fans took their hostility towards Excellent Era and placed it all onto Ye Xiu alone.

Of course, Ye Xiu played an important part in the the relationship between the two teams.

It was just that Happy was Happy. Say that Happy was the continuation of Excellent Era? How could that be said? In the Challenger League, Happy was the one who eliminated Excellent Era and led to their disbandment.

Fortunately, Excellent Era was rescued in the end, leaving a few key remnants of the organization. The New Excellent Era had won the Challenger League this season and would be returning to the Alliance. Beside them was also a group of loyal fans who would never abandon the team.

But there were many people who felt like Happy was more like the original Excellent Era, even if they were the team that led to Excellent Era's disbandment.

It was because Happy took over the original Excellent Era's home stadium. It was because Happy's captain was Excellent Era's former captain, Ye Xiu.

The Ye Xiu that had founded Excellent Era's dynasty.

The Ye Xiu that had earned the title of Battle God for One Autumn Leaf.

No matter what, these were all of the past, things that had already become reality. These achievements would never be separated from Ye Xiu, nor would they ever be forgotten.

As a result, when Happy and Tyranny met in the playoffs, many people brought up the often-talked-about subject of old enemies.

Excellent Era?

It wouldn't be good to talk more about one person's name.

Ye Xiu!

Everyone kept on talking about Ye Xiu. Even Su Mucheng, who used to be a core player on Excellent Era, was mentioned less.

After all, when Excellent Era won their three championships, Su Mucheng hadn't been a part of the team yet, and most of the enmity between Excellent Era and Tyranny had been established during that period of time. Su Mucheng happened to join the season that Tyranny beat Excellent Era. As such, the hostility towards Su Mucheng from Tyranny's fans was naturally far less than Ye Xiu, who had led the team that had eliminated Tyranny three times in a row.

The match between Happy and Tyranny was discussed heavily by the media, who hyped up the match by flipping through talking point after talking point.

The day of the match was about to arrive.

And the sight of the fans that had assembled at the stadium was astonishing to see.

Although Happy was a popular team nowadays, their home game against Blue Rain was nowhere near as crazy.

As the beginning of the match approached, the number of people gathered at the stadium was so large that not only were there no empty seats, it might even be hard to find space outside the venue.

This sort of scene could only be found before when Excellent Era played against Tyranny.

Had City H's Glory fans regarded Happy as an alternative to Excellent Era?

It was a reasonable possibility, but it shouldn't be to this extent. After all, Happy defeating Excellent Era in the Challenger League was a fact that no loyal Excellent Era fan could ever forget.

There were Excellent Era fans that hated Happy. There were Excellent Era fans that were indifferent about Happy. But those who liked Happy could only be ones who liked fads.

Then, where did all of these Glory fans gathered here come from?

The playoffs was a popular topic among the media. There were, of course, special reports about the various histories behind the teams. Just taking a look at a few articles would give a good overview of the situation.

It was true that many of the people gathered here didn't have any love or Happy, but their hostility towards Tyranny was as strong as ever.

That was why they came. Not to cheer on Happy, but to see Tyranny fall. There was no Excellent Era these days, but many Excellent Era fans continued their tradition of hating on Tyranny. Many of the reporters that were here to conduct interviews sighed at this scene. Although Excellent Era had already been gone from the Alliance for two years, their influence remained. The players could be gone, the characters could be changed, the stadium could be replaced, but the history that they had left behind would always remain.

Excellent Era was a memory, one whose glory would never be forgotten. And their enmity with Tyranny was a part of that memory.

As a result, there was now another point of discussion.

Happy was the one that led to Excellent Era's downfall, yet now they were going to carry on the tradition? It was a very contradictory situation.

Of course, there were no lack of optimists in the interviews. They cheerfully expressed that they were here today to see the drama. It didn't matter who won. Either way, they would be able to vent their anger...

All sorts of topics were pushed to the peak of attention because of this match. There were even fans who were certain that they had seen Huang Shaotian in the crowd. Others claimed to see Yu Wenzhou, Yang Cong, Tang Hao...

In short, the pro players who were no longer in contention for the championships all seemed to be somewhere in the crowd.

Who would win? Who would lose?

Everyone had come here to see the answer to this question.

That night at 8 o'clock, at the sold-out Xiaoshan Stadium, many of the Glory fans gathered outside without seats did not leave. They didn't need to appreciate the course of the match. Just being able to know the results first-hand was enough for the wait to be worth it.

Inside the venue's prep rooms, the two teams were getting ready for the match.

"It's really lively today, huh." Fang Rui was relaxed, talking to everyone as if this were normal. Team Happy had done what they had always done. At around seven, they left the Internet cafe, ready to cross the street to Xiaoshan Stadium. But when they saw the giant crowd outside, they got scared! It'd be a miracle if famous players like them could make it inside without any trouble!

In the end, Chen Guo urgently contacted the stadium employees.

Xiaoshan Stadium had hosted Glory events for many years. They had experienced the rivalry between Excellent Era and Tyranny and were familiar with handling it. As soon as they took Chen Guo's phone call, they immediately told them that a special passageway had been prepared for them. The stadium even sent out a staff member to guide Happy inside. In fact, they already knew that Team Happy was right across street from them.

When they got inside the venue, the sea of people outside the stadium left a deep impression on them.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng weren't too surprised. They had been a part of Excellent Era and had experienced it before. But even Fang Rui, an All-Star, had never seen such an army before. As a matter of fact, despite having more experience than the rookies, he felt more surprised than them.

"Why aren't these people leaving? The match is almost about to start," Chen Guo said. She was too naive. Chen Guo thought that those Glory fans outside were hoping for a ticket, and since the match was about to start, they clearly hadn't gotten any tickets and should be leaving. How could she have known that their passion was no longer something that could be stopped by a ticket to the match. Just waiting outside, awaiting for the results with everyone else, was a type of joy to these people.

"I just know that the crowd gathered here today probably isn't here to support us. Don't feel too pressured by them," Ye Xiu said solemnly.

Chen Guo stared blankly.

His intentions were good, but how come the logic didn't seem to make sense?

"Tyranny has this many fans here?" Tang Rou asked. No matter how much of a rookie she was, she knew quite a bit about the scene now. Their opponent was Team Tyranny. And having worked at Happy Internet Cafe in City H, Tang Rou knew about the people of this city's relationship with Team Tyranny long before she became serious about playing Glory.

"They're probably here hoping for Tyranny to fall," Ye Xiu said.

"Then, aren't they hoping for us to win?" Tang Rou said.

“They’ll probably be happy if we lose too,” Ye Xiu said.

Tang Rou was smart. She quickly understood.

“Too bad we won’t!” she said.

“That’s why I’m saying we should just treat them as if they didn’t exist,” Ye Xiu said.

Just as he said this, they heard a knock on their door. The staff were calling the two teams to get ready to go on stage.

Ye Xiu led the way out of the room and came across Team Tyranny’s captain and his old rival, Han Wenqing, who was also leading his team out.

They looked at each other face to face, without any expression. Soon, the two teams lined up next to each other in the passageway.

“When are you going to retire?” Ye Xiu suddenly asked Han Wenqing an especially depressing question.

“It’s still early.” Han Wenqing’s gaze was firm.

“You still want to win a championship?” Ye Xiu smirked. “You’ve got no chance this year.”

“Humph,” Han Wenqing snorted.

Ye Xiu turned his head and gave an upward nod at the third Tyranny player in line. “You’ve got no chance at a fifth second-place finish, either.”

Zhang Jiale wished he could give Ye Xiu ten middle fingers.

Chapter 1482: Stepping Back

They hadn’t even gone onstage yet and the mockery had already begun. This knife at Zhang Jiale was particularly cruel – even the stadium worker nearby couldn’t keep a straight face.

But these people from Tyranny had interacted with Ye Xiu for far too many years, and understood him very well. And Zhang Jiale was such an easy target, it’d be strange if Ye Xiu didn’t take a few jabs at him. So even though Zhang Jiale expressed his indignation, Tyranny as a whole remained fairly unruffled. They were all so familiar with each other that even if the hostility was high, they just treated it all as insults traded between bad friends. Notably, when Ye Xiu said this, some people in Tyranny almost laughed. Such as Lin Jingyan.

When Lin Jingyan saw Zhang Jiale twist his head to look at him, he hastily turned it into a cough. Adjusting his glasses, he regained his composure.

“When did you become nearsighted?” Fang Rui happened to be standing across from Lin Jingyan. Fang Rui wasn’t as familiar with the others in Tyranny, but he and Lin Jingyan had been partners back in the day, so of course the degree of familiarity wasn’t the same.

Lin Jingyan adjusted his glasses again. “They’re plain glass.”

“Trying to look all intellectual?” Fang Riu said.

“I think they looked quite good!” Lin Jingyan appeared to be quite satisfied with this new accessory. But then, he heard another voice speak up from behind Fang Rui.

“You’re a Brawler, what kind of Brawler wears glasses to look intellectual?”

Steamed Bun. Only Steamed Bun would have such strict views on Brawlers.

“My character’s class is a Brawler, thanks.” Lin Jingyan felt gloomy as he turned and answered Steamed Bun.

“You don’t like Brawlers? Then why’d you pick one,” said Steamed Bun.

“I...” At this point, Lin Jingyan couldn’t explain any further. This Steamed Bun insisted on drawing an equals sign between the in-game Brawler class and a real-life brawler. Alright, the Brawler class did have the aura of a street thug, but this was still a separate matter, okay? Did using this class mean that you had to have the aura of a street thug?

Lin Jingyan looked at Steamed Bun through his plain-glass glasses, and found that he couldn’t say anything. This guy really fit the image! This hairstyle, this attitude, this attire, throw him onto a street and anyone would recognize him as a little brawler! And... quite a handsome brawler at that.

“Haha...” Aside from a weak chuckle, Lin Jingyan really had no idea what to say. In the end, Happy’s trash talk did have some effect, not from the experienced Ye Xiu, but from the rookie Steamed Bun.

Fortunately, they were finally about to walk onto the stage.

Ye Xiu, Han Wenqing...

When the two captains met at the center of the stage and shook hands, the entire stadium erupted with enthusiastic applause.

Ten years!

Both of them had once stood at the peak of Glory, had experienced ups and downs. Now, ten years had passed, and they still stood on this stage, still stood on this battlefield, still faced off against each other.

Whether they loved or hated them, no one could erase the respect held toward these two people. The two of them shook hands and prepared for battle, once more, after so many times throughout the years. Everyone delivered up applause, no matter whether they were Happy fans, Tyranny fans, or old Excellent Era fans looking for excitement.

But soon after the applause...

“Kill him!!”

Such brutal and foul language immediately rose up within Xiaoshan Stadium. Respect had been expressed, so the next step was to establish dominance.

The two of them had faced off for ten years, and the fans behind them had faced off for ten years as well. Even if their team backgrounds were thrown away, these two people's names were enough to ignite a fiery chaos.

The emotions of the stadium were immediately bursting aflame, and under this ruckus, the players of the two teams continued to shake hands down the line. After that, the players returned to their respective player areas, and Ye Xiu alone remained onstage.

“Ohhhhhh!!” In Happy's home stadium, there were naturally many Happy fans. Seeing this, they immediately started cheering. They knew all too well what this meant – this meant that Ye Xiu was still the first up. Starting from the second round of the regular season, up through the second round of layoffs right now, he had always been Happy's first player, and he had yet to lose a single 1v1.

37?

Loyal fans didn't even recognize this streak anymore.

It should be 39!

There was no “individual competition” in the playoffs. There was only the group arena, and they couldn't expect anyone to 1v5, right? So, because Ye Xiu had twice defeated the opponent's first player, they counted that result into the record. Quite a few people were emphasizing that Ye Xiu's current win streak was no longer 37, but more accurately 39.

And now, for the 40th time, Ye Xiu was Happy's first player. There was no more suspense – after the pre-match formalities, he simply remained onstage and aimlessly strolled around.

In the past, this would have been quite a valuable shot, because Ye Xiu never made public appearances before. He'd always hide very well. But now, it had already been a whole season, so that mysterious aura had long since disappeared. By wandering around onstage now, in everyone's eyes, it looked like he was trying to provoke Tyranny.

I'm right here. Which of you will come to fight me?

“Who's coming?” Happy's fans knew how to get hype, and immediately began shouting.

“Han Wenqing, you dare come?” Someone shouted this. In theory, if a Happy fan wasn't formerly an Excellent Era fan, they shouldn't have much reason to hate Han Wenqing. But everyone at least knew that there was so much history between Han Wenqing and Ye Xiu, and so at this time, they wouldn't shy away from helping their own team's captain provoke the other.

Of course, everyone loved this kind of topic, and so very quickly, the entire stadium was helping Ye Xiu call out Han Wenqing.

Tyranny's fans had no way of retaliating.

Because the player order was decided before the match, if they really hadn't set Han Wenqing as the first player, there was no way that they would decide to change the order just because the whole stadium was shouting for Han Wenqing to come onstage.

But... Happy's choice to send Ye Xiu first was a very obvious thing, right? Would Tyranny back down from such a challenge?

They wouldn't!

Of course they wouldn't.

This was Tyranny, this was their captain Han Wenqing. Knowing that Ye Xiu stood before him, would he retreat?

What a joke.

When they thought to here, Tyranny's fans immediately gained confidence. Thus, they also began to shout for their captain, as though it was a guarantee that Han Wenqing would come onstage.

All the way until the digital screen flashed with Tyranny's first player. All the way until, in Tyranny's player area, the first player stood up.

The stadium quieted down for a moment, and then Happy's fans exploded with crazy jeering. And Tyranny's fans? They were silent.

Tyranny's first player: Qin Muyun. Character, Sharpshooter Negative Nine Degrees.

Han Wenqing actually retreated? He'd clearly known that Happy's first player would be Ye Xiu, and yet he still didn't stand forward to fight Ye Xiu, instead leaving this opportunity to Qin Muyun, this most overlooked player of Tyranny's main roster?

The audience was shocked, as were the commentators Pan Lin and Li Yibo.

This was entirely outside of their expectations. Pan Lin and Li Yibo had just been talking about how Ye Xiu's position as Happy's first player had never changed, and so in the confrontations in this round of the playoffs, it was very possible that Ye Xiu would 1v1 Han Wenqing a number of times.

"Best of three. This ten-year conflict might finally see an answer," Pan Lin had noted, but unexpectedly, Han Wenqing actually hadn't come up to fight.

"This..." At first, the two wondered whether Han Wenqing had sustained some injury, and wouldn't be able to fight at all today. But when they thought again, they remembered he had still been playing well last round. Would he suffer such a serious injury in just a few days? Tyranny couldn't be that unlucky!

The two exchanged glances. They had no idea how they would explain this. The televised broadcast ignored Qin Muyun as he went onstage, instead choosing to show a close-up of Han Wenqing.

Tyranny's captain merely sat in his seat, his face cold, his attention on their player walking onstage. It didn't seem like there was anything unusual going on.

The match hadn't even begun yet, but the player order had already given everyone a big surprise. It was just completely outside of everyone's expectations, expectations that had been formed over the course of ten years.

Ye Xiu, too, was surprised.

The broadcast didn't skip over him, and furiously snatched close-ups of his reaction when Tyranny didn't send up Han Wenqing.

Ye Xiu was indeed somewhat caught off-guard, somewhat surprised. He glanced toward Han Wenqing, still in Tyranny's player area. But then, he smiled lightly.

Was it mockery?

Those who saw this immediately began analyzing Ye Xiu's smile.

Not mockery.

This smile looked more like one of understanding, more like one of relief.

When Han Wenqing's expression was shown next to his onscreen, this feeling became even stronger.

After shaking hands with Qin Muyun, Ye Xiu headed to the player booth to prepare for the upcoming battle. Everyone was still discussing what it meant that Han Wenqing hadn't come onstage, and poor Qin Muyun was completely overlooked.

"Han Wenqing isn't going up against Ye Xiu first battle, are you watching this?"

Huang Shaotian had come to watch the match live. With his status, getting the best VIP seats wasn't difficult, of course. There was no way he could sit with the masses, because after all he was a top star of Glory as well. Right now, seeing Tyranny's arrangement, Huang Shaotian sent out a text.

"I'm watching." A reply came – Yu Wenzhou.

"What do you think he's trying to do?" Huang Shaotian continued to ask.

"Stepping back," Yu Wenzhou replied.

They were all players at the highest level. With such great mutual understanding, not much needed to be said.

Stepping back.

The one thing that it had always looked like Han Wenqing didn't know how to do was step back. But now, he made this kind of choice. Was he yielding, was he compromising?

No. There was absolutely no way.

If Han Wenqing knew how to yield, how to compromise, then countless people's worldviews would be completely shattered.

Han Wenqing was changing. In the twilight years of his professional career, for the sake of that goal, he was adjusting himself. Much of this could be seen, in fact, from his performance over the course of the regular season.

Stepping back wasn't compromising, even less so yielding.

Stepping back was a wisdom, a wisdom that Han Wenqing understood, but was unwilling to accept. Yet this time, he had done it. And this was just an arrangement of player order. On the actual battlefield, the Han Wenqing who now knew how to step back, what kind of performance would he bring?

Chapter 1483: High-Level Hide-And-Seek

Happy faced Tyranny in their home game. The first round of the group arena would be Ye Xiu versus Qin Muyun. The match was at the loading screen stage, but the crowd had yet to quiet down. The people didn't care about the match itself. Happy's fans were booing loudly at Han Wenqing for not coming out, while Tyranny's fans felt like they couldn't hold their heads high. They forgot that although Han Wenqing hadn't been sent up this round, the player who had, the poor Qin Muyun, wasn't getting any attention.

Up until the match began.

When Qin Muyun's Negative Nine Degrees appeared on stage through Glory's projection technology, on the big screen in the stadium, on the TV or computer screens of countless Tyranny fans, they finally realized that though Han Wenqing may not have gone up, their Tyranny was still fighting.

"You can do it!"

Cheers erupted from the away-game seats, Team Tyranny's fans.

The loud cheers all of a sudden gave Happy's fans a fright.

Excellent Era fans were experts at competing against Tyranny fans. Although Happy's fanbase had some crossover with Excellent Era's fanbase, it wasn't a majority. Happy's fans couldn't beat Tyranny's fans in a yelling contest, and the regular season had already proved that.

But this was the playoffs, a competition where one side died while the other side lived. Happy was a new team that was creating a miracle. Once this thought came across their minds, Happy's fans started to feel their blood boil too.

This is our home field. How can we let Tyranny overwhelm us?

The first intense battle of this playoffs round began with the audience.

In the meantime, the two players on stage were calmly making their way forward.

Happy had chosen the map, Thatcher Manor. It was another setting from a map in the Heavenly Domain. The map consisted of a multitude of elements: a lake on the west side, a small forest on the east side, and a two-story tall manor in the center of the map. Apart from that, there were all sorts of small buildings scattered throughout the map such as a mill, a stable, gardens, and so on.

The two characters spawned on the north and south end of the map. Both of them chose a direct route straight to the center. However, because of the obstruction from the manor, neither of them could see the other side.

Qin Muyun's Negative Nine Degrees came from the north side towards the back of the manor. It looked like he wasn't a complete stranger to this map. After arriving there, he had Negative Nine Degrees move towards a corner and then borrow window sills and pillars as platforms to jump on. Shortly afterwards, Negative Nine Degrees made his way to the roof of the manor, giving him a wide view of the map.

But Qin Muyun immediately had Negative Nine Degrees crouch and search for an appropriate position before carefully looking outwards.

He was looking towards the south, but there were no signs of anyone.

Judging by Lord Grim's movement speed, if he had taken the middle road, he should be here too.

But he wasn't.

The left? The right? Or could it be...

Qin Muyun looked downwards.

The manor wasn't just decoration. It could be entered. If he and Ye Xiu chose to take the middle road, while he had been jumping onto the roof, he could have easily entered the manor without him noticing.

There was a door at the back of the manor too, but Qin Muyun chose not to go in. Sharpshooters held an advantageous position in an open field. Fighting inside the manor would not be a good idea for a Sharpshooter.

Perhaps Ye Xiu had chosen to go in for that very reason?

As Qin Muyun pondered over this question, his Negative Nine Degrees took the next step.

Boom!

He vaguely heard an explosion, seemingly far yet seemingly close at the same time. As the explosions continued to sound, he was able to accurately determine that the explosions were coming from below.

Hua!

Negative Nine Degrees was laying on the rooftop. However, he hadn't expected Lord Grim to fire shots from the inside and blow a hole in the roof to force Negative Nine Degrees to fall towards him.

Qin Muyun reacted quite fast. He immediately had his character jump to the side and throw a grenade into the hole.

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was standing there with his umbrella open, looking at the roof and admiring his masterpiece. Then, he noticed a grenade roll out from cloud of black smoke.

Bang, boom!

Ye Xiu fired at the grenade, making it explode. For a normal player, executing this move would make them feel unbelievably cool, but in Ye Xiu's hands, it just looked like any other day.

The grenade was no threat to him, but it gave Ye Xiu second thoughts. He could have Lord Grim fly through the hole in the roof and give chase using Rotor Wings, but he had to consider the possibility of an ambush from Qin Muyun.

As a result, Lord Grim went towards the window. He jumped up, shattered the glass, and leaped out.

It was the second floor, but Lord Grim didn't fall. The moment he was outside, his umbrella transformed into a ninjato and stabbed into the wall. He used it as a lever to jump and then stabbed his ninjato into the wall again...

Ye Xiu was very familiar with the Ninja's Rock Climbing technique. It was difficult for the audience to keep their eyes away from Lord Grim's fluid movements.

Lord Grim climbed up the wall, his direction clear. After a few rises and falls, he made it onto the roof. He didn't stop to rest. He rolled towards a bunker to hide, not making a sound the entire way through.

Then, he peeked out his head and looked towards the other end.

Nothing!

Negative Nine Degrees wasn't there. Qin Muyun hadn't chosen to mount an ambush.

Ye Xiu didn't waste time just because it was outside of his expectations. Lord Grim quickly looked around and found a few potential spots on the rooftop.

From Lord Grim blowing a hole in the roof to jumping onto the roof, the entire course of action took only 5 seconds.

5 seconds. Ye Xiu had checked where Qin Muyun could have moved to within those 5 seconds.

There were only two other possibilities.

First, he could have jumped off the roof. But Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had just climbed up the wall and didn't see him, so it was unlikely.

The second possibility was that Qin Muyun jumped through that hole.

Calm, collected, and exceptional at picking spots. These were the characteristics that Ye Xiu observed from the fifth player who stood beside Tyranny's Four Heavenly Kings.

Exceptional at picking spots?

Ye Xiu suddenly realized something. Lord Grim immediately rolled to the side.

Bang!

The sound of a gunshot.

A bullet pierced through the roof and shot towards the sky.

"Whoa!!"

Gasps came from the crowd as the bullet flew.

The viewers had an omniscient view and could see everything. Lord Grim had jumped out the window and made his way to the roof, while Negative Nine Degrees did the opposite and fell through the hole in the roof. Then, just like how Ye Xiu had accurately determined Negative Nine Degrees' position, Qin Muyun accurately determined Lord Grim's position.

How had they done it?

“Intuition and deduction.” Li Yibo had commented on this point when Ye Xiu had found Negative Nine Degrees’ position. After Lord Grim entered the manor, he immediately moved towards a spot. From that spot, he was able to catch a glimpse of Negative Nine Degrees jumping towards the roof.

This wasn’t a coincidence. Ye Xiu knew that it was possible to jump onto the roof from the back of the manor, so he looked for a spot for which he could see that. Then, once Qin Muyun got to the roof, what hidden observation spots were there?

Ye Xiu knew of a spot, and it was the spot that Qin Muyun had found. As a result, he attacked there.

Vice versa, Qin Muyun had predicted what Ye Xiu would do, so he had Negative Nine Degrees fall through the roof into the manor. If Ye Xiu wanted to catch a Negative Nine Degrees that was laying in wait for an ambush, where would he go? As a result, he attacked there.

A high-level confrontation and high-level deduction. If neither side was exceptional at picking spots and didn’t choose the most optimal position, the two would have predicted incorrectly.

Li Yibo had given them praise for this point.

And this time, Qin Muyun’s sneak attack didn’t need his explanation. Everyone understood it now. But everyone was astonished that Qin Muyun’s sneak attack actually missed. He had used a high-level Snipe, but it missed its mark. Lord Grim suddenly rolling as if he had a premonition was just too miraculous.

“How did he know?” Pan Lin couldn’t help but ask Li Yibo.

“Ye Xiu probably made a prediction one step ahead...” Li Yibo forced out his words. He wasn’t sure if he was completely correct this time. There was some level of prediction for Ye Xiu’s dodge. But to just barely dodge it in such a timely manner, reaction speed had been a part of it, but luck had been very important too.

Two guns, two switches in position, fluid movements, and deep mind games. The level of skill displayed in this match could clearly be seen.

“It looks like this match will be brilliant game of hide-and-seek.” Just when Li Yibo made this statement, he heard a crash.

The rooftop broke apart.

Collapsing Mountain!

After Lord Grim dodged that shot, he didn’t stop to take a break. He immediately jumped up and used Collapsing Mountain towards the roof.

Happy had certainly figured out just how durable the roof was. This Collapsing Mountain split open the roof as Lord Grim crashed down.

One in the air, one on the ground.

Lord Grim and Negative Nine Degrees saw each other.

Hide-and-peek? Li Yibo hadn't even finished his words, when the two characters found each other. He had spoken too soon and didn't have time to swallow back his words.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

Qin Muyun stayed calm. His Negative Nine Degrees fired at Lord Grim as he moved.

Hua!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened, blocking the bullets. Collapsing Mountain had ended when the roof broke apart. Right now, Lord Grim was falling freely. If he were hit by bullets, he would certainly be Delivery Gunned away.

But with protection from a shield, everything changed. Sword light flashed, Falling Light Blade!

Lord Grim changed directions in the air. His umbrella retracted, but... Negative Nine Degrees? He was gone.

Chapter 1484: Faster at Finding Spots

What is he going to do?

Those who understood the change felt more nervous than Ye Xiu. Pan Lin and Li Yibo were even more so. The two wished this wasn't a live stream. They wanted to press pause and then give a detailed analysis of the change for the audience to hear, but unfortunately, they couldn't. It was a match where a myriad of changes could happen in an instant.

Hua!

Without any trace of Negative Nine Degrees to be found, for a moment, Ye Xiu had Lord Grim raise his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

Hide-and-peek?

Maybe it looked like that, but it was a hide-and-peek deathmatch. The goal of the game wasn't to find the opponent, but to kill the opponent.

After losing sight of Negative Nine Degrees, Ye Xiu's response was to lift his umbrella to be on guard against any sudden ambushes from Negative Nine Degrees. Then, Ye Xiu quickly recalled where Negative Nine Degrees had been when his Lord Grim had fallen to the ground with Collapsing Mountain.

Next, he tried to predict where Negative Nine Degrees could be.

For Negative Nine Degrees to vanish, he obviously had to have moved, which meant that he first had to pick a spot.

Team Happy had chosen this map. How could Ye Xiu not be familiar with this map? He didn't need to look around. He could deduce the optimal position in his head.

Charge!

Lord Grim held the umbrella shield above his head as he dashed towards a direction.

But at this moment, a pitch-black gun reached out from the other side and aimed towards Lord Grim.

Everyone thought that Lord Grim would be hit from behind by the bullet, but then, he suddenly stopped.

Lord Grim cancelled Charge and turned around. Light flashed.

Bang!

Sparks flew out from that pitch-black gun. Qin Muyun had put in the inputs. It was too late for him to stop. However, between pressing the trigger and Lord Grim turning around, one of them came first. Ye Xiu had somehow known that Negative Nine Degrees would be here before the gunshot rang. Had he looked over here before?

The broadcast director checked a replay, but he found nothing.

Lord Grim had never looked towards Negative Nine Degrees' position.

How had he known?

Everyone looked at one another. Li Yibo didn't know, but Pan Lin had thrown the question to him already.

He didn't answer for now. Lord Grim stopped abruptly, turned around, and then flickered towards Negative Nine Degrees with a Shining Cut.

It was true that Sharpshooters had the strongest close combat capabilities among Gunner classes, but given a choice, very few Sharpshooters would choose to fight at a close range. Gun Fu wasn't an easy technique to perform. Without this technique, just their few Taijutsu skills alone were nothing worthy of praise.

So when Qin Muyun saw Lord Grim heading towards him, his first thought was to retreat!

Bang bang bang bang!

Gunshots continued to ring. Negative Nine Degrees leaped backwards and open fired. Bullets sprayed out from his dual guns, the recoil helping to push Negative Nine Degrees back. In this enclosed area, even if the bullets missed Lord Grim, they would hit other objects in the room. The wall, tables, and all sorts of ornaments were shattered by the bullets.

Lord Grim was unscathed though.

Lord Grim drew a beautiful arc across where he moved, traversing through the rain of bullets. Although Negative Nine Degrees' Aerial Gun technique allowed him to move fast, it couldn't compare to an actual movement skill. The distance between the two characters was slowly erased step by step.

Seven steps.

Six steps.

Five steps.

Four steps.

The bullets suddenly formed a net that flew towards Lord Grim. Negative Nine Degrees had also stopped retreating. His movements seemed to be nothing out of the ordinary, but he would constantly maintain an angle that he could attack from. The distance between the two was subtly kept under control.

Four Step Gun Fu!

Those who knew what was what instantly recognized it. It could be considered a part of the Gun Fu technique. The number of steps was a way to look at a player's mastery over the technique. Zhou Zekai's Three Step Gun Fu was something no other player in Glory had achieved. It was a realm that only he had reached. The other pro Sharpshooters hovered around four steps. If they were feeling good, they could reach three and half steps. If they weren't, four or even four and a half steps could be riddled with mistakes.

Gun Fu wasn't a survival technique for when opponents got close. It was an offensive technique for Sharpshooters. Qin Muyun's main role in Team Tyranny wasn't as an attacker. His main responsibilities were to restrict his opponents. Gun Fu could occasionally be seen from him, but it never drew too much attention.

But right now, Four Step Gun Fu... ah!

The viewers didn't even have time to appreciate it, when Negative Nine Degrees suddenly stepped forward. Bang bang bang! He continued to exert pressure onto Lord Grim, but the distance between them was... three steps!

Three Step Gun Fu?

Everyone was astonished. Qin Muyun, whose existence in the team seemed so weak, was actually able to perform what up until now only Zhou Zekai could do?

But before the viewers could appreciate this peak Three Step Gun Fu, Negative Nine Degrees jumped back, pulling the distance from three steps to five steps.

This...

Some players might not see anything strange, but the skilled players, especially the Sharpshooters, were very surprised.

Gun Fu was about moving in and out, but that didn't mean going from three steps to five steps to three steps. Moving in and out was a way to describe a position, which the user could move in to attack or move out to retreat.

The number of steps was defined as how many steps it took to move both in and out. Qin Muyun had just performed a Three Step Gun Fu, but in the blink of an eye, it turned into Five Step Gun Fu... there was nothing inherently wrong with this sort of change, but how long had Ye Xiu and Qin Muyun been fighting for? Four steps to three steps to five steps, wasn't he changing it too much? Was his Gun Fu not stable?

There were too many questions, and the two most worried people among the audience were Pan Lin and Li Yibo, who needed to explain it to their friends watching. Li Yibo seemed to have a vague idea, but

he wasn't confident in it. Taking advantage of the intensity of the match, he decided not to talk about it. Instead, he and Pan Lin listed out what skills the two players were using.

After five steps was seven steps!

Seven steps was somewhat far. Gun Fu combined gunfire with the Sharpshooter's several kicking skills. At a distance of seven steps, the majority of a Sharpshooter's close combat threat was out of the picture. At this point, he was probably planning on breaking away from using Gun Fu and running away, right?

The audience focused their eyes on Lord Grim.

The other side was getting ready to run, what will he do?

Lord Grim made movements, but it was simply to attack. He didn't give chase. Ye Xiu let Negative Nine Degrees reach seven steps away.

Qin Muyun felt a shiver down his spine.

Was he seen through?

Seven steps was bait to lure Lord Grim forward. However, Ye Xiu didn't move. Lord Grim aimed his attacks towards a very specific direction. It was to counter what Qin Muyun would have done if the bait had succeeded.

He really did see through me!

Such a specific direction of attack let Qin Muyun make a firm decision.

Bang bang bang, gunfire continued to sound. Lord Grim didn't give chase, so Qin Muyun followed along and had Negative Nine Degrees begin to retreat. He had already figured out what route he wanted to take. Even though he wasn't very familiar with this map, he was exceptional at picking spots, which also meant that he was exceptional at adapting to all sorts of maps.

But then, Lord Grim decided to move.

As soon as Qin Muyun gave away his intent, Ye Xiu acted.

Slide Kick!

Lord Grim slid across the ground, the bullets flying past him, as he headed towards Negative Nine Degrees.

Qin Muyun immediately had Negative Nine Degrees adjust by lowering his aim. He predicted where Lord Grim would slide to and attacked.

Bang bang bang bang.

The glossy marble ground became riddled with holes.

Lord Grim had suddenly jumped.

While he had been sliding across the ground, he sprung up into the air just as Negative Nine Degrees adjusted his aim.

Lord Grim had a gun too!

The tip of his Myriad Manifestions Umbrella opened and aimed at Negative Nine Degrees.

Bang bang!

Bullets shot out.

However, the Myriad Manifestation's gun form was a Rifle, and Lord Grim didn't have the class advancement skill "Gun Proficiency". Lord Grim could not fire rapidly like Sharpshooters using normal attacks. Lord Grim only shot out two bullets, seemingly negligible out of all the other bullets flying through the air.

But Qin Muyun didn't neglect them.

Lord Grim jumped, the muzzle of his gun gleaming in the light. Qin Muyun immediately had Negative Nine Degrees roll, while also adjusting his aim, pointing his gun towards the sky.

A bright fiery radiance flashed where Lord Grim was.

Flying Meteor!

The Exorcist skill was an above Level 20 skill, which meant that Ye Xiu had chosen to put this skill onto his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

This skill had probably been used before Lord Grim had fired those two shots. Those two shots were bait to lure Qin Muyun into dodging. Before Negative Nine Degrees could press the trigger, the Flying Meteor had already descended.

Boom!

A sea of fire swallowed the area. This time, Qin Muyun didn't have time to dodge. The Flying Meteor had been timed too precisely.

"But the attack only landed because of Qin Muyun's skill in picking the optimal spot and moving there." Huang Shaotian received a message from Yu Wenzhou.

Yes! These top experts understood this reasoning.

Positioning was originally Qin Muyun's strongest point. However, Ye Xiu took advantage of that strength.

It was true that Qin Muyun could quickly find the most optimal position and move there precisely, but because he always made the optimal choice, it meant that he lacked mix-ups.

If Ye Xiu could figure out what that optimal choice was, he could accurately predict where Qin Muyun would move to.

That sounded simple, but it wasn't something anyone could do. Positioning was Qin Muyun's speciality, which meant that he was better and faster than others at figuring out what the optimal position was at any given moment.

But since Ye Xiu could keep up with his pace, it meant that Ye Xiu was no worse than Qin Muyun in terms of positioning. It could even be said that he could find the right spots faster than Qin Muyun could!

Chapter 1485: Saving Trouble

The Flying Meteor was about to strike Negative Nine Degrees. For a moment, whirling flames covered Qin Muyun's view. He could only rely on his experience and intuition to make his next move.

But his every action was within Ye Xiu's predictions. A figure suddenly appeared inside the sea of fire as if he were born from the fire, Lord Grim!

A distance of three steps!

Qin Muyun had chosen to retreat. The distance between Negative Nine Degrees and Lord Grim was three steps.

Qin Muyun had shown a Three Step Gun Fu previously, and it appeared to be a distance that he could maintain. However, Qin Muyun knew why it seemed like that.

His Three Step Gun Fu wasn't perfect. He didn't have complete control over moving in and out within three steps. But because of his outstanding positioning, he occasionally found spots where he could perform Gun Fu within three steps. When those moments came, he would choose to step forward and perform a Three Step Gun Fu like he had done previously in his exchange with Lord Grim. After all, the closer the steps, the higher the threat.

When he was no longer able to maintain it, he would move back.

By relying on his positioning skills, Qin Muyun was able to form his own unique form of Gun Fu, which allowed him to keep the threat of Gun Fu up while staying at a comfortable distance.

However, right now, Qin Muyun wasn't in a position where he could perform Gun Fu at this distance of three steps.

There may have been an opportunity at one point, but the spot that Lord Grim was in destroyed Qin Muyun's last hopes.

I've been seen through!

Qin Muyun knew that his technique and his intent had been seen through. Every step he took was uncomfortable for him. The first strike had hit his vital point.

As expected of the one who's fought with Captain for ten years and often had the upper hand.

Qin Muyun felt awe. When he had started his journey, Ye Xiu had already retired. However, his existence was a part of Excellent Era's history and Tyranny's history – the villain in Tyranny's story.

Qin Muyun had heard of the stories and had seen Ye Xiu's accomplishments. He had fought against him in the team competitions during the regular season. But in this 1v1, he finally experienced for himself just how terrifying Tyranny's villain was.

Do I still have a chance?

Once Lord Grim closed the distance between them, he tried to fight while retreating. He looked for ways to escape.

The window?

The door?

The corner over there?

There wasn't much space in the room. Every exit seemed so close, but close did not mean reachable. Lord Grim blocked him from moving towards those exits. Finally, Negative Nine Degrees was forced into a corner.

Without enough space, he couldn't even execute Gun Fu. At this point, Sharpshooters practically had no options left. Qin Muyun realized that he had made a mistake in the beginning. Choosing to fight in this enclosed space had been a grave mistake.

But if he hadn't entered the room, if he had waited up on the roof to ambush Lord Grim, he would have been caught by Lord Grim's sneak attack!

Qin Muyun had already started to review this match, and when he came to this point, he could only stare blankly at his screen.

Throughout this match, Ye Xiu had the initiative every step of the way. It was because Ye Xiu knew that his positioning was outstanding, so he could always make an accurate prediction of where he would move to. When Lord Grim went through the window onto the roof to sneak up on Negative Nine Degrees, he missed. Why? Wasn't it because Qin Muyun had dropped through the hole in the roof into the room?

Ye Xiu hadn't covered this option because from a certain perspective, he knew that it wasn't a smart one. However, Qin Muyun really did choose this unwise option, throwing Ye Xiu's plans into disarray for a bit.

Qin Muyun felt like he had realized something. When facing against an opponent like Ye Xiu, the optimal option was not always the best option because the opponent knew what that optimal option was...

I lost.

Qin Muyun's Negative Nine Degrees fell. However, he had taken out 43% of Lord Grim's health too, so it wasn't too bad. After careful observation and thought, Li Yibo finally noticed the key points in this match and began speaking confidently about the competition of positioning between the two players.

"In the end, the older, the wiser. Ye Xiu is more skilled!" Li Yibo sighed.

“But what about here!” Pan Lin hinted at the broadcast director to show a replay. When Lord Grim broke the rooftop and fell down, he blocked a few shots with his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. But when he retracted his umbrella, he couldn’t see his opponent. However, he quickly deduced Qin Muyun’s position and found him soon afterwards.”

“Qin Muyun wasn’t in the optimal position, so how did Ye Xiu figure out where he was and then fake an attack?” Pan Lin asked.

“Hahaha,” Li Yibo laughed with delight, “It’s true that Qin Muyun didn’t pick the optimal position, but picking the right spot is dependent on the circumstances. At that time, not only did Qin Muyun need to pick a spot, he needed to take advantage of Ye Xiu’s blind spots and move while Ye Xiu couldn’t see him.”

“I see...” Pan Lin understood.

“Under these conditions, Qin Muyun’s position is, in fact, optimal,” Li Yibo said

“But if Ye Xiu had figured out Qin Muyun’s position, why didn’t he drop down and directly attack him? Why bother faking an attack?”

“Because Qin Muyun really had picked a very good spot! Look, if Lord Grim landed on the ground first, he wouldn’t have been in a good position to launch an attack. In fact, Negative Nine Degrees would have had more space. By faking an attack, he was able to move to a better position to attack,” Li Yibo explained.

“Oh.” Pan Lin felt enlightened and felt even more appreciation for Li Yibo. He had been won over by his analysis.

“In other words, the purpose of Ye Xiu’s feint was to paralyze the opponent and to move to a better position,” Pan Lin concluded.

“That’s right,” Li Yibo nodded. He felt proud that he had seen through the issue.

“What an amazing fight,” Pan Lin sighed.

“Qin Muyun was beaten by Ye Xiu at his own game. I hope it won’t affect him later.” That was what Li Yibo said, but it was evidently a way of phrasing what he wanted to say in a nicer way. In reality, he was pointing out that Ye Xiu beating Qin Muyun would be a blow to Tyranny’s morale.

“But despite Ye Xiu having the upper hand, Qin Muyun was still able to take down 43% of Lord Grim’s health. Qin Muyun performed quite well,” Pan Lin said.

“Yes, especially in the latter half of the fight, where he was backed into a corner. Sharpshooters have a very difficult time fighting in those conditions,” Li Yibo said.

“Let’s see who Tyranny will send up next,” Pan Lin said.

By this time, Qin Muyun had left the player booth. The camera had zoomed in onto him for some time. Li Yibo had seen his expressionless face and had said the words “I hope it won’t affect him later” as a response. The two commentators found a few praiseworthy moments for him before discussing the next matchup.

But in the eyes of the experts, the discussion of the match wasn't finished yet.

"43% seems a bit much," Huang Shaotian messaged Yu Wenzhou. Ye Xiu had the clear upper hand. Using nearly half his health to take down the opponent was a bit excessive.

"His opponent didn't make it easy! Qin Muyun's positioning is truly outstanding," Yu Wenzhou replied. When the two experts chatted with each other, they didn't need to explain every detail like the commentators. They just needed to touch upon the main point.

"If he gave himself more space and put more pressure on him, he could have reduced the damage he took." Huang Shaotian replied.

"But it's more risky, and it would have increased the amount of inputs he would have needed to make," Yu Wenzhou said.

"So he's trying to save his energy!" Huang Shaotian said.

"That's why we tried to wear him down," Yu Wenzhou said.

"That bastard," Huang Shaotian cursed. They had drawn up a strategy, targeting what Ye Xiu had been worried about, but Ye Xiu was able to neutralize it. When Huang Shaotian thought back, he felt even more helpless. On the other hand, Ye Xiu's simple and crude setups for Blue Rain all hit their target.

For example, take Blue Rain's Mister Clutch, Song Xiao. His playoffs run was truly depressing. He had gained fame from his plays in the playoffs. It was as if the playoffs was his home. But his performance in Blue Rain's two rounds against Happy? In the team competition, as the sixth player, he was often the Mister Clutch that helped Blue Rain open up the field, yet before he could even do anything, the match had already been decided.

Mister Clutch wasn't on the field at the crucial moments. How could he be clutch if he wasn't there? Happy had crudely placed Song Xiao on the back burner.

"Let's see who Tyranny will send up next." It wasn't clear if it was because Yu Wenzhou had also recalled their loss against Happy, but he now switched topics.

The big screen displayed Tyranny's next player.

Zhang Jiale, Spitfire, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

The crowd boomed.

Zhang Jiale had returned to the scene, abandoning Hundred Blossoms and joining Tyranny. Hundred Blossoms viewed him as a traitor. The fans of other teams, including Tyranny, looked down on his conduct. The current Zhang Jiale was nowhere near as popular as before. There were always people who would criticize his moral character, and Happy's home stadium was no exception. As soon as Zhang Jiale appeared, boos and curses were immediately thrown his way.

Zhang Jiale was used to it. It had been two years. He could even face Hundred Blossoms calmly now. None of those boos or criticisms counted as anything.

Two years.

Zhang Jiale was counting his days. He knew that, for people like him, every day that passed was one less day. If they failed this year, what about next year? Did they have a next year?

But none of them could have expected that the one blocking their way would be Ye Xiu. As he walked onto the stage, Zhang Jiale couldn't help but recall those glorious years when the two had once battled.

Chapter 1486: One Person's Dream

Ye Xiu, a first generation pro player. Zhang Jiale, a second generation pro player.

There was only a year between them, so there was no need for any courtesies for seniority. Though Ye Xiu would sometimes act the wise, knowing elder, Zhang Jiale clearly had no care for it.

The two's first real top level face off was in the third season of the Glory Pro League.

That season, Team Hundred Blossoms' Sun Zheping and Zhang Jiale, their Blood and Blossoms had fully matured, sweeping across the Alliance and taking first place in the regular season. However, in the end, in the finals, they were met with Excellent Era. The story of how One Autumn Leaf cut through their combo with his Evil Annihilation had become a legend in this scene.

In the end, Blood and Blossoms fell into the background.

Zhang Jiale wouldn't accept that, of course, so they returned anew in the fourth season.

But this season, they didn't even make it into the finals. The season came to a close with the legendary battle where Tyranny ended Excellent Era's dynasty. Blood and Blossoms once more became no more than a passerby.

In the fifth season, Hundred Blossoms came back in high spirits, ready for the new season after three seasons of experience. That was when their captain, Sun Zheping, was forced to retire midseason, in his golden years, due to a hand injury. Zhang Jiale took over as captain and Team Hundred Blossoms charged forward amidst their tears, empowered by their sorrow, straight into the finals.

However, the result was that they lost against the one who joined the scene in the third season, known throughout the Glory scene as the Magician. They lost to the one who, as rumor would have it, was the closest to the God of Glory, the closest to erecting a dynasty like Ye Xiu did. They lost to Wang Jiexi.

Wang Jiexi became Hundred Blossom's worst nightmare. In the seventh season, when they were mere inches away from reaching the championships again, it was Wang Jiexi who shattered their dreams once again.

Seven years and three runners-up, it was almost as if Hundred Blossoms was plagued by some sort of curse. When they fell to Wang Jiexi this time, Blood and Blossoms had been left in the past, and this had become an accomplishment of Zhang Jiale's efforts alone.

Perhaps it was because he thought that it was already the best he could do alone, one summer later, Zhang Jiale suddenly announced his retirement.

Today, the story of Blood and Blossoms had truly ended. Though Sun Zheping had already retired in the fifth season, Zhang Jiale had always fought for the both of them.

No one could understand what sorrow he felt, what disappointment he lived in.

The people would only sigh: if Sun Zheping didn't retire from his injuries, if Sun Zheping had been there all along, then would Blood and Blossoms have erected a Hundred Blossoms dynasty after Excellent Era fell?

There were no ifs.

These ifs were nothing but knives to the heart for those involved.

Zhang Jiale had never given up, otherwise, he wouldn't have carried the responsibility and dream that two were meant to bear and gritted his teeth, charging onwards alone.

Unfortunately, he still fell in the end and gave up.

Blood and Blossoms was a story of two. One person wouldn't be able to write that perfect ending.

However, for him personally, there was still a dream in his heart, an everlasting dream.

After a season, he returned, abandoning his old home Hundred Blossoms and joining Tyranny, a pandering move he was despised for. Zhang Jiale had doubted his choices, but ultimately, he didn't regret it. He affirmed his goals. Now, he stood here, still in control of Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, but it was Tyranny he was fighting for. As for his opponent? Ye Xiu wasn't unfamiliar, but his character was the unspecialized Lord Grim, representing the new team Happy.

Familiar scene, familiar characters, but different people?

No, the people were the same people, but everything else was messed up.

However, no matter what happened, his dream of the championship would never change.

Bang!

A sudden gunshot startled everyone. Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had just loaded into the map and suddenly shot a bullet into the air.

Click, click, click, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms switched rapidly through his cartridges before heading off. This was a habit of Zhang Jiale's.

It was still the same map, and both chose to go the middle path, so they arrived in the manor in the middle of the map one after the other.

Lord Grim went in directly through the front door. And Dazzling Hundred Blossoms? Straight through the back door.

Although Spitfires were a Gunner class, they had many different kinds of attacks and were called the Mages of Gunners. Their battle styles didn't need a lot of space like Sharpshooters and Launchers. An enclosed speed was equally as convenient. In fact, there were some enclosed terrains that Spitfires excelled in!

The manor had two floors. Ye Xiu and Qin Muiyun's battle happened entirely on the second floor. The map wouldn't refresh, so the second floor was still in complete disarray from the previous battle. Negative Nine Degrees's bullets had turned the rooms that the two characters had fought intensely into a complete mess.

However, Lord Grim and Dazzling Hundred Blossoms were still on the first floor. Both characters were wary, each step taken with infinite caution.

Ye Xiu was familiar with the map. Lord Grim first watched the window for a while like he did against Qin Muiyun. After not seeing any signs of Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, he was clearly acting on the thought that "he probably came in through the back door."

As for Zhang Jiale? He had clearly lost the initiative since he didn't know the map. After entering through the backdoor, he cautiously surveyed his surroundings, the room layout, the doorway. After entering the room, he glanced around several times and randomly went for the doorway that led to the hallway, opening it with a creak.

The audience held their breath.

In the corridor outside the doorway, Lord Grim was carefully walking over. The sudden opening of the door would expose Zhang Jiale's position.

"Careless! He knows its a corridor..." Pan Lin was saying, but then suddenly shut up.

Knowing that the corridor was here, he should be on guard for the possibility of his opponent to just so happen to be passing by. He was about to say that, but then, he shut up because he saw that after Dazzling Hundred Blossoms opened the door, he didn't walk out.

Creeeeaaaak...

The door opened, then closed again, creaking all the while.

Lord Grim, in the corridor outside, already had his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella raised. Lord Grim pointed towards the doorway as he silently edged rightwards to give himself a better view of the room.

Creeeeaaaak....

The door continued to close, with only a sliver of an opening left.

Was he not coming out?

Just as everyone thought this, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms darted out suddenly.

The door was slammed open again. Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had the door behind him as cover, his right hand holding his automatic handgun Hunter Seeker out in front of him.

Zhang Jiale saw Lord Grim immediately.

Ye Xiu also saw the charging Dazzling Hundred Blossoms immediately.

Gunshots.

Both guns spat embers simultaneously. However, for normal shots, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was a rifle. Each reload allowed for two shots. Meanwhile, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms was using an automatic handgun. On top of that, he had the Spitfire class skill Ammunition Expansion, which affected normal attacks as well. The number of shots they could fire in that moment were on two completely different levels.

So Lord Grim immediately attacked with a skill.

Anti-Tank Missiles!

Three missiles shot out in rapid succession.

Boom boom boom!

In the narrow corridor, the two characters aimed their guns at one another. The shots they fired collided, exploding. A thick smoke billowed out and enveloped the corridor, and the force of the explosion sent both characters backwards.

Ye Xiu didn't retreat. With a push of his mouse, Lord Grim used Slide Kick, charging straight at the billowing smoke.

"That's too daring!" Pan Lin cried out in surprise.

It was an unknown situation, but it wouldn't be hard to guard against Ye Xiu going on the offensive. So long as Zhang Jiale was on guard, he could just throw a few grenades into the smoke. How would Lord Grim dodge that?

However, when he saw the exact direction Lord Grim had aimed his Slide Kick in, he realized something was wrong.

Was he planning to Slide Kick the wall?

In that moment of confusion, Lord Grim had already slid to the wall.

Boom boom boom!

As expected, flashes of explosions bloomed amidst the smoke. Zhang Jiale had been prepared for the possibility of an attack. However, in this moment Lord Grim slid to the wall and then suddenly jumped up. He unsheathed his ninjato from the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, swinging in and stabbing it into the wall. With a leap, he pulled the blade blade and swung again...

He was running along the wall!

Pan Lin stared in shock. The whole audience stared in shock.

The corridor was narrow, so the force of the explosions enveloped the entire area. But with the wall to brace himself on, Lord Grim wouldn't be thrown back. The force would just press him closer against the wall....

Taking some insignificant damage, Lord Grim had managed to charge out of the smoke with two jumps, falling forward.

This was originally where Dazzling Hundred Blossoms was, but when Lord Grim appeared, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms immediately darted out of the way. He had kept some distance between him and the thick smoke; Zhang Jiale wouldn't be so stupid as to stand right in front of it. Thus, he could still dodge out of the way even when Lord Grim used such an unexpected method of attack.

With a step, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms stepped back into the room.

Creeeeaaaak, the door continued to close. With the way he was falling, Lord Grim was going to hit the door. If that happened, that would be rather embarrassing.

Lord Grim hurriedly swung his ninjato again.

Bang bang bang bang...

After switching positions, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms immediately began to attack, but Lord Grim dodged the bullets by swinging his ninjato towards the wall behind, ending up stepping on the top of the door accurately.

With a kick, Lord Grim jumped to the other side of the door and the door closed rapidly. Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had to retreat swiftly, almost getting hit in the face by the door.

Clank!

Slamming shut, the door separated the two characters, one inside the room, the other outside.

Since the first level of the castle had to take a lot of weight, the walls were very thick. They weren't something characters could destroy without some effort. Right now, with the two separated like this, they didn't have to worry about a sneak attack coming through the wall.

Lord Grim didn't make any moves for now. This was because Ye Xiu knew the map well. The room had a lot of ways out. If he circled around, he probably wouldn't be able to catch the other, unless Zhang Jiale stayed in the room and didn't move.

Right now, the quickest way to continue his assault was to charge inside through this door.

However, the door opened outwards, not inwards, which meant that Ye Xiu couldn't barge inside like Zhang Jiale had barged outside, using the door to cover his back while he faced the other way. If the door had opened inwards, Ye Xiu would be able to charge in, being able to react no slower than the person waiting on the other side.

However, if Ye Xiu charged inside and Zhang Jiale was ready to ambush him, that would not be good.

What should he do?

The two characters pressed themselves against the wall, silent and unmoving.

Chapter 1487: The True Hundred Blossoms

The two characters each stood against the wall. The distance between them was very small; the tension was thick in the air.

Until messages appeared in the chat.

“You come in!”

“You come out!”

The childish exchange swiftly broke the tense atmosphere. The audience didn't know whether to laugh or not.

But while this meaningless chat occurred, Ye Xiu was moving. Lord Grim ended up not going through the door, but he didn't circle around to a different room either. He actually chose to nimbly make his way outside through the window. Then, he swung his ninjato, quickly flipping up to the second-floor window and rolling back inside, having chosen a suitable position.

Everyone was caught off-guard. With this action, was he planning to directly break through the floor of the second level to ambush from above?

It was a complicated task for the fully immersive projection to beautifully display this interior environment, because anything that obstructed the audience view had to be eliminated. Right now, the floor of the second level looked like it was suspended in midair. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim and Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Hundred Blossoms were displayed like that, one above and one below, still at a very close distance, but the distance was now vertical instead of horizontal.

On the first floor, Zhang Jiale still hadn't detected anything. Dazzling Hundred Blossoms lifted a gun with one hand and held a grenade in the other. From where he was standing, he could attack every entrance of this room.

But right now, Ye Xiu wasn't planning to use an entrance!

Hualala!

Ye Xiu very much valued time. He didn't hesitate at all while he was on the second floor. While many people were still processing his actions, he was already beginning to act.

The cross section of this castle was fragile enough. One more attack was enough to break through, and amidst the shattered pieces, Lord Grim plummeted downward. In the blink of an eye, he had already found Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' position. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella swung over, fire!

Zhang Jiale's reaction wasn't slow. As soon as he heard a noise above him, even as he lifted his camera to check, his automatic pistol, the Silver weapon Hunting Seeker, was already lifted into the air, and the grenade in his left hand was tossed outward. Immediately after, he confirmed the situation above him and continued to toss grenade after grenade, like a weapon master in wuxia, or like a magician with his playing cards. Those grenades flew outward nonstop.

Boom boom boom boom!

The middle height of the room was instantly swallowed by explosions, just like the passageway earlier, splitting the space in two.

Unexpected?

Ye Xiu's plan was quite unexpected, but this method was a bit too blunt. The attack made a loud noise when it impacted the floor of the second level, and Zhang Jiale was good enough to immediately react and deal with it. What Ye Xiu gained here was similar to the situation Zhang Jiale had been in when he'd rushed outward through the door earlier – the situation wasn't particularly advantageous for either side, it would come down to whose reaction was faster.

Earlier in the passageway, the two of them had tied after an exchange of blows. This time, with one above and one below, who would win the upper hand?

Roundhouse Kick!

Dazzling Hundred Blossoms suddenly used a low-level Sharpshooter skill, sweeping around 360 degrees.

Miss!

There was actually no one next to Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, and Zhang Jiale instantly knew that he had made a mistake in his prediction. He had originally thought that Ye Xiu would take advantage of the cover, using Shadow Clone Technique to swiftly close in. Yet, surprisingly, Ye Xiu hadn't done this.

One misstep instantly revealed an opening. Amidst the flashing explosions in midair, Lord Grim looked like he was flying with an imperial sword, and he came plummeting down with a Falling Light Blade.

He had actually stayed in midair for that long?

The audience could see clearly that after Lord Grim broke through the floor, he didn't hurry to the ground. After the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella fired a few shots in gun form, it shifted back to a ninjato and was anchored into the ceiling.

From the start, Ye Xiu didn't think that his sneak attack from above would directly cause Zhang Jiale any difficulty. He just wanted to create an unusual situation. With this small opening that Zhang Jiale exposed with his mistake, he now attacked.

Zhang Jiale had no time to dodge. The Falling Light Blade came right down upon Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. But then, with a blast, Lord Grim was also thrown aside by a shockwave. There was a hole in the ground, the scar left by the explosion of a landmine.

Ye Xiu had seized an opportunity for attack, but he hadn't expected that Zhang Jiale also had an ambush ready. In their second clash, the two of them once again reached a stalemate. But this was only speaking about the battle situation. In terms of damage, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had broken through the firing line in the first clash, and suffered bombing in the second before forcefully breaking through the firing line. In doing so, he had taken more than a little bit of damage. After being sent flying by this landmine, Lord Grim's health had fallen to 42%, having started this round at 57%.

Two times, he had used up his health for the sake of his offensive, but he hadn't managed to win the initiative. From this exchange perspective, even though Ye Xiu had initiated the attack both times, Zhang Jiale had ultimately ended up better off.

"Defensive fighting!" Blue Rain was a defensive team, so of course they were very sensitive to a defensive playstyle. Seeing this situation, Huang Shaotian immediately sent another text to Yu Wenzhou.

“Yes.” Yu Wenzhou’s reply acknowledged this point. And in the televised broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo were still exclaiming about how the two players’ incredible reaction speeds and responses made them evenly matched. Those two hadn’t even realized the deeper significance of this!

“This is more like you!” In another area of the stadium, an audience member who was keeping a low profile as he watched the match now uttered this exclamation.

Sun Zheping!

A former part of the Blood and Blossom duo, a former god-level player, now contributing the last remnants of his strength to Team Heavenly Swords with the limited time he had. Today, he could no longer be considered a star. The attention he’d garnered when first returning had gradually faded away because of his severely limited appearances in Heavenly Swords.

Heavenly Swords, where he was now, had no business in the playoffs; for him, the championship dream was already long in the past. He simply remained here as a passerby, all because of that piece of his heart that prevented him from ever giving up on Glory completely.

Yes, a passerby. His kind of return and onstage appearance could only be considered passing by. Because of this, Sun Zheping didn’t have any regrets about not tagging along with the black horse that was Team Happy. Happy was the starting point for his return. And now, this grassroots team with which he wasn’t unfamiliar was actually piercing straight through toward the championship. If he were still in this team, Sun Zheping believed that he would go crazy from his inability to go all-out at such a crucial time.

Heavenly Swords was a wise choice. Sun Zheping never regretted it.

And seeing Happy reach this point, Sun Zheping felt gratified as well.

He looked forward to seeing this team create a miracle, just like when they had defeated Excellent Era in the Challenger League. But now, Happy was actually facing off against Tyranny...

Toward Tyranny itself Sun Zheping didn’t have any particularly strong feelings. He would pay attention to them only because Zhang Jiale was there, because his former partner, his closest friend, was there.

His emotions, his goal, his pursuit, Sun Zheping understood completely. But now, Zhang Jiale collided with Happy.

It was really a difficult situation to watch. But Sun Zheping was a simple and direct person; he didn’t have any conflicts in his heart. Facing each other on the narrow road, the courageous would emerge victorious – his belief was just that simple. For him, his emotions would never become a burden on the battlefield, and as a spectator in the audience, it was the same.

But now, the Zhang Jiale he saw didn’t have the furious, desperate stance of before. In particular, it was a far cry from that struggling ferocity that he’d displayed while leading Hundred Blossoms after Sun Zheping had retired from injury.

Was this a sign that he no longer had that fighting spirit of before?

Of course that wasn’t the case, because this right now was the playstyle that truly suited him the best.

The Hundred Blossoms style was called the most splendid and romantic playstyle in all of Glory. As the inventor of this style, Zhang Jiale certainly wasn't imitating anyone with his use of skills. His technique simply reflected his personality; this was just the kind of person he was. That sort of furious, desperate hacking and slashing very much went against his character.

But in Hundred Blossoms, after Sun Zheping was forced to retire from his injury, Zhang Jiale could only take up Sun Zheping's desperate portion of the playstyle as well.

In reality, it didn't have to be like this.

Sun Zheping had always wanted to say this to Zhang Jiale. But, it was entirely because of his own injury that this burden landed upon Zhang Jiale. When the other was so desperately carrying it, what right did Sun Zheping have to tell him not to do this?

If you're willing to carry it, then stay strong and advance!

This was just the kind of person that Sun Zheping was. He only knew how to staunchly encourage his old friend like this.

Unfortunately, in the end, all that Zhang Jiale tasted were the bitter fruits of defeat.

It wasn't until he arrived at Tyranny that he could finally set down his burdens of the past. Zhang Jiale no longer had to carry the responsibility of two people by himself. And so, the Zhang Jiale of the earliest Blood and Blossoms era had returned. This was the condition that suited him best.

Just in this match, Sun Zheping saw it clearly.

The Hundred Blossoms playstyle was protection, was cover; it filled the openings left by teammates; it augmented the teammates' offensives. This was an extremely careful and thorough playstyle. It wasn't something that could be accomplished just by throwing around complicated controls – that kind of Hundred Blossoms wasn't a true Hundred Blossoms.

In the time that Zhang Jiale had led Hundred Blossoms alone, his technique had grown more refined, but his Hundred Blossoms had drifted away somewhat from its essential spirit.

But now, it had all returned.

In fact, because of his growth from experience, Zhang Jiale's Hundred Blossoms playstyle of today was even more careful and precise. Every thread was tightly interwoven, leaking not a single drop.

People thought that the Hundred Blossoms playstyle still hadn't emerged in this match?

That was a big mistake.

In the passageway, in midair, those bursting explosions were all the Hundred Blossoms style. And in this kind of space, when the Hundred Blossoms bloomed, there was nowhere to hide. The charging Lord Grim could only suffer the damage he was supposed to.

There were those who thought that the Hundred Blossoms playstyle was supposed to consist of nonstop lights and shadows, flashing until no one could see anything. But this kind of view was too simplistic.

The true Hundred Blossoms wasn't placed everywhere, it just *could* be placed anywhere.

Take as an example using lights to block the opponent's vision. Did that require 360 degrees of surrounding?

It didn't.

What it truly required was nothing more than, in that most critical moment, a sudden expanse of flashes appearing in the opponent's vision.

Boom boom boom boom...

In such a small space, the explosions were nonstop. For the moment, Lord Grim had no way of closing in.

It seemed like the explosions weren't being continuously strung together, but every time that Ye Xiu prepared to control Lord Grim to rush forward, a series of explosions would make his vision go blurry.

Ye Xiu completely understood that this was intentional. Given that the opponent was able to accomplish this to this extent, he didn't dare blindly charge forward.

The space he had was shrinking, and his exits were already cut off. Lord Grim was right in the middle of the Hundred Blossoms.

Chapter 1488: Borrow

No holes!

Lord Grim had been trapped, but Ye Xiu's intuition told him that he could only evaluate Zhang Jiale's performance as such.

Ye Xiu had been around throughout Zhang Jiale's professional career. He had watched Hundred Blossom's Berserker and Spitfire rise to fame to Blood and Blossoms dominance in the Glory scene to Sun Zheping's retirement to Zhang Jiale's bitter walk alone. Ye Xiu had been there the entire time, crossing hands with Zhang Jiale at every step.

His thoughts were the same as Sun Zheping's: the current Zhang Jiale was the best that he had ever been because Zhang Jiale had re-found his footing. The years of potential that had been bottled up the entire time were finally being put on display.

Ye Xiu couldn't find any openings, but that didn't mean he could just keep waiting for one to come.

Zhang Jiale wasn't letting out fireworks for Ye Xiu to enjoy. The bullets fired by Dazzling Hundred Blossoms might not be heavy, but all of them dealt damage. The space that Lord Grim could maneuver around in was getting smaller and smaller, and his injuries were getting heavier and heavier.

Charge!

Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella suddenly opened. It seemed like he was planning on tanking the hits to escape from this predicament, but how could Zhang Jiale not have considered such a simple method like tanking the hits with a shield? As soon as Zhang Jiale saw the umbrella open, he immediately responded.

A grenade was thrown at the edges of the umbrella's canvas. Then, with a bullet, the grenade was knocked over the umbrella, directly into Lord Grim's line of sight.

There was no time for Ye Xiu to react. The grenade exploded.

Remote Control Grenade.

It had less power than the low-level Impact Grenade, but the user could blow up the grenade manually, naturally making it much easier to set off the explosion at a precise timing. The grenade had leapt over the umbrella shield and exploded. Although the damage dealt was low, it had been a direct hit. The knockback sent Lord Grim sliding back.

With Lord Grim swaying from the blow, the umbrella shield no longer fully covered him. Zhang Jiale seized the openings and fired all sorts of bullets.

Boom boom boom!

Light and smoke intertwined, forming a dazzling picture of a hundred flowers blossoming.

Lord Grim had been swallowed by the brilliant light. All that could be seen was a blurry figure. Zhang Jiale didn't relax and continued to throw out attacks at Lord Grim up until even that blur could no longer be seen.

The attacks suddenly stopped.

Zhang Jiale realized that Lord Grim's health wasn't going down.

How is that possible?

There had been no place for him to dodge or block. Lord Grim had been cornered.

The artillery barrage stopped. The light dissipated. All that remained were remnant flames and smoke. In this enclosed space, the thick smoke would take awhile to disperse, but he was able to see what he needed to see. A hole had appeared in that corner of the room.

Zhang Jiale instantly understood what had transpired.

The walls were sturdy, but no indestructible. It just needed enough attacks. Ye Xiu had made a feint, baiting Zhang Jiale to launch a fierce counterattack. By borrowing the artillery barrage and the cover of the dazzling light, he broke through the sturdy wall and escaped.

Lord Grim had taken a considerable amount of damage to pull this off; only 19% of his health remained. However, in what seemed to be an inescapable position, Ye Xiu had been able to force an opening.

He really is hard to deal with!

Zhang Jiale couldn't remember just how many times he had thought this in the past.

Zhi!

A door from the other end opened.

The other side of the wall was the neighboring room. Ye Xiu acted decisively, immediately launching a counterattack. Zhang Jiale had Dazzling Hundred Blossoms turn towards that entrance and started attacking wildly. As soon as a figure could be seen, the light engulfed him. However, the figure appeared shorter than usual was knocked down a lot faster. More importantly, Lord Grim's health hadn't gone down.

Zhang Jiale realized that the situation wasn't good. He quickly turned back, but Lord Grim had already closed the distance. Lord Grim had dashed out from that broken hole. As for what had pushed open the door, it was a Goblin. The Goblin had distracted Zhang Jiale for just an instant.

But an instant was enough. Lord Grim had left behind a shadow as he came through the hole in the wall. He had used Shadow Clone Technique, his fastest movement option, to instantly close the distance.

Dazzling Hundred Blossoms was knocked into the air. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed in a blur as the Unspecialized Blitz began.

Blood splattered into the air.

Close combat resulted in this sort of bloody fight.

Dazzling Hundred Blossom's health slid downwards rapidly. He hadn't taken any damage previously, so everyone thought that Zhang Jiale would be able to end this match without losing much health, evening up the disadvantage left by Qin Muyun's defeat.

But in the end, he hadn't been able to take care of Ye Xiu in one wave.

19%. The remaining health on Lord Grim came back to bite him.

Would he be swept away by Lord Grim's combo?

Everyone started worrying for Zhang Jiale.

Ye Xiu's unspecialized had done this too many times in the regular season. Just one bite, and he would never let go.

Zhang Jiale obviously understood this point. Ye Xiu had undoubtedly been their main focus point in their research on Happy. He was an old rival that Team Tyranny was incomparably familiar with, but he just had to switch classes. It had truly been a headache for them.

A class change meant a change in playstyle. However, a person's experience, intuition, knowledge, habits, etc. wouldn't change.

Team Tyranny's Han Wenqin had fought with Ye Xiu for ten years.

Zhang Jiale and Lin Jinyan were the Alliance's second generation of players.

The players, who were most familiar with Ye Xiu and had fought against Ye Xiu the most times, were coincidentally all from Team Tyranny.

The complexity of the unspecialized class put them in a bind just the same as everyone else, but in terms of grasping Ye Xiu's thoughts, no one else had more of an advantage than them.

Time would take away things, but also leave them with things.

Take me out in one combo?

Zhang Jiale was the only one, apart from Ye Xiu, who had experienced four finals. No one had as much experience at the apex of Glory as much as these two had. Zhang Jiale had gotten second place all four times. The experience had tempered his heart even further.

He had experienced the greatest setback four times. It was just a single up-and-down in one small part of a match. For him, it was insignificant.

The second he had been launched into the air, he began resisting. While in the air, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms kept throwing down grenades as if Lord Grim was a piggy bank.

No one had expected Zhang Jiale to actually launch such a powerful counterattack from a disadvantaged airborne state. There were a few grenades that Ye Xiu had no choice but to deal with, but most of them couldn't be dealt with if he wanted to keep his offense going.

Grenades poured from the sky.

Amidst the blooming light, Lord Grim tenaciously moved.

This sort of powerful counterattack didn't force him back. To think that he would insist on continuing his attacks.

Everyone was astonished.

Tyranny's Han Wenqing, who had never known the word "retreat", had backed down in front of Ye Xiu today. But now, it was Ye Xiu who bravely stood his ground in this situation like Han Wenqing would.

A trade!

The pro players watching the match such as Yu Wenzhou, Huang Shaotian, Sun Zheping all saw through it.

Apart from the grenades that would disrupt his offense, Ye Xiu would do his best to dodge the grenades while dealing as much damage as possible to Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

A trade was a standard group arena method.

What Ye Xiu sought wasn't a victory this round, but to pave the road to victory for his next teammate.

"Isn't he just trying to make things easier for himself?" Huang Shaotian messaged Yu Wenzhou.

"Maybe..." Yu Wenzhou replied.

Some of the viewers watching were hoping to see Zhang Jiale break open the situation. Others were hoping to see Ye Xiu end the fight in one wave. However, the experts all knew that this round would end in a trade.

Finally, Lord Grim fell. Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had 61% of his health left.

Victory?

In the group arena, it was a bit difficult to say who truly won.

Ye Xiu had lost, but he had taken out 39% of his opponent's health, keeping Happy in the lead.

Zhang Jiale had won, but compared to the expectations towards him when he had cornered Lord Grim, the outcome was somewhat disappointing.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo usually gave a summary or a few comments after a round ended, but right now, the two were sidetracking the main topic.

This individual round seemed brilliant and straightforward. Everything had been directly observed by them, but just talking about those points made the two feel they weren't being thorough enough for some reason. What were they missing? The two were puzzled.

As Ye Xiu walked down from the stage, the crowd clapped in approval. This outcome was acceptable, especially that last comeback. It was a bit unfortunate that he wasn't able to take down Zhang Jiale in one wave, but facing these tyrants, hoping for a 1v2 was too much!

Who would Happy field next?

The audience applauded as they fixed their gaze on the big screen. They wanted to know who Happy's next player was.

Mo Fan!

The name appeared.

Mo Fan, known as the Godslayer, had a stable position in Happy's group arena line-up. And his style was recognized by many as very suitable for the group arena.

After his name appeared on the big screen, Mo Fan got up and headed towards the stage. Along the way, he walked past Ye Xiu, but none of them said anything. They just nodded to express "I see you".

Pan Lin and Li yibo wasn't sure how to summarize the previous round, so they shifted the subject to the next round.

"The Godslayer facing the 61% health Zhang Jiale." Pan Lin said thoughtfully. Though their starting health wasn't even, if Mo Fan won, another name would be added to the Godslayer's list of kills.

Chapter 1489: Crazy Hundred Blossoms

When Mo Fan came onto the stage, everyone's first thought was his title Godslayer. Their second thought was the cold and cheerless chat.

For Mo Fan, it wasn't even a question of not speaking much, he didn't speak at all. Even Ye Xiu felt astonished because when he first met Mo Fan in the game, it was true that Mo Fan didn't speak much, but he wasn't completely silent like he was in real life. It seemed like he was the type who could communicate in virtual worlds, but when it came to real life, he wouldn't say a word. After he became a pro, he would practically never speak in the game either. Was it because he was so invested into the

game that he couldn't differentiate between fantasy and reality? Ye Xiu didn't know, and he had no way to ask. Communicating with him was hard!

Soon afterwards, the match began.

Zhang Jiale was the type of player who would occasionally say a few words. In the fight with Ye Xiu, apart from "You come in!", "You come out!" when the two were stuck, there were no other interactions between the two players. Relatively few words had been spoken that round. This round, facing the taciturn Mo Fan, Zhang Jiale also became quiet.

"There's surprisingly little talking between the players today!" Li Yibo sighed. He had thought that because Ye Xiu and Tyranny's old generals had known each other for a long time, there would be quite a bit of trash talking between them. As it turned out, Ye Xiu and Zhang Jiale bickered childishly for a bit and then, that was it.

"There probably won't be a lot of talking this round," Pan Lin followed up. Mo Fan never speaking was common knowledge.

The two players remained silent. Both players chose to take the middle road, moving towards the manor, one from the front, one from the back.

"Are all of today's fights going to be decided in this manor?" Pan Lin joked.

Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Hundred Blossoms took the same route as the previous round. He went in from the manor's back door and walked through the rooms in the first floor. Compared to last round, he had a better understanding of the layout of the rooms, so he walked more confidently.

As for Mo Fan? Deception didn't enter through the main entrance. This time, a real Ninja had taken the field. With skillful ninjato technique, Deception climbed onto the roof.

The further Dazzling Hundred Blossoms went in, the more careful he became. He needed to be ready for the opponent to appear at any moment. Meanwhile, Deception moved along the rooftop swiftly. Just when everyone thought that he would go through the hole in the roof from the Ye Xiu and Qin Muyun battle, he went directly towards the back of the manor. After cautiously peering downwards, he jumped off the roof soundlessly.

Deception had made his way across the manor to where Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had been initially. Then, he went in.

Tyranny's fans in Xiaoshan Stadium went into an uproar. Going all the way across the manor to circle to the back of the opponent was truly too despicable. Tyranny's fans looked down on such an action.

Even if they looked down on it, they couldn't help but worry for Zhang Jiale because Zhang Jiale clearly didn't realize what had happened. His vision was focused on where Mo Fan might be if he came through the front door.

Mo Fan's Deception entered the manor and started his search, quickly checking room after room. Deception was slowly getting closer to Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

Happy's fans were excited.

Sneak attacks! It wasn't possible to kill the opponent in one strike, but the important part was that when the sneak attack came, the opponent would be flustered. To the viewers, it was an enjoyable sight.

Deception was getting closer and closer. Zhang Jiale hadn't noticed yet. He was on the lookout for Mo Fan, but he had completely ignored his backside.

The doors were opened gently. To avoid startling the snake by beating the grass, the two were careful with their every action. Although the two hadn't come across each other yet, the two acted like their opponent was in the next room. But this time, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' opening and closing of the door was caught by Mo Fan.

With a stride forward, Deception had arrived at the door that Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had just closed and gently opened it.

Mo Fan was familiar with the layout of the manor. Once Dazzling Hundred Blossoms entered this room, he probably wouldn't look back. This room had only one other exit, and Dazzling Hundred Blossoms could only move in that direction.

Deception had activated the Disappearing Body Technique as he rolled into the room. He got up and sprinted soundlessly towards Dazzling Hundred Blossoms as his two hands quickly formed seals.

Ninjutsu – Flickering Pursuit!

Deception became a blur. It was only then did Zhang Jiale notice, but it was too late. Deception struck Dazzling Hundred Blossoms.

“Ohhhhhh!!”

The anxiousness, excitement, and suspense that had been pent up when Deception crossed the manor was let out all at once!

This was the thrill of an ambush. This sort of excitement couldn't be found in any other way.

Empty Cicada Double Kill, Flame Cut, Annihilation!

Deception followed with three consecutive skills, all of them landing and launching Dazzling Hundred Blossom into the air.

But getting hit into the air had actually given Zhang Jiale an opportunity to respond. He immediately dropped a grenade.

Grenades were AoE attacks. As long as Zhang Jiale had a general idea of Deception's position, it was enough for him to attack.

As for Deception? He dashed and jumped. Then, he borrowed the wall to jump back. This series of fast and fluid movements allowed Deception to dodge Dazzling Hundred Blossom's grenade.

Damn!

Surprise flashed through Zhang Jiale's mind. He had been surprised again and again by Ye Xiu. One round later, he was surprised again by another opponent, Happy's Mo Fan.

Countless flashes of light accompanied his surprise.

Pu pu pu pu!

As Dazzling Hundred Blossoms fell, Deception jumped and stomped on him.

After Storm Shuriken, he followed with a Bird Fall.

Dazzling Hundred Blossoms crashed to the ground. The entire room seemed to tremble. After Deception's Bird Fall, he wanted to borrow the momentum to run. For him, the combo had been long enough. It was time for him to stop and adjust the tempo.

But the momentum was unexpectedly too much.

Boom!

Deception crashed into the ceiling, but he didn't immediately start free-falling down. Instead, it was like he was stuck to the ceiling.

To be more precise, he was pushed.

Deception wasn't the only one pushed. The furnishings in the room were pushed askew. The more fragile objects shattered into pieces.

Implosion Grenade!

The Implosion Grenade had set off at the perfect timing. It had exploded the instant Dazzling Hundred Blossoms fell to the ground. In this room, apart from Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, nothing else was left untouched.

Deception wanted to escape, but because of the push from Implosion Grenade, he was pushed to the ceiling. Because of the limited space, the force from the Implosion Grenade wasn't able to completely proliferate outwards, which was why Deception was stuck to the ceiling, unable to get down.

It was just for a short instant, but it was enough for Dazzling Hundred Blossoms to shoot who knew how many bullets.

As the bullets flew, a grenade was thrown. In the blink of an eye, Deception was swallowed by the light. Soon afterwards, he was back onto the ground.

But Dazzling Hundred Blossom followed him down. The bullets continued to barrage him. On the ceiling, a charred strawman could be seen. No one gave it another glance, only the broadcast gave it a close-up.

Substitution Technique!

Although Deception was able to get to the ground, he wasn't able to escape from Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' pursuit.

The room had two exits. Mo Fan could only look on helplessly at them; his Deception had no way of reaching them. Not only could he not reach them, to reduce the damage he took, he had to retreat away from them.

Similar to what Ye Xiu had experienced last round, the blooming net of gunfire would force the target to the corner. Then, amidst the beautiful blossoms, the target would be killed.

At the end, Ye Xiu was able to borrow Dazzling Hundred Blossoms' firepower to break a hole through the wall. But Mo Fan? What could Mo Fan do? Ye Xiu's previous method of escaping wouldn't work a second time. Zhang Jiale wasn't stupid.

Mo Fan could only rely on his own methods.

Deception suddenly retreated back all the way. He hadn't been forced to do so, it was a display of attitude.

Zhang Jiale promptly adjusted his aim. This short window was an opening for Mo Fan.

An opening that let Deception finish several hand seals.

Ninjutsu – Shadow Dance!

Mo Fan was able to complete the hand seals for a Level 70 skill in just an instant. One Deception turned into ten. The one that had been in the corner was instantly swallowed by the blinding light.

It wasn't a big room. For claustrophobic viewers, these ten identical clones made them feel nauseous.

"He's going to use the chaos to run!" Pan Lin shouted.

"Using a high-level skill just to escape, Mo Fan is quite wasteful," Li Yibo sighed. For a scrap picker, safety was number one. It didn't matter what had to be used to guarantee his safety, it would be worth it.

Ten Deceptions. Which one was real? There was no way to tell because the Heart of Shadow Dance could be switched around at any time. Zhang Jiale's only choice seemed to be to guard those two exits. But the other side wasn't just going to line up and rush towards those two exits to die! If Deception used a few attacks to harass Dazzling Hundred Blossoms, wouldn't that make it easier for him to escape?

How difficult! The Tyranny fans acted as if they were in Zhang Jiale's position. Their brows were furrowed, and they looked as if they were at wit's end. But then, they saw the entire room blossom with light...

If it was said that in the previous round, no one was able to see that crazy Hundred Blossoms style, then in this round, everyone saw a Hundred Blossoms that was even crazier than in their imaginations.

The entire room filled with light. Dazzling Hundred Blossoms? Ten Deceptions? All that remained were blurry silhouettes.

The projection technology could intelligently remove objects blocking the viewers' sights, but it did not obstruct the visual effects from the characters' attacks...

Who cared if there were ten Deceptions? Who cared if there were two exits? Who cared about enemy harass?

He would simply strike at every corner of the room, leaving Deception no place to hide.

Even though he had returned to his roots, that didn't mean he had forgotten that wildness from those two and a half seasons.

A hundred blossoms to burn away everything in his path. At that time, he had believed in it!

And now, when he needed it, he wouldn't give up on trying it.

The three summers of wild blossoms, which had once attempted to burn everything down, bloomed again in this little room.

Chapter 1490: Escape Isn't the Goal

It was as if a flash grenade had been thrown at the audience. Trying to figure out what those blurry figures were doing amidst the dazzling light required rich experience.

Zhang Jiale's experience at doing so was second to none. If the Hundred Blossoms Style blinded even him, then that would be heaven's biggest joke.

Several blurry figures instantly vanished. It just looked like random flashes, but there was purpose behind each flash. No matter how skilled Zhang Jiale was, there was no way for him to use a single skill to cover all four corners simultaneously. The light that enshrouded the room, whether real, fake, attacks, or feints, was carefully arranged by Zhang Jiale.

Unable to differentiate between what was real and what was fake, how could Mo Fan's Deception escape?

Practically no one believed he could. They couldn't even see what was happening inside as spectators. How could Mo Fan fare any better?

They were gravely mistaken.

Mo Fan was completely different from them, and the one who felt it most clearly was Mo Fan's opponent, Zhang Jiale.

The hundred blossoms had only just bloomed, when he noticed that Mo Fan had started making adjustments towards his shadow clones.

The viewers had vaguely observed that several shadows had vanished in an instant.

It was four!

Zhang Jiale knew the exact number.

Then, another four.

Mo Fan was trying to break apart Dazzling Hundred Blossom's offense. He didn't get confused by the blinding light, quickly figuring out what was real and what was not.

For most viewers, everything was a blur to them.

But to Mo Fan, this chaos wasn't nearly enough to confuse him.

He had faced countless chaotic situations before. This chaos was never from just one or two people, but a group of them.

When he had searched for a way to escape from predicaments as a scrap picker, the obstructions weren't from just one or two classes, but rather a variety of classes.

Chaotic?

Not at all!

Mo Fan's life as a scrap picker had been chaotic. Zhang Jiale's Hundred Blossoms style had structure.

Four shadows split apart, and then another four.

"Damn!" Mo Fan had surprised Zhang Jiale again.

His Hundred Blossoms encirclement had been broken through, and the reason was because his attacks had structure to them.

And the structure had been grasped by Mo Fan.

If Ye Xiu had done it, perhaps Zhang Jiale wouldn't have been so surprised, but he was currently facing a young rookie.

"The kid's got talent in this area!" Sun Zheping smiled from the audience. He was no longer teammates with Zhang Jiale. Otherwise, he would have certainly warned Zhang Jiale. Mo Fan's skill at escaping was far greater than anyone could imagine. Even with the Hundred Blossoms style, trying to trap him would require even more focus. Mo Fan had grown in chaos.

Scrap picker...

Sun Zheping also felt interested, thinking of Mo Fan's background. There had never been any pro players now or in the past who had that sort of background.

It was the result of a person training what they were best at in the most suitable environment for them. The outcome was superb and didn't lack individuality. It wasn't something that could be molded from the pipeline-like training camps of the pro Clubs.

He possessed godlike skill in his expertise. When Sun Zheping had been at Happy, he and Ye Xiu had privately acknowledged it. And at that time, Mo Fan couldn't even fit in with the team!

Now, he was expanding his expertise. Not only would it be used for scrap picking, but for PvP on the pro stage.

If he became more all-rounded and flexible, not like how rigid his playstyle was right now, a God of a new generation would certainly appear.

But... with his personality, would he be able to round out his playstyle? When Sun Zheping had been in Happy, Ye Xiu had already been worried about this issue.

But even if it didn't turn out to be successful, Mo Fan would still be a formidable player.

Godslayer?

That wasn't a coincidence or a joke.

When the battle shifted towards his domain, he could crush even Gods.

"If he doesn't notice this, he'll definitely be eaten!" Sun Zheping thought in his heart.

On stage.

Ka.

The sound of a door opening.

Inside and outside were two different worlds.

One side was chaotic, the other side was calm.

Deception had reached the outside. He had escaped to the calm side.

The crowd cheered loudly.

"Godslayer!!" Happy's fans shouted excitedly. It was as if Mo Fan wasn't escaping from a predicament, but rather that he had killed his opponent in one hit. Their cheers also showed just how nervous Happy's fans had been.

Tyranny's fans sighed, seeing his astonishing escape.

To think he could escape, and to think it would be so normal, opening the door and running out.

Was Zhang Jiale too old? He couldn't even suppress a rookie? Quite a few people had these sort of thoughts. Even Pan Lin and Li Yibo wanted to say it, but in the end, they only said that Zhang Jiale was a bit slower than Mo Fan.

Why was he slower? Because he was getting old... the two didn't say these words.

But Sun Zheping laughed.

He didn't care who won or lost this match, but when he saw his former teammate performing well, he couldn't help but smile.

"How steady." Sun Zheping's gaze was focused on Dazzling Hundred Blossoms and the light that hadn't yet dissipated.

Mo Fan was able to find an opening in the hundred blossoms through his scrap-picking skills.

But he was no longer a scrap picker. He was a pro player, and he was constantly fixing his habits.

As a result, besides escaping, he had another choice.

Attack the opponent.

Escape didn't mean he won. The only way to win was to kill the opponent. Mo Fan knew this point clearly. Gradually, killing the opponent became a higher priority than escaping.

When he had broken through the chaos, Mo Fan's first thought was no longer to escape, but to use the opening he saw to attack his opponent!

But this time, he had chosen Deception to escape because he couldn't find an opportunity to attack. After the disturbances from the eight shadows, a huge adjustment was made to the hundred blossoms.

It still covered the room and alternated between real and fake.

However, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms had erected an impenetrable defense.

As a result, Mo Fan could not choose to attack. He could only run away.

The two players knew of this detail and so did the pro players watching. But besides them, the rest were discussing how Zhang Jiale was slower.

Zhang Jiale, who they had just commented on being slow, suddenly sped up. The light and shadow from the Hundred Blossoms style seemed to flow out of that door to the next room.

Kakakaka...

The shockwaves kept pushing the door. It wanted to close but it could never close, constantly making an uncomfortable noise.

Deception was hastily running away. Mo Fan hadn't thought that Zhang Jiale would chase after him so quickly.

But a few steps later, he realized that not only was his opponent pursuing him quickly, his opponent was pursuing him closely.

Bullets, grenades, explosions, smoke, light, all of these seemed to be following him as if they were stuck to Deception's feet.

In countless hero movies, there was always a hero who ran around freely amidst a field of explosions, but the explosions would never hit.

Deception was running madly, but the explosions kept following him. If this were a movie, the audience would have probably left their seats by now, seeing these narrow escapes again and again.

I can't get him off of me!

Mo Fan was surprised.

This was what he was best at, but right now, he couldn't get away from the pursuit.

The dazzling light was like a wave that swept away everything behind Deception.

Mo Fan's Deception couldn't stop. He even felt like there wasn't enough time to look back.

On the pro stage, there were at most 5v5 team battles, which couldn't compare to the chaos that a scrap picker experienced in the game.

However, he had never experienced such a crazed pursuit in the game.

He couldn't stop even for a second. If he stopped, the light would swallow him. Although Mo Fan had successfully escaped from that encirclement, that didn't mean he could replicate that success. Both sides were people, not NPCs. Just because it worked once didn't mean it would work again.

I need to get away...

Mo Fan seemed to have returned to the former days, where he would have countless people chasing after him. But he was sure that even in those situations, he had never felt such pressure before.

Mo Fan's Deception had been able to escape from those situations again and again.

But this time, facing this one person's pursuit, Mo Fan's Deception fell.

"Escape isn't the goal. The only goal is to beat the opponent..." Sun Zheping sighed in his heart. He was happy about Zhang Jiale's outstanding plays. But he also felt regret seeing Mo Fan's defeat.

Zhang Jiale, 1v2! He had beaten a half-health Ye Xiu and the "Godslayer" Mo Fan. The advantage that Ye Xiu had established was wiped away. Now, Team Tyranny had a 27% health advantage in this group arena.

The stadium was silent. Happy's fans hadn't expected this outcome. In the end, Zhang Jiale was able to chase Mo Fan down to his death. This was their home field, yet they were lagging behind.

At this moment, Happy's third player stood up.

"It looks like it's my time to shine!" Fang Rui said.